



JANUARY 2024 | @AFGELOCAL618 | 317-532-1926



Happy New Years

Who's ready for 2024?

It feels like every year time goes by faster and faster.

As we begin a New Year we want to take a moment to reflect on things we accomplished in 2023 as a local and as a part of AFGE.

We have seen our local membership numbers grow at a pretty fast pace, going from 99 members at the end of 2022 to 185 at the end of 2023.

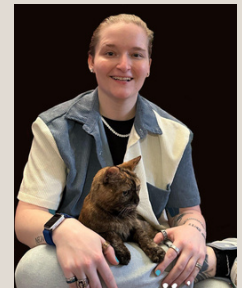
This is a great thing because our strength in negotiations and our voice when we need to stand up for what is fair and just comes from the number of members we have.

We still have a long way to go as we build this local into a powerful force against the injustices we face, but we are a lot better off than we have ever been in the past.

For those who have been around for a while, you know that we as a local have not been present or active in the past to the level we have needed to be and many people have taken the stance of "The union has never done anything for the workforce" so why should I join and pay dues? The answer is...

Since I took over as President at the end of 2021, I have been trying to change all of that and the misconception of what the union is about.

Later in the newsletter we will cover some of the things the local has accomplished and some of the things we are working on for the future.



Member of the month:
Karen Samulski: Steward SBN

Hey everyone! Karen Samulski here, but please, call me Smalls. I'm definitely not a Karen and if I had a dollar for every time I've heard the meme, I'd have a hefty retirement fund saved up. J

I have been an officer with TSA at South Bend International for almost 8 years, and Union Steward going on about a year.

I am excited to be able to help my fellow officers and have their support with my efforts for correct workplace practices. It has always been extremely important to me to be able to feel heard, and make sure others are also heard. I have a very passionate personality and refuse to give up and accept nothing less than fairness and equality.

On any normal day you can find me taking country cruises in the Jeep with Giji, *Pictured* Drawing on the iPad, painting around the house, or playing video games with my friends while surrounded by my five cats.... yes, five.

I have fully embraced my title of cat lady, but the "crazy" part is still up for debate.

I can't wait to see what 2024 has to offer, and I can only hope to grow as a Steward, Officer and person overall.

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WE ARE MAKING A CHANGE

Collective Bargaining Agreement Update

Council 100 bargaining committee has been working around the clock to negotiate a CBA that will benefit the work force and open up a lot of new rights that we have not had before.

We are in the home stretch and should be wrapping up negotiations soon. The next step will be to put the new CBA out to the entire workforce to be voted on, so be on the look out for when that takes place (We will make sure to inform everyone)

After the CBA is passed by the workforce, it will go to be ratified (basically signed and made legal

How has the Union Helped?

I am working on getting some testimonials from members on how the union has helped them whether it be representation or the use of benefits.

So be on the lookout for this section to have that information as we get members to share their stories.

If you would like to have your testimony featured in the newsletter please email it to afgelocal618@outlook.com

What I can tell you is that we have successfully represented a number of paid and non-paid members with the results being in the officers favor.

As well as we have had members approach us with personal issues that we were able to help them find benefits that reduce overall cost and helped to take some stress off the situation.

Joining the Union is more than just protecting your job. It adds your voice to help battle workplace issues both locally and nation wide.

It unlocks benefits only available to paid members, and provides strength to your local that allows for us to have the ability to fight for what is right and just.

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WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2023

Locally

With the amazing team we currently have in place, we have gone toe to toe with management on a lot of tough issues this year and have represented a number of officers in disciplinary cases where we have won the majority of them, either getting them reduced down to a reasonable and acceptable outcome, or dropped entirely.

We will continue to fight for all officers rights and ensure that we have a fair work environment

This however cannot be accomplished without the support of paying members that help equip us with the training we need to fight these fights. Training is not cheap but is needed to do what we do.

Our voices are stronger when we unit together, the more paid members we have, the more we will be able to accomplished. Even if you think you will never need representation, the investment into your local is invaluable.

AFGE Nationally

Many might not know that the cost of living increase is a direct result of negotiations done by AFGE.

Without them stepping in and negotiating on our behalf, we would be at the mercy of the government and would be lucky to get even a 1% increase. This year we will be receiving a 5.2% increase as a result of the work AFGE has done for us, and are still fighting to get more.

Council 100 members have been tirelessly negotiating a new CBA as well as fighting to introduce multiple bills to help fund the TSA so that we not longer have to worry about shutdowns, and we can get paid what we deserve. As well as TITLE 5 rights that will afford us the same benefits and representation that every other agency in the federal government gets.



WHATS THE PLAN FOR 2024

Locally

With the new CBA approaching we will need to get equipped to handle the new articles we have never had the opportunity to have a say in before, this will require a lot of training both in person and virtually.

We will be continuing our EEO training throughout the year that will afford us the opportunity to take on and represent officers who need to file EEO cases that would normally get turned down due to not having enough lawyers within AFGE to handle every case.

We will continue to increase our knowledge and skill levels in all aspects of representation such as MSPB and arbitration so that you have the best outcome possible if and when you may need representation.

We also plan on expanding our knowledge of the FMLA process as well as Workers Compensation so that we are able to assist in those areas as well.

It has been implied that local presidents will now have the ability to negotiate things on the local level that would have been otherwise just been blanketed across the entire agency. This will open up the ability for us to flex our voices and strength even more. So now is the time when we need to increase our membership so that we increase our voice and strength.

AFGE Nationally

As we ratify the new CBA, the fight is nowhere near over. AFGE will continue to put pressure on Congress to give us equal rights and pay that we deserve as well.

Council 100 will continue to equip the locals with the information and training we need to effectively support all of our officers to ensure you get the best representation and support you need to perform your duties.



WEINGARTEN: THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

When do employees have a right to representation under Weingarten?

If you have a reasonable belief that the answers you give might result in your being disciplined, you have a right to union representation during the meeting. Employees are entitled to Weingarten rights in the following situations:

"Investigatory interviews," in which the supervisor is seeking to elicit facts, to have the employee explain his or her conduct, to discover the employee's "side of the story" or to obtain admissions or other evidence.

A supervisor's request for a written statement or written answers to interrogatories about an incident or accident in which the employee's own conduct may be at issue.

A meeting or discussion in which the employer either has not yet decided whether to impose discipline or is seeking information to support that decision.

Employees are not entitled to Weingarten rights in the following situations:

When the meeting or discussion is merely for the purpose of conveying work instructions, training or needed corrections.

When the purpose of the meeting is simply to inform the employee about a disciplinary decision that has already been made and no information is sought from the employee.

When the employer has clearly and overtly assured the employee prior to the interview that no discipline or adverse consequences will result from the interview, provided the employer keeps that promise.

When, after the employer notifies the employee that he or she is being disciplined, the employee initiates further discussion.