

# The Professionals Guild of Ohio



## PGO UNION NEWS

**October 2010**

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### **High Stakes Elections**

*By Chauncey Mason,  
PGO Executive Director*

What season is marked by the leaves changing colors, brisk mornings and evenings bracketing bright sunny days, and politicians kissing babies and other things? Fall, you say? Well actually, it's the season within a season I call "the Silly Season." You know it's the Silly Season when obnoxious political commercials take over our televisions and radios.

While we may grow weary of the constant barrage of propaganda, we must not lose sight of the very important issues underlying November's elections. Jobs, health care, fair taxes, pensions, Social Security, corporate accountability and consumer protection all hang in the balance. Union members must closely scrutinize a candidate's positions and vote for the ones supporting issues that help working people.

Promises to cut taxes that will primarily benefit the richest in our communities, while simultaneously eliminating public jobs through privatization and slashing services to the poor and elderly is a recipe for disaster in an economy teetering on the brink of a full-blown depression. You should vote against any politi-

cian that panders to personal greed at the expense of the greater good!

Last but not least, vote to support your schools, your social service agencies and your local governments. Strong public institutions create strong communities, which in turn make our country strong.

Make your voice heard... vote!  
While you're at it, amplify your voice by encouraging your neighbors, family members and friends to vote. The stakes are too high to sit this one out!

### **PGO CBA Settlements**

2010 may be a record-breaking year for PGO contract negotiations. In the past, negotiations have been more evenly distributed with usually no more than a third of PGO councils having negotiations in any given year. This year, 13 of PGO's 17 councils have been at the bargaining table.

There is little doubt that the troubled economy is the primary reason for the upsurge in bargaining. Multi-year contract settlements have been difficult to achieve in the last two years and when we have been able to close on one, it usually has economic reopeners for the second or third years. All of this adds up to a lot of work for PGO officers and staff.

The good news is that we've been getting settlements in many of our councils. The bad news is that the 2010 record may be broken in 2011 if the economy doesn't improve soon.

The following is a summary of recent PGO council negotiation settlements.

#### **PGO Council 4**

The PGO members working at the Hamilton County Educational Service Center successfully resolved their 3rd year wage reopener for 2010-2011. After agreeing to a wage freeze for 2009-2010, the council members will now receive a 1 percent increase effective July 1, 2010. Just as important as the raise, the members successfully maintained their insurance. Council president *Debbie Clyde*, *Terri Densford*, and PGO field representative *Amelia Woodward* represented the Union during these negotiations.

#### **PGO Council 13**

PGO members in the Lucas County Children Services and the Lucas County Commissioners recently approved the tentative agreement to resolve negotiations for a second year economic reopener.

Among other things, the agreement includes a 2 percent wage increase for employees at the top of their wage schedules and a 3 percent step for employees eligible to receive a step increase within their wage schedules.

Additionally, pursuant to the SERB fact-finder recommendations that resolved negotiations last year, the parties negotiated and agreed to a major restructuring of the child welfare caseworker (CWCs) career ladder at the agency.

The new career ladder will have 4 levels with different pay ranges for the CWC 3 classification. Level A is the entry level for CWCs with no experience. After 1 year of experience and a competent rating on the annual evaluation, Level A CWCs will move to Level B and a pay range that is 4 percent greater than at Level A.

CWCs with 4-years experience, or 2-years with an MSW degree, and LSW or LPC certification will advance to Level C. Level C has a pay range that is 4 percent higher than Level B.

CWCs with at least 7-years of experience that meet the other requirements of Level C will qualify to move to Level D. Level D's pay range is 8 percent higher than Level B's.

The final pieces of the career ladder restructuring included the creation of a new caseworker classification to replace the CWC 2 classification and the creation of a new CWC 4 classification. The CWC 4 classification will require a minimum of 10-years of CWC experience, an MSW and LISW or LISW-S certification.

Members of the PGO bargaining team included president *Joe DeStazio*, *Lynn Pinkleman*, *Dave Rudebock*, *Becky Davenport*, *Melinda Meehan*, *Nancy Reineke*, *Vonda Williams*, AFSCME regional director *Sally Powless* and PGO executive director *Chauncey Mason*.

#### **PGO Council 19**

PGO members in Montgomery County's Northridge Local School District's transportation department reached agreement on and approved a new 3-year contract effective August 1, 2010.

The new contract will provide general wage increases of 1.5 percent in the first year, 1.5 percent in the second, 2011-12 school-year and 1.95 percent in the third and final 2012-13 school-year. In addition to the general increase, employees that have not reached the top of their pay ranges will receive anywhere from an additional 2 to 4 percent step increase.

On the give side of the equation, PGO members agreed to concessions in their health insurance benefits that include, among other things, new \$100 single/\$200 family deductibles, increases in out-of-pocket annual maximum payments from \$650 to \$1,000 for single coverage and \$1,300 to \$2,000 for family coverage, and a new \$250 co-pay for in-patient hospital services.

PGO Council 19 bargaining team members included president *David Davis*, *Cathy Larson*, *Linda Strader*, *Jeff Hatton*, PGO field representative *Amelia Woodward* and PGO executive director *Chauncey Mason*.

**Voice of a PGO Union Leader**

*By Amelia Woodward, Esq., PGO Field Representative*

Julie Dillon, President of PGO Council 16, is our featured union leader this month. Julie is a first year council president and is leading the council during successor contract negotiations at the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Julie, a service and support administrator, has worked at the BDD for over thirteen years. She works with individuals at the DD in assessing and attaining their personal needs and goals.

**What other jobs have you had before you started working at Athens BDD?**

*I currently work as a service and support administrator (SSA) with the Athens County Board of DD. Prior to this position, I worked as a plan coordinator with this county board in the adult services program. Before coming to Athens in 1997, I was employed by the Meigs County Board of DD as a habilitation coordinator. Prior to that I was working towards a Masters Degree in Family Studies at Ohio University.*

**What does the Athens BDD do and what is your favorite part about working there?**

*Since 1957, the Athens County Board of DD has been providing individuals with developmental disabilities opportunities to learn, grow, and become contributing and valuable citizens of their communities. The county board provides services such as assessing individuals' needs and creating individual plans. In addition to service and support administration, the county board offers education, employment, life skills training, recreation, transportation, residential support, and service coordination.*

*My favorite part of being an employee with the Athens County Board of DD is the hope that I am making a difference in the lives of the individuals served by the county board. The SSA has a huge responsibility in serving as the single point of accountability for individuals receiving services and this is a responsibility that we all (me and my fellow SSAs) take very seriously.*

**As council president, what struggles are you faced with on a day to day basis?**

*Being a smaller council, I'm fortunate that I don't face a lot of adversity on a day-to-day basis. But, this is the year that our contract is renegotiated, and that presents, I'm sure, the same problems all council presidents face: reaching that ever elusive happy medium between labor and management. We are utilizing an Interest Based Bargaining approach this time around which is proving to be not only interesting but educational as well.*



**Julie Dillon, PGO Council 16 President**

**What would you tell someone who is not a union member about why they should be in a union?**

*There is strength in numbers and it is good to have the larger "parent" organization to look to for guidance and support in difficult situations.*

**What are the biggest advantages to union membership in your opinion?**

*Having that strength in numbers mentioned earlier and having available a knowledgeable representative that can support a local council to develop a contract that protects its members as well as secure the future of the union.*

**How can the PGO improve in helping you in your role as council president?**

*I, personally, would find it helpful to have regularly scheduled meetings with our PGO representative so that all our members have the opportunity to become familiar with that person rather than just have interaction with them when there is a crisis situation happening.*

**What activities are you involved in outside of the Union and your job?**

*I devote a great deal of time to my pets, my fur-kids, if you will. I also travel between two homes, one in southern Ohio and one in central Ohio. This fall I will be spending as many Saturdays as possible watching my nephew play football for Youngstown State University as this is his senior year.*



**PGO Supports Social Service Levy Campaign**

Over the years, PGO has contributed thousands of dollars to support human services levy campaigns in counties where PGO members live and work. Continuing this tradition, PGO has recently donated \$1,000 to support the Montgomery County Human Services Levy campaign.

The money generated by this levy supports Montgomery County Children Services and Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities. PGO represents children services workers at the Montgomery County Department of Jobs and Family Services (PGO Council 12) and transportation workers at the Montgomery BDD (PGO Council 20).

PGO has also donated \$200 to support the campaign for the Athens County BDD levy (PGO Council 16) and is processing a recent request for financial support from the Guernsey County Children Services Board (PGO Council 8) for its upcoming ballot issue.

**Poverty Grows in US**

Last year, 43.6 million people were living on family incomes less than \$21,954, the largest number ever to fall below the official poverty line since the government began keeping track 50 years ago. The percentage of Americans considered poor was 14.3 percent—1 out of 7—the third year in a row that it's climbed. Children are the worst off, with more than 1 out of 5 under 18 years old living in poverty.

Source: *Labor Notes* October 2010.

*PGO officers presented a \$500 check for the Montgomery County Levy Campaign to Montgomery County Job and Family Services director, **Gayle Bullard** at the September PGO membership meeting. Pictured from left to right is **Jane Hay**, Council 12 secretary, **Gayle Bullard**, **Jenny Gardner**, Council 12 vice president and PGO treasurer, **Kay Cox**, PGO president, **Eric Kanthak**, Council 12 president and PGO vice president, and **Julie Pennington**, Council 12 treasurer.*

**Ohio Minimum Wage Increase**

Ohio's minimum wage will increase by 10 cents to \$7.40 an hour effective January 1, 2011. This increase is part of a constitutional amendment voters approved in 2006 that requires the minimum wage to increase each year at the rate of inflation.

The \$7.40 rate applies to workers 16 and older who don't get tips. The wage for tipped employees will be \$3.70 per hour, a 5 cent increase.

Employers that gross more than \$271,000 annually are required to pay the Ohio minimum wage. Employees at smaller companies, and for 14 and 15-year old workers, must be paid the federal minimum wage, which is currently \$7.25 per hour. The current federal minimum wage rate was set in 2009.



**"I met with the personnel people and we agreed that the cheapest way to fix all of our problems is chocolate."**