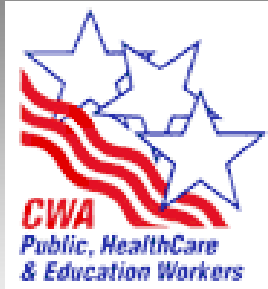


Communications Workers of America



Local 4501 Communicator

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Local 4501 Communicator

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President Richard Murráy contributes a quarterly message and oversight
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Cynthia Stewart cstewart@cwa4501.org writes political and voter empowerment articles, and more

WHAT THE SAM HILL IS GOING ON IN YOUR AREA? Tell us

Bleak Winters Ahead For Us?



President Murráy

Back in ðthe good old daysö before the Collective Bargaining Act was passed in Ohio, Ohio State University employees who had maxed out on their steps re-

lied entirely on the ðgenerosityö of Ohio's politicians. The Communications Workers of America Local 4501 could not negotiate wages for its members back then, nor could we strike. The same was true for all state agencies.

Three years might go by with nothing but a longevity raise each year which, after the initial longevity raise, was pennies on the hour. Employees would

spend entire gubernatorial terms waiting for a sympathetic governor to get into office so they could start catching up with inflation.

Why bring up this ðancientö history now? Governor elect John Kasich is already challenging the binding arbitration portion of the Collective Bargaining Act, justifying it by saying that many municipalities may suffer. We all know that binding arbitration cuts both ways, but that it is an effective and semi-fair way of ending stalemates. By eliminating arbitration, he wants to make sure that the only

ones who ðmay sufferö are you.

I feel I must reiterate what I said in the last newsletter. When conservatives say they are against government, they don't mean they are against themselves, they mean they are against you. So you can assume that if you work at The Ohio State University, the Ohio Secretary of State's Office, Pickaway County Jobs and Family Services or Franklin County Veteran's Services, you are the "government" that Governor-elect Kasich is against.

I believe that this threat against this one leg of Ohio's Collective Bargaining Law is Governor-elect Kasich's way of testing the waters to see what labor will do to stop him from

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Be a tooth in the plow, not ice on the road

Future

totally gutting the act. What progressives giveth, the conservatives taketh away. So it has been with state workers and so it shall be. He gains strength by making us weak. and gutting the Collective Bargaining Act is his first great step in that direction.

All I can *say* is I hope you voted, because if you did, you did your job. And if you did not, you did some-one else's job. And all I can *do* is hope you enjoy a challenge and are willing to stand up and fight for the next four years, because we have some potentially bleak winters ahead of us. And, as we look to our future, our past is trying to overtake us.

On October 25, while you napped or walked your dog or unintentionally missed it, some of our best and most popular political figures stood up to deliver last minute messages. As we in the audience snacked on sumptuous meat balls and vegetables, we were informed and entertained by, from left to right/top to bottom: Secretary of State Candidate Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, **State Senate Candidate Charleta Tavares**, Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy, Lt. Governor Lee Fisher, candidate for U.S. Senate, **Franklin County Commissioner Marilyn Brown**, Common Pleas Judge Candidate Jamie Campbell, **State Representative Ted Celeste**, Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Eric Brown, and Ohio Auditor Candidate David Pepper and many others. Those in red were winners in their races.

What You Missed



Breaking: Senate Republicans Block Debate, Kill Paycheck Fairness Act

Senate Republicans used the filibuster to kill the Paycheck Fairness Act that would have made sure that laws requiring equal pay for women are enforced and would have helped women in their claims for pay fairness.

GOPers unanimously refused to let the bill be debated and proceed to a "yes or no" vote on the Senate floor. That included Republican Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe (Maine) and Kay Bailey Hutchinson (Tex.), plus one Democrat, Ben Nelson (Neb.) (Alaska GOP Senator Lisa Murkowski did not vote.)

Today, 45 years after passage of the

Equal Pay Act, women still earn, on average, 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, the National Women's Law Center said. "In this difficult economy, in which nearly 40 percent of mothers are primary breadwinners, women cannot afford to have employers discounting their salaries," the center said.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would have given women the right to know what their male colleagues earn so that they'll also know whether they're experiencing discrimination. Without the Paycheck Fairness Act, an employer still can retaliate against or even fire an employee

who just wants to know what her co-workers are earning. Shades of Lilly Ledbetter. Ledbetter for two decades earned far less than men at Goodyear doing the same job, but was blocked from getting back pay by a Supreme Court decision that said she had no right to sue 20 years later, even though the discrimination was ongoing. In other words, she should have sued immediately, even though she didn't know she was being paid less than her male colleagues. The Lilly Ledbetter Act, which fixed this backward thinking, was the first legislation signed by President Obama.

Make sure to check out CWA's National Women's Committee webpage.

Why We Need to Reform the Senate Rules

All 42 Senate Republicans signed a letter to Majority Leader Harry Reid, announcing that they will continue to delay and filibuster every piece of Senate legislative business until they get their way on tax cuts and the federal budget.

The Obama administration and Democratic leaders supported tax cuts for 98 percent of American families of those making less than \$250,000 a year. But Republicans especially want a big tax cut for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans that will add \$700

billion to the budget. The Republican Senators also have specific demands on the appropriations bills that fund government operations; they're basically saying "our way or the highway." Just more of the same tactics that Senate Republicans have pursued throughout the 111th Congress, making debate and discussion impossible on issues important to working and middle class families. That's why Employee Free Choice, and a bill to end the tax break for companies that offshore jobs, as well as the Paycheck Fairness and

other important bills went nowhere. This strategy of "obstruct, then delay, then obstruct again" is all too obvious. That's why CWA and a broad coalition of organizations are pressing for crucial reform to these rules when Senators are sworn in for the 112th Congress. Specific principles call for an end to destructive secret holds, a reasonable opportunity for all Senators to express their views and a timely "yes or no" vote on every nomination and measure.

What's Going On in the Senate?

In the U.S. Senate, there are back room deals, secret holds, and filibuster rules that allow a handful of senators to stop the rest from making any progress. Senators don't even get to debate about really important legislation on the Senate floor, let alone vote, and no one is held accountable. But the rules can be changed by a majority vote at the start of the next Congress. Let's fix the Senate, now.

Next Page: What's Broken

What's Broken

The current Senate rules haven't been changed for decades. They just don't work in today's super-charged political climate. In past years, our nation was able to move forward on landmark legislation that put in place workers' rights, civil rights, retirement security for seniors and so much more. Today, we only see outrageous obstruction, like this:

SENATORS TAKING HOSTAGES

Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) recently placed a blanket hold on over 70 nominees from the Obama administration in an attempt to force the federal government to award a \$35 billion defense contract to Northrop Grumman in Alabama.

ONE SENATOR CONTROLLING THE ENTIRE SENATE

Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) refused to allow any legislation to move forward that his office had personally not cleared. Instead of voting against the legislation, Senator DeMint blocked any of his colleagues from being able to vote on legislation that did not receive his okay - effectively controlling the agenda for the entire Senate.

STALLING BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION

One senator stood in the way of a vote on a bipartisan food safety bill despite the recent salmonella outbreaks that have sickened thousands. Even though Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) Republican colleagues Senators Judd Gregg (R-NH), Mike Enzi (R-WY), and Richard Burr (R-NC) were co-sponsors of this important legislation, Coburn still objected to it receiving a vote. The House passed similar legislation in July of 2009.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES PREVENTED FROM DOING THEIR JOBS

For months, the National Labor Relations Board had just two members, because of holds and threatened filibusters on nominees to fill the remaining three seats. This further delayed and denied justice for thousands of workers who were illegally fired or mistreated by employers.

In this session of Congress, the House of Representatives has passed more than 400 bills. None of these has been debated in the Senate. It's time to change these broken Senate rules, which have put special interests above the public interest. Jack Lew's nomination to be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, a critically important position during these difficult fiscal times, was delayed for months by a hold placed by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) who wanted to protest an entirely unrelated matter - the Obama administration's moratorium on Gulf of Mexico deep water drilling.

Please call to encourage change. To reach Senate offices by phone, call the Congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Act Now to Help Pass Public Safety Bargaining Bill

CWAers nationwide are working hard to push the U.S. Senate to act on a measure giving public safety officers collective bargaining rights. Hundreds of phone calls and handwritten letters have been sent to Senators, pressing for a vote on the bill.

This is our last chance to see justice before the new Congress comes into power, and may be the only legislation that passes this year which will extend collective bar-

gaining rights for American workers, CWA Legislative Director Shane Larson said, commending activists in Virginia who have generated more than 400 phone calls and 200 handwritten letters to Democratic Senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner.

The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (S. 1611), would provide public safety officers with collective bargaining rights. More than half of the 22,000

members of the National Coalition of Public Safety Officers-CWA live in the 25 states that deny bargaining rights for public safety workers. The bill has bi-partisan support but has been held up by obstructionist tactics by some Republicans who want to delay and filibuster this measure and others.

There's still time to make a difference. To reach Senate offices by phone, call the Congressional switchboard at (202) 224-3121.