

# County and City Employee

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

## SPECIAL 51ST CONVENTION ISSUE

### 'Labor must fight back'

The American labor movement is at a critical juncture, AFSCME President Lee Saunders told the Council 2 convention in June. As a result, union members must defend their rights as never before.

"I have never seen this level of viciousness in the attacks on public service," he said. "The authorities are doing all they can to dismantle public service."

"Five years ago would anyone consider that in Wisconsin the governor and his legislature would strip away our bargaining rights in 2011? Who would have thought that that would happen? Who would



have thought that in the state of Michigan, where the labor movement was born, the governor would impose right-to-work legislation?" Union membership is at its lowest

levels since 1916, Saunders said.

"For the first time ever last year union membership in the public sector declined. We know why: we are under attack."

"The stronger the labor movement, the stronger the middle class is in this country. Now the middle class is shrinking, just as the labor class is shrinking."

"Now more than ever we need to be strong, nimble and think outside the box. We have to be persistent: we must defend public service in every county and every city across this country. We must be the leaders in rebuilding our movement, the mid-

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**'We must be the leaders in rebuilding our movement, the middle class, and the American dream.'**

— AFSCME President Lee Saunders speaking at the Council 2 convention

When dealing with management  
**'We don't work for ME,  
but work for WE'**



Carol Travis

Until this year, Carol Travis had attended every Council 2 biennial convention since 1985. That's 14 conventions covering 28 years—without interruption.

But she broke this impressive record when she was unable to attend the convention held in Spokane in June. That would be the convention at which she was presented with the prestigious Mary Hersey Award.

True, she had a good

#### The Mary Hersey Award

Mary Hersey was fired from her job at the *Yakima Herald Republic* newspaper for union activism. She successfully sued her employer and was reinstated, but quit the same day. Hired by Council 2 as a staff member in 1972, she became the Women's Committee Advisor in 1980. She retired in 1992 and was presented with the first "Mary Hersey Award" shortly before she died in 1997.

Among the criteria taken into account in presenting the award are:

- Advancement in leadership roles and/or activism within the labor movement.
- Outstanding service within the labor community.
- Service in a leadership role beneficial to labor.
- Service in a leadership role in coping with critical issues such as worker safety, minimum wage, comparable worth, human services, and political action needs.
- Participation in educational projects either through a local union or through another labor organization.

reason for not attending this year's convention. After all, she had retired from her position in the business office at Prosser Memorial Hospital and therefore from the executive board of Council 2, in October. And she needed to attend her son's wedding in Virginia taking place at the same time as the convention.

So it was that, when the award was announced at

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### Conditions improving for Council 2 members

As the economy continues to improve, conditions are getting better for labor in Washington state, President/Executive Director Chris Dugovich told the 200 members and guests who attended the June biennial convention in Spokane.

"At the last convention two years ago we were coming out of the Great Recession," he said. "Things were pretty tough. We were going through layoffs and furloughs. We lost more than 1,000 members across the state."

"But today things are better. The economy is coming back to a degree and Washington State is doing better than much of the rest of the country."

"We hope this trend will continue."

Council 2 has grown over the last two years, Dugovich added. "People tend to join because they have been recommended by people to join," he said. "They want the same rights you have and they certainly want a negotiated contract."

The union also has been able to protect members' pensions, but they are under attack, he said.

"If the conservative forces gain control of our legislature they cer-

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# Getting back to normal may take time

**CHRIS DUGOVICH**

This year's 51st Council 2 Convention went far in outlining our victories and the challenges that this union faces in the coming years. We are now at the tail end of what was clearly the greatest economic down-



*Letter from the President*

turn in many of our life times, a recession that caused cutbacks for all and loss of employment for many amongst our membership.

With the increasing good news on the economic front comes a responsibility by the employers to remember our sacrifices and a realization by our membership that it may take a while to get back to normal—and by normal I mean the lack of layoffs, some

meaningful hiring of new employees and reasonable wage increases.

I've said throughout this recession that the most important point is to be here when it's over! This means maintaining jobs, so that when the economy returns we all will still be standing to enjoy its newfound health.

Now that the economy is coming back the politicians will be conservative and cautious, as well they should be! Feast and then famine policies are not what we are after or what we should be pursuing.

What we need is sustainability!

## Arlington employees ratify contract

Some 55 City of Arlington employees have ratified their first-time contract, which covers 2012 and 2013.

The contract took some time to negotiate.

After first negotiations began early last year, further bargaining was delayed by the budget crunch, which led to several months of bargaining over furloughs and later over layoffs rather than working conditions.

In addition to a small cost-of-living allowance increase, the contract calls for longevity increases of up to 4 percent a year.

The contract covers all employees except Police and Fire.

# RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT 51ST CONVENTION

### #1 CONTRACTING OUT/USE OF VOLUNTEERS

That AFSCME, Council 2, should continue to actively oppose contracting out or use of volunteers by educating its members, elected officials and the general public about the shortcomings of contracting out as well as using volunteers.

### #2 HELPING LOCALS COMMUNICATE WITH MEMBERS

That programs and discussions on best practices for communicating with members be a primary focus at the 2013 Presidents' Weekend.

### #3 FAIR TAXATION

That Council 2 support Federal and State tax reform consistent with a fair and equitable taxation of individuals and businesses for the continued provision of adequate public infrastructures and services.

### #4 IN SUPPORT OF LIBRARY WORKERS & SERVICES

That Council 2 will continue to direct its resources and staff to support library workers in the fight to maintain jobs, benefits, and needed library services to communities.

### #5 PROMOTING INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL

That Council 2 leadership activity promote participation of its membership in their Central Labor Councils and provide online support such as links to Washington State Labor Council websites and events and a directory and contact information listing the Central Labor Council districts in order to encourage and facilitate such participation.

### #6 RESOLUTION OPPOSING INITIATIVE 517

That the Washington State Council of County and City Employees and its members encourage all Washingtonians to join the coalition opposing I-517 and campaign actively for the defeat of I-517.

### #7 NEW MEMBERS

That WSCCE highly encourages that Locals designate a member to attend the orientation sessions to introduce the Union as well as distribute the new member kits.

### #8 RETIREES, EXPANDED HEALTH CARE OPTION

Whereas the lack of affordable health care plans cause many members to continue working past their retirement years, that Council 2 actively pursue options that provide alternatives for retired public employees.

### #9 SUPPORT FOR FULL TIME, BENEFITTED POSITIONS

That Council 2 will actively and assertively press employers to fill and maintain full time, benefitted positions and aggressively resist attempts to supplant the regular work force with part time, temporary, non-benefitted employees and/or volunteers.

### #10 STOP "RIGHT TO WORK" (FOR LESS)

Council 2 and its affiliates must hold all local, state and federal candidates and office holders accountable and demand they oppose "Right to Work" in Washington State.

### #11 THE NEED FOR COURTHOUSE SECURITY

Council 2 will fight to ensure that all courthouses in the State of Washington will have security personnel and screening equipment.

### #12 IN SUPPORT OF YOUNGER WORKERS

That Council 2 will develop a robust program to send active, eligible members from locals to the biennial Next Wave conference to observe and participate at all levels of our union.

### #13 IN HONOR OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE REMEMBERING SANDY HOOK SCHOOL SHOOTING

That Council 2 set aside a moment of silence in memorial of such tragedy.

### #14 — Omitted

### #15 RECOGNITION OF CITY OF SEATTLE, CITY OF FERNDALE AND CITY OF SPOKANE FOR SUPPORT OF LIBRARY WORKERS

Whereas the Cities of Seattle, Ferndale and Spokane ... passed a levy to support libraries and restored services, Council 2 recognizes the citizens of Seattle, Ferndale and Spokane and applauds their forward thinking.

### #16 REPEAL THE TAFT-HARTLEY ACT

That Council 2 advocate for an immediate repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act; and for the passage of both state and federal legislation to enhance employees' fundamental human right to form a union in their workplace.

### #17 EYMAN'S SUPER MAJORITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE

That Council 2 and all its affiliates actively oppose any efforts to require this undemocratic two-thirds super majority in all its jurisdictions.

### #18 END THE PREFUNDING OF RETIREE BENEFITS IN USPS

That Council 2 shall encourage all delegates to this Convention to join in and help our brothers and sisters in the American Postal Workers Union by signing the Petition to "End the Prefunding of Retiree Benefits in USPS" at <https://tinyurl.com/cvoay7a> and that all Local Unions represented at this convention share this information with their members back home.

### #19 UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

The Washington State Council of County and City Employees hereby proclaim their support for universal health care,

which would ensure access to quality and affordable health care for every American citizen without the risk of losing their home or entire life savings for health reasons beyond their control.

### #20 LIBRARY SAFETY

That Council 2 will continue to identify all responsible public agencies and strongly advocate for maintaining appropriate minimum staffing levels and safety and security measures in all community libraries.

### #21 ASSAULT ON PUBLIC EMPLOYEES BENEFITS

Whereas, the events in Wisconsin and Ohio and elsewhere around the nation are a coordinated assault on public employees designed to strip fellow workers of representation and benefits, to join our fellow colleagues and working men and women nationwide to fight against this assault on Public Employees in coordination with the union leadership's action strategy.

### #22 CIVIL SERVICE

That Council 2 assists Cities and Counties under attack in their fight to retain Civil Service protection.

### #23 SAVE OUR PENSIONS

That Council 2 utilize its support for organizations such as the Economic Opportunity Institute to continue to publish the true facts behind our pension plan; and that Council 2 send a letter of support to Washington State Treasurer Jim McIntire for his efforts in debunking the myths being spread by the media.

### #24 APPRECIATION FOR THE HOST LOCALS

That the assembled delegates of the 51st Council 2 Convention applaud the members of District 8 and their respective committee members.

COUNCIL 2 EXECUTIVE BOARD		
OFFICERS		
<p><b>Chris Dugovich</b>, President/Executive Director  <b>Ron Fredin</b>, Vice-President <b>Kathleen Etheredge</b>, Secretary/Treasurer</p>		
<p><b>DISTRICT ONE</b>  <b>Michael Rainey</b>, Local 109 (Snohomish County)  <b>Lee Lehman</b>, Local 1849 (San Juan County)  <b>Caredio Duffy</b>, Local 1811-A (Alderwood Water District)  <b>Patty Goins</b>, Local 1811-CA, (Snohomish County)</p>	<p><b>DISTRICT TWO</b>  <b>Cindy Richardson</b>, Local 1857 (King County Library System)  <b>Melissa Sprague</b>, Local 2084-SC, King County Superior Court  <b>Pat Miller</b>, Local 2170 (City of Renton)  <b>Cher Ravagni</b>, Local 2083, Seattle Public Library</p>	<p><b>DISTRICT THREE</b>  <b>Patti Cox</b>, Local 3787 (Pierce County Library District)  <b>Wayne Withrow</b>, Local 120 (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department)</p>
<p><b>DISTRICT FOUR</b>  <b>Mark Sigler</b>, Local 275 (Grays Harbor County)  <b>Terri Prather</b>, Local 618, Thurston County</p>	<p><b>DISTRICT FIVE</b>  <b>Nicole Snider</b>, Local 307-CO (Clark County)  <b>Tracy Ross</b>, Local 307-VC (City of Vancouver)</p>	<p><b>DISTRICT SIX</b>  <b>Mike Haider</b>, Local 1122 (City of Yakima)  <b>Sherry Bingham</b>, Local 874-HC (Benton County)</p>
<p><b>DISTRICT SEVEN</b>  <b>Allen Hill</b>, Local 1191 (Walla Walla County)  <b>Pam Fitzgerald</b>, Local 1191-W (City of Walla Walla)</p>	<p><b>DISTRICT EIGHT</b>  <b>Dave Hanshaw</b>, Local 270 (City of Spokane)  <b>Tom Trarough</b>, Local 492-CS (Spokane County)  <b>Rebekah Johnson</b>, Local 1553 (Spokane County)</p>	<p><b>DISTRICT NINE</b>  <b>Robin Ricks</b>, Local 433 (City of Coeur d'Alene)</p>

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tainly will go after our pensions.  
 “If that happens, you will see a strong move to come after your pensions at the state level, particularly for those members who come after you.”

“You need to be working on those issues. Make sure they understand that this is important to you.”

Council 2 handles about 300 arbitration cases a year, Dugovich said.

The union does a lot when it comes to scholarships, he said.

Council 2 gave away \$86,000 in scholarships across the state last year and has given more than \$500,000 in the last seven years.

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the Women’s Action Committee Breakfast during the convention, her good friend and fellow union leader Sherry Bingman, Secretary/Treasurer of Local 874-HC (Benton County), quoted from a note that Travis had given her to be read at the ceremony. It said, simply: “We don’t work for me, but work for we when dealing with management.”

That note—which Bingman also read at the general session of the convention—pretty well sums up Travis’s approach to the union to which she has devoted so many hours and so much time away from family over the years (she says her husband and children were really understanding).

“I wanted to make sure everybody was able to be treated fairly,” she says. “I was never out for myself. It was for the good of the people and not just for me.”

Travis demonstrated this approach over the three decades during which she served several terms as vice-president and president of Local 874-H, having also been elected to the local’s executive board and on the state executive board.

Travis attributes her approach to the “middle-child syndrome.” “Because I am a middle child, I grew up to be a peacemaker,” she adds.

As an example of her approach, Travis says when she looked at pay scales and realized that those who had worked longer earned more, she said “Yay.” She was pleased for them. “I was never out for myself.”

Her drive to be fair was tested when the Great Recession forced management to seek concessions from the union.

“We would vote to defer pay raises for ourselves in order to prevent some of our members being laid off,” she explains.

“That seems fair; I would rather see other people being able to keep their job or even to keep the hospital open than insist that I should get my full pay.

“I am a kind-hearted person.

“It was more about my community and everybody else than me.”

Says Council 2 Staff Representative Kevin Dougherty, who represents the area in which Prosser falls, “Carol has always impressed me with her involvement in union activities and her leadership.

“As a local president, she was fearless with management.

“She understood her role and always went to bat for the people she worked with.”

# Public sector pension plans at risk

## How retirement plans compare

**Defined benefit** (the traditional pension plan): You know how much you will receive when you retire as your benefit is based on a formula. You don’t have to worry about how it is invested. Enough money has been set aside to pay your pension until you die.

**Defined contribution** (such as 401(k) plans): You don’t know how much money you will receive when you retire. The only aspect that is defined is your contribution—the amount you put into it. You choose how you will invest that money and you withdraw from it when you retire.

Risks are that the market might crash and that you might outlive the lump sum. Also, you risk outliving the lump sum.

## Council 2 pensions safe — for now

The threat to Council 2 pension plans was averted. That’s the good news from the lengthy Washington state legislative session, which ended in early July. “We worked hard to make sure that none of the harmful pension bills were included as part of the final budget,” says Council 2 Deputy Director Pat Thompson.

“We can thank Governor Jay Inslee for his leadership on this issue. We also want to thank our members who took the time to call their legislators.”

Were the threat not averted, union members faced the creation of a plan for a 100 percent defined contribution plan to replace the existing defined benefit plan.

Defined benefit plans, which have all but disappeared from the private sector, are under attack in the public sector, says AFSCME Collective Bargaining Director Steve Kreisberg.

“It is difficult to fight against the onslaught, but we will do so because this is one of the best things about public sector employment.”

Kreisberg, who addressed a workshop during the June convention, said Council 2 has been a leader in the fight to retain public employees’ pensions. Council 2 Deputy Director Pat Thompson sits on the board of directors of the Select Committee on Pension Policy. Also, the Economic Opportunity Institute has been working with Council 2 for years.

Gov. Jay Inslee has no interest in moving to defined contribution plans, but “you never know what could happen,” Kreisberg added.

Among the moves being mooted by the authorities is to have new employees start with a defined contribution plan, rather than a pension.

But such a move will still have a big impact on existing employees, Kreisberg explained.

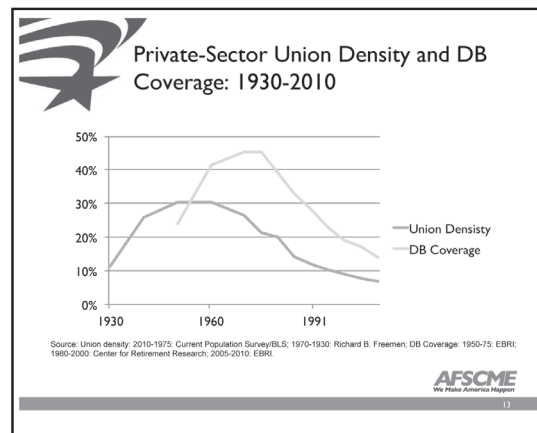
The reason: The new employees would not be paying into the pension system, reducing the funds available to fund pensions.

“At some point, your fund will be closed and the amount available to pay the pensions reduced.”

Defined benefit coverage has fallen at the same rate as union membership has declined, Kreisberg added (see accompanying graph).

“Where we have unions, we have pensions, where we don’t, we don’t.”

The result is leading to impoverishment in retirement.



## Council 2 adds 109 new members

Council 2 has added 109 new members this year. Details:

- About 35 **City of Seattle prosecuting attorneys** joined the union in mid-March.

Until joining the union they were an employee association represented by a private attorney. “For nearly two years they were in negotiations that were going nowhere, so they felt the time had come to affiliate with a union,” explains Director of Organizing Bill Keenan.

The vote to join Council 2 was nearly unanimous. “It is an honor that this esteemed group has joined Council 2,” Keenan adds.

- In June, the 33 workers who form **Clark County Facilities Maintenance Employees** voted to join Council 2. The employees maintain all the mechanical operations of the county buildings and include carpenters, electricians and boiler operators.

“Job security was the biggest issue for them,” Keenan says. “They were particularly concerned about coverage and contracting out of their work.”

- All 23 **Kitsap County Juvenile Probation Officers** voted on June 27 to join Council 2.

“They felt they needed to have a stronger voice in their working conditions,” Keenan says.

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dle class, and the American dream.”

AFSCME is having some victories,” Saunders continued. “In Philadelphia, the mayor was going to ignore the bargaining process and force a settlement down our throats.

“The State Supreme Court told him to go back to the negotiating table. That was a victory because we stood together and made our voices heard.

“In Puerto Rico corrections officers had not been getting the overtime they deserved. Our political machinery went to work. We won an award for \$35 million for back pay.”

Council 2 is doing the right thing, Saunders said.

“You have organized 500 new members in Council 2 since 2010. All of us are stronger for that.”

“When they knock us down we

have to get up and stick up for our families and our country. We do it because we must. Our services hold our nation together.

“If we walk together in solidarity we will lift up working families in and outside the unions.”

To rousing applause and a standing ovation from delegates, Saunders declared: “When AFSCME fights, AFSCME wins.”

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# Seen at the convention



**All in a weekend:** Delegates meet in session, listen intently, applaud a speaker, attend one of several workshops, enjoy a reception and pose for a picture.



# Heard at the convention



**W**e have a choice every day about what we are going to do and that choice has a tremendous impact. Your choice makes a difference in your families, in your union, in your offices, in your communities.

You are never too old to do something you were born to do and what you love to do.

As Mother Teresa said, We do not have to do great things, only small things with great love.

— State Supreme Court Justice Mary Fairhurst



**W**hen I read that public employees are overpaid, don't work hard or are not really needed, I get pretty upset. I am sick and tired of public employees being demonized and attacked just for doing their job for the people of this country.

You have a voice you can use to stop what's going on: your vote. Are you willing to vote to make sure working families get a family wage? Are you ready to go to work?

— U.S. Congressman Denny Heck



**O**ur middle class is under siege. We have seen what happened in Wisconsin and Michigan.

There is a concerted effort in this country to denigrate our public workers and especially the systems (unions and civil service) that protect them. I will not be a bystander to the destruction of the city and the people that have inspired me throughout my life.

You have many good friends out there!

— Spokane City Council President Ben Stuckart