

Olympia by Storm continued from front page

Unfortunately, the Public Records Act has not kept pace with changing technology and there is a growing number of requestors who monopolize resources with broad, voluminous, commercially driven or retaliatory requests that do not provide a public benefit proportionate to the tax-payer dollars needed to fulfill these requests.

Senate Bill 6475: Expands Public Employees' Board.

The Public Employees' Benefit Board program currently provides health care coverage through the Health Care Authority (HCA) to a variety of public employees. This includes the employees and retirees of state agencies and state higher education institutions, and the retirees of school districts and educational service districts.

Senate Bill 6475 would extend the option to participate in the state medical plan to small rural counties and cities, giving them an option in the insurance market that they wouldn't otherwise have.

# Member Takes Steward Training and is Immediately Thrown Into Deep End

Taking steward trainings is an important part of making sure our brothers and sisters are fairly represented in the workplace. Council 2 has some great resources for members and our regional trainings are designed to help stewards develop some of the basic technical skills necessary to become an effective union representative.

Skills that are learned cover a wide range of topics including training to better understand the structure of the union, steward roles and responsibilities, knowing how to use your contract, the duty of fair representation, Weingarten Rights, and the proper processing of grievances — which includes: identifying, investigating, documenting, preparing and the writing of a grievance.

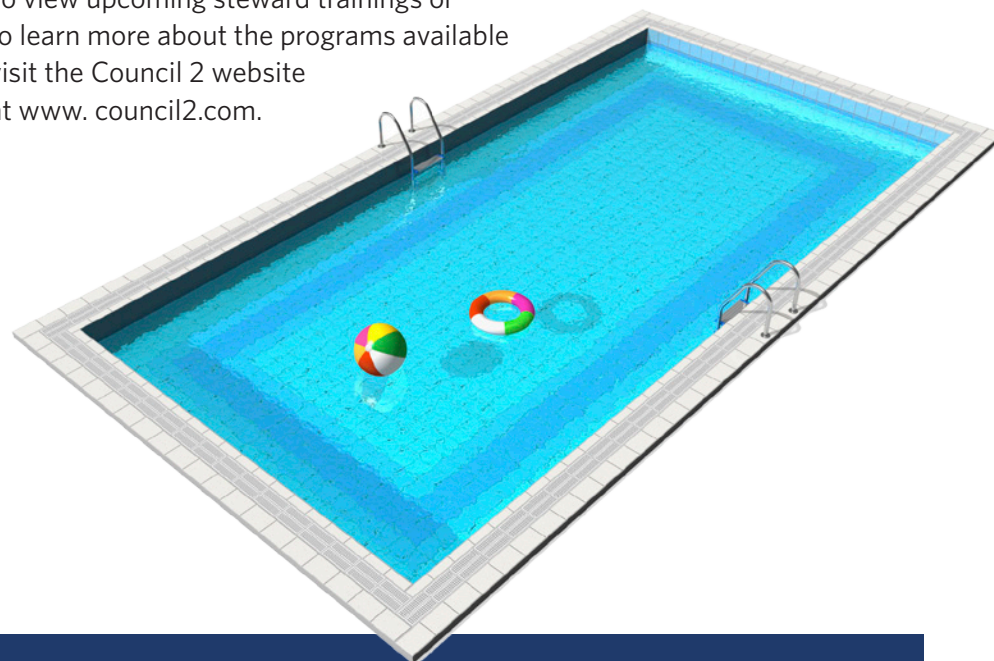


Recently a Local 120-Tacoma member, who works as a social worker providing services to the aging and disabled in Pierce County, took one of our steward training courses and the very next day was asked to represent one of her coworkers in a grievance. She was thrown into the proverbial deep end of the pool to either sink or swim.

Not only did she effectively represent the interests of our member, she felt prepared as an advocate throughout the process. "Our steward trainings are a wonderful resource for members

and I strongly encourage those who are interested to take advantage of this great program," said Kashmiri Gavronski. "The training really helped us be prepared for dealing with stressful situations and was a great tool for better understanding our rights. I left feeling 100% prepared and ready to handle the dispute that I was involved in the very next day."

To view upcoming steward trainings or to learn more about the programs available visit the Council 2 website at www.council2.com.



## COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEE

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## Getting Ready to Retire?

A career in public service is something to be proud of. It means you've earned the right to a secure and guaranteed retirement. But real security is only possible if you're willing to defend your rights and protect your interests. Don't think that your lawmakers are keeping your best interests - your security - in mind. That's why you owe it to yourself to stay involved and take an active part in safeguarding the security of your retirement you worked so hard for.

The Retired Public Employee Council of Washington (RPEC) is a non-profit legislative watchdog that was created by concerned people, like you, who retired from state, county, city, and municipal employers within Washington. They were tired of not having a voice to protect their hard-earned benefits. RPEC is comprised of 10,000 PERS, SERS and PSERS retirees whose goal is to fight to protect their retirement security locally and nationally.

*"Our Strength is Your Retirement Security!"*



### What are the benefits to membership in RPEC?

- ▶ **Fight Threats to Your Retirement:** Staying informed with Newsletters and Email Alerts on the latest attacks on your benefits, like cuts to pensions and health insurance, in order to mobilize in your defense.
- ▶ **Strength in Numbers:** RPEC is affiliated with AFSCME with over 250,000 retirees in total. Our numbers give us a strong voice in the Political arena.
- ▶ **Support from Working Members:** RPEC works with active employee member organizations to protect your issues.
- ▶ **Members-Only Benefits:** The "AFSCME Advantage" Program offers a variety of benefits and services to meet our members' consumer needs.
- ▶ **Local Chapter Meetings:** Our 36 Chapters are spread across the state and meet monthly. They are a source of information, as well as a place to socialize.

Associate Membership is FREE to those within 18 months of retirement! Dues are only \$7/month after retirement. If you would like to learn more about us, please check out our website: [www.RPECWA.org](http://www.RPECWA.org) or call to request an information packet at 1-800-562-6097.

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Further, the plan would eliminate 70 union jobs (and 100 jobs overall) should the city shut down service. The unions also pointed out that it was very likely that without the public provider offering competition many seniors and low-income families who could not afford to pay more would likely be priced out of the market.

As a result of our members hard work there was a happy ending. The city council agreed to remove the restriction placed on CLICK, allowing them to provide internet service to better compete—saving jobs in the process. It was a win for consumers and a win for the workers of Local 120.

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WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL OF COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEES — AFSCME AFL-CIO

## Council 2 Takes Olympia by Storm



Recently, we had over 100 members join Council 2's lobby day at the State Capitol to help make sure our voices are heard on important issues facing working families. Members from all over the state traveled to Olympia to rally and meet individually with their own legislators from the 49 districts across Washington.

There were a number of pieces of legislation being considered that were designated priorities by the Council 2 lobbying team. Proposals included:

### House Bill 2438: Restores liquor Profit Distribution to Counties and Cities.

Alcohol consumption increases public safety and health costs at the local level. In recognition of this, the state has shared liquor revenues with cities and counties for over 80 years. When voters approved liquor privatization through Initiative 1183, they also approved increased revenue for

local governments to fund public safety. This promise of enhanced public safety funding has not been honored in recent years and members advocated in favor of restoring this important promise to Counties and Cities.

### House Bill 2576: Strengthening the Public Records Act due to changing technology and burdensome requests.

We support open and transparent government and continue to seek the best ways to meet this commitment. Washington Public Records Act is an important and powerful law that protects citizens' right to know. The vast majority of requests are focused and most requestors are willing to work with Local Governments to get the information they need.

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## Saving Cable Service Saves Jobs

Affordable cable service is something we all too often take for granted. Since the early 90's residents of the city of Tacoma have had access to a municipally owned cable service provider called CLICK that has helped keep service reasonable for consumers.

Competition has become fierce in recent years from private providers, as more and more people have found alternatives to cable. Further exasperating the problem was the ability of competitors to offer discounted cable rates when service is bundled with other products and services. Unfortunately, despite having the infrastructure to be able to provide the service, CLICK was not permitted under city policy to provide broadband internet service putting them at a competitive disadvantage.

With the publicly run service struggling, city officials took the unwise action of putting forth a recommendation of selling CLICK and leasing out the city owned fiber optic cable infrastructure to private providers.

That's where members of AFSCME and IBEW sprung into action. The two unions worked hand-in-hand to demonstrate to city officials that the plan to privatize was not in the public's best interest and that the recommendations were largely negotiated behind closed doors without public input in the process.

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# The Importance of Union Representation



**CHRIS DUGOVICH**

When I was entering the workforce, union jobs were always the best jobs—good wages, strong benefits, a collective voice to protect our rights, and the promise of employment security. That still holds true today, perhaps even more than ever. That

## Letter from the President

reality, that unions ARE an important protector of the middle class and one of the few ways working people can address the massive disparity in American wages, drives the anti-union crowd nuts.

Economic studies show over and over that when you enter the workforce with better pay, the independence and mobility last a lifetime. In summers during high school and college, great paying Union jobs were in the grocery stores, construction, factories and a coveted Christmas break position with the United Parcel service. Once you recognize your value as a worker, you are less likely to accept less than your worth.

My first real Union experience was as a Banquet houseman at the old Olympic hotel in Seattle, in the late 1970's. I paid somewhere in the neighborhood of ten dollars a month for dues. Money well spent.

I've always been proud of our union, the men and women who dedicate their careers to public service, and our staff—locally, and at the International—who fight on our behalf in Congress, Olympia, and at the bargaining table.

This Union helped lobby the original PERS pension law that provides guaranteed benefits and peace of mind to current members, and retirees. If you don't believe these Union-won benefits are under attack, look no further than the Boeing Machinists, who lost their defined benefit plan in their last contract settlement.

It's a sad state of affairs that a company that the citizens of this state gave billions in tax breaks, fought to eliminate pensions. Replacing public pensions with 401-k type retirement plans is a key goal of anti-Union legislators and activists. Make no mistake—your PERS pension or one of the 3 city plans that our members participate in are in their cross hairs.

Over the years we have not only defeated attempts to water down your retirement plan, but actually enhanced some of its benefits and made sure that it is funded.

In 1966, Council 2 leadership successfully lobbied and passed our current collective bargaining law. Sam Kinville, President of Council 2 at the time, recounted great stories about the hard work that went into that effort. If you can imagine, it passed with bipartisan support and was signed into law by Republican Governor Dan Evans.

50 years later, that law still provides a foundation for our members to have real participation in the work place. Collective bargaining gives your Local Union leadership the ability to sit down with employers and negotiate wages, health insurance, work place safety and a career environment that promotes improvement and advancement.

Without collective bargaining, we would be at the mercy of what our employers offer, with no recourse or rights. A stark reminder was the process we completed this month to gain a reasonable contract settlement in our largest represented jurisdiction, Snohomish County. After better than 18 months of being stonewalled at the bargaining table, members took a stand and authorized a strike. They stood together, and the result was a settlement both parties could live with (without a strike).

There is simply no way we would have made progress in containing health insurance costs, negotiated four years of COLAs, and other gains if not for the solidarity among our ranks, and our Union leadership—all rooted in the strength of law.

The same is true wherever you work and live in the Evergreen State. Politicians and anti-union voices can always find excuses why they need to spend tax dollars on something other than the people who really provide the services. Your Union, and that's all of us, provides the balance of power and the organizational strength that keeps them from ignoring public employees.

There's a long history in this Union of effective advocacy on your behalf—stretching decades but never taken for granted. Please stay informed and to the extent you can, become active in your local or the many committee and volunteer activities offered through your Local or Council 2. Remaining strong and protecting the middle class from ideological attacks is up to all of us, together!

**Politicians and anti-union voices can always find excuses why they need to spend tax dollars on something other than the people who really provide the services.**

## JOIN US FOR OUR 15TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, July 8, 2016 at 1:30pm

Shotgun start  
Golf Club at Newcastle, WA

Come and enjoy an afternoon of golf, barbecue and prizes! All fees and donations go towards the Council 2 scholarship fund. For more information and to sign up, see our website for details. [www.Council2.com](http://www.Council2.com)



## Do You Know the Signs of Workplace Bullying?

### EXAMPLES OF BULLYING:

- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Blame without factual justification
- Being treated differently than the rest of your work group
- Being sworn at
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Being shouted at or being humiliated
- Excessive monitoring or micro-managing
- Being given unrealistic work deadlines

If you have questions on workplace bullying visit our website [Council2.com](http://Council2.com)



# Local Members Secure Transit Service and Jobs

Council 2 members and residents of a neighborhood near Anacortes shared a recent victory when they were able to secure local transit service for their community. The win came

as a result of the hard work of a Local 176-T transit member, who serves on the Skagit Transit Authority board, and who helped bring together his union and the community to achieve a win-win for jobs and transit riders.

Recently, 250 members of the Dewey Beach Neighborhood came together

to petition the Skagit Transit Authority to obtain bus service to their island community. The response from the board was to provide taxi service to meet the communities' transit needs. Members of Local 176-T met with Dewey Beach petitioners and convinced them of the benefits of using transit authority vehicles and their drivers. Community members rallied around the cause and union members, along with disabled residents, jointly presented arguments on why the highly trained, safe, professional drivers who are operating well-maintained and more safely equipped vehicles were a better alternative.

Ultimately the transit authority board took action and approved pocket service for the community that used union drivers. This was a great example of a local community and union forging an alliance to achieve positive change.

# Getting Respect in the Workplace

Council 2 is a growing family and we have been proud to have many new workers join our union in recent months. Individuals are joining Council 2 to help ensure they get the respect and fair treatment they deserve in the workplace.

New members join for a wide range of reasons but we wanted to share why some of our newest members are glad to be part of Council 2 in their own words.



*"It's a reality of our times that Governments are forced to do more, with less resources. The recent economic downturn brought that into sharp focus. Our department had to downsize, and some vacant positions were not filled, leading to a labor shortage. It became important to us as a work unit to join the union to help protect our interests, advocate for us, and give us a venue for bringing forward grievances and fair labor issues."*

- Chris Grabowski, Local 618 - City of Olympia



*"I wanted to be in a union for the protection against management making backdoor deals that effect staff's lives. About 5 years ago I almost lost my job because a deal was made a year earlier. If I would have had a union at that time, I believe a deal would not have been made that started the domino effect, that put my employment at risk. I am happy to be a member of this union."*

- John Davis, Court Monitor/Program Technician, Kitsap Juvenile Court

## Employer Told Hands Off Collective Bargaining Rights

Council 2's legal team recently defended the rights of a member when her employer attempted to reclassify her work position and remove her right to be represented by the Washington State Council of County and City Employees.

The employer, Lewis County, changed the employee's title that she held in the County's Public Works Department from Accountant Technician in the Solid Waste Department to the new title of Solid Waste Accountant. With the title change came the employer's contention that the Accountant position should no longer be in their current bargaining unit.

Lewis County petitioned the court to remove the employee's right to collectively bargain. They were promptly shot down as the court ruled in favor of the employee. They ruled that though her title had changed she was performing largely the same duties, was geographically located and interacted with the same bargaining unit employees in Solid Waste, and reported to the same supervisors.

## SAVE THE DATE

The 42nd International Convention of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, will take place in Las Vegas from July 18 - 22, 2016.

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