



# NETWORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF NURSES & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AFT, AFL-CIO



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# President's Podium

by Candice Owley, R.N.

## Vote as if your contract depends on it... because it does

By the time you receive this newsletter there will only be a few days left to vote and you will once again have been bombarded with mail and phone calls and all the negative TV ads money can buy. In fact, I heard there are actually no ad spots left to purchase in many media markets. How much of this communication matters is difficult to know, but what I do know is that member surveys have consistently told us that approximately 70% of our members want their union to provide information on political candidates. They want to know the positions candidates have taken on workplace issues. With that thought in mind, our union leadership interviews candidates, researches their views on our issues and then makes endorsements.

## Mistakes of the past

Two years ago we urged members to vote against Scott Walker for Governor. I reminded you that the public employees' right to have unions and to negotiate over pensions could turn on who was the next Governor, and that Medicaid and BadgerCare might come under attack. I never imagined I could be so right. But, many members thought these warnings seemed overblown and perhaps even alarmist. We now know I had, in fact, underestimated the terrible consequence of Walker as Governor and also that many of our members did vote for Walker.

I bring this past election up because I feel we are in the same spot with the current Presidential election. Governor Romney and V.P. candidate Paul Ryan came out in full public support of Walker's action to strip collective bargaining from public employees. Their party has called Walker a right wing rock star and featured him as a prime time speaker at their convention. Their party platform is anti-union, calling on all states to follow Walker's lead in both the public and private sector and bring an end to union bargaining in our country.

WFNHP is a union—it is your union. Romney and Ryan, and even Tommy Thompson, have as their stated goal the destruction of your rights and your union. We may disagree on issues of taxes and deficits, or even some social issues; but, at the end of the day, any politician who wants to destroy workers' rights and our union will never deserve our endorsement.

President Obama and Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin are clear, unashamed and outspoken supporters of union rights, including the right of public sector workers to have full bargaining rights. They have earned and deserve the support of all union members and their families. The standard of living of the middle

class was built by generations of union activists. If you enjoy rights such as overtime, paid vacation and sick leave, unemployment and worker's compensation, even pensions and health benefits, you should know that these things came about because

decades ago workers fought and, in some cases, died so you could have these benefits. Politicians have great power over the future of workers' rights and even the future of your union. But, you also have great power, and that is the power that comes with your vote.

## Vote for your rights

I know you may not like every position of President Obama and Congresswoman Baldwin, but there's no doubt about it—they have your back if you care about your union rights. When you go into the voting booth in a few days, remember you are voting for your own rights. I made this as clear as I could two years ago and, sadly, my predictions came true. So, I am taking one more shot at this and telling you a vote for Romney is absolutely the same as a vote for Walker. In fact, it sends a message that you agree with the action Scott Walker took against unions. I know some members may very well agree and are sorry they have a union contract, but I also know hundreds of members that wish everyday they could turn back the clock and once again have the right to bargain.

## In your hands

We have worked hard to give you accurate information. There is very clear and real difference between these candidates and your vote is your voice. Do not let it be silent. The election is now, and the future is once again in your hands.

## What you can do

- ♥ **VOTE**—To find your polling place go to: <https://myvote.wi.gov>, or call the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board at 608-266-8005. Stay informed and, most importantly, get out and **VOTE on Tuesday, November 6th**, and encourage your family and friends to vote as well.



## Your Voice, Your Vote

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by Jamie Lucas, Organizer

It seems like it never left, but election season is once again in full swing here in Wisconsin. That means debates, television ads, piles of mail, and lots of phone calls. Hopefully, you've also noticed that some of those phone calls came from your union office, with the friendly voice of an actual, live human and fellow member on the other end of the line.

WFNHP members have been working the phones since September 20th to discover what's most important to our union in this election. Over 2,000 phone calls have been made throughout our membership, and there is one concern that has dominated these conversations—healthcare.

Overwhelmingly, you have said that we need to vote to preserve Medicare for our retirees and our parents; that we need to vote so that children with pre-existing conditions will not be turned away by insurance companies who celebrate profit before life, because they cost “too much” to treat; and, that we need to vote to keep BadgerCare intact because Wisconsin has always been ahead of the country in providing care to those in need. It is clear that members of this union truly value the work they do.

These conversations reflect only a small portion of the work that needs to be done before Election Day. The candidates we send to office will hear our voices and values at the ballot box, but only if we vote.

There are also two candidates who have the clear-cut support of our membership: President Obama and Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin. What our volunteers have heard on the phones is that Paul Ryan's plan to change Medicare and Medicaid is too risky and unclear, while Obama has made expanding access to healthcare a trademark of his first four years. Similarly, Tommy Thompson has changed since his days as Governor. His recent remarks of, “Who better than me to do away with Medicaid and Medicare?” have highlighted his transformation. Tammy Baldwin has been a strong voice in Congress for working families, and will bring that strength and fight to the Senate.

Early voting is already underway and will run until the close of business on Monday, November 2nd. Contact your municipal clerk for the hours in your community. If you're planning on voting on Election Day, polls will be open from 7am until 8pm on November 6th.

As you fill out your ballot this year, remember what's most important to you. If you're one of the many members who want to preserve Medicare and expand access to healthcare, let your vote carry your voice.

## Act 10 Declared Illegal

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On Friday, September 14, 2012 Circuit Court Judge Juan Colas declared much of Act 10 to be unconstitutional. In his ruling he said the limits placed on bargaining rights for city, county and school employees violated the Constitution, along with the requirement for yearly elections and the ban on using payroll deduction for dues. Judge Colas's ruling is the second that declared parts of Act 10, the law that effectively ended the right to bargain for thousands of Wisconsin public employees, unconstitutional. Early this year Judge Connelly ruled the aspects of the law regarding annual elections and the ban on dues deduction also illegal, but this ruling goes much further by restoring full bargaining rights to municipal and school employees only.

### Request to bargain

In effect, this ruling made it once again legal to bargain over all wages, benefits, hours of work and working conditions as public employee unions have done for over 40 years. In response to the new ruling, our state organization sent a letter to all the public employers that have WFNHP locals and requested that we immediately return to the bargaining table. To date, the only positive responses have been from the City of Sheboygan and Milwaukee County. While these employers have not yet agreed to bargain, they are at least consulting with their elected officials to get direction. The other employers, Sheboygan, Dodge, Columbia, Kenosha, Racine and Wood counties, rejected the offer to bargain saying they will wait until the ruling on the law is settled.

At this point the Colas ruling has been sent to the Appeals Court and the first hearing is late in November. The Attorney General has also asked that Judge Colas place a hold on his decision until the Appeals Court makes a ruling. He did not agree, therefore, it is still legal to bargain, as it was before Act 10 was passed.

### Bargaining rights may hang on one election

The official opinion is that the case may very well end up at the State Supreme Court early next year. As it happens, one of the conservative Supreme Court Justices is also up for election early in 2013; therefore, that election could once again determine whether Wisconsin's public employees have the right to bargain.

### Special meeting for public sector local leaders

For now the locals will continue to advocate preventing negative changes in their wages, hours or working conditions. On November 10<sup>th</sup> WFNHP will hold a special meeting for leaders of these locals to discuss the current legal situation and strategies for the future of their unions. No matter what the court rules, it is critical that public sector leaders and their members come to realize the real power of their union is not just in a good contract; but, is equally about members standing in solidarity to fight for what they believe in.

**GETTING  
OUT  
THE  
VOTE**



**ABOVE: Tom Raven, (Milwaukee County RN) volunteers to get out the vote because he's interested in supporting the rights of working families.**



**RIGHT: WFNHP Retirees, Elaine Johnson and Sandy Jacobs, volunteer because there are so many important issues facing all Americans in this election. Most importantly, they believe we need elected officials who will fight to keep Social Security and Medicare benefits intact.**



**L to R: Even though Donna-Marie Harrer (Diet Clerk, St. Francis Hospital) and Connie Smith (Surgical Tech, St. Francis Hospital) both work two jobs, they make time to volunteer.**

**"Its my duty to do what I can to get the right candidates elected who will fight for the middle class, not the 1%."**

**~Donna-Marie Harrer**

**"I want a better future for my children and grandchildren, so I do my part to make sure people are making an informed decision when they go to the polls on Election Day."**

**~Connie Smith**



**L to R: WFNHP President, Candice Owley, and Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer, Stephanie Bloomingdale, hit the streets and knock on the doors of working families in the Milwaukee area.**

***“Politicians have great power over our future. But, you also have great power, and that is the power that comes with your vote.”***

**~Candice Owley**

***“This November we face a clear choice about the direction of our country. Working families are deeply committed to re-electing President Obama and other legislators who will keep our nation secure and strengthen our economy.”***

**~Stephanie Bloomingdale**



**LEFT: “Since I have been involved with our union for the last few years, I have learned how important our political choices are to the benefits and working conditions that we have. As a mental health nurse, I also worry about Paul Ryan’s plan to convert Medicaid and Medicare to a voucher program. He doesn’t have a clue how many people these programs help.”**

**~Karen Haglund (Milwaukee County RN)**

**ABOVE: Tom Jaeck (Local 5001 Retiree) feels strongly about this campaign and wants to educate his fellow union members on the importance of this election.**

## Meet the New Guy *by Jamie Lucas, Organizer*

With well-funded attacks continually threatening to silence the voice of the working class, not only across the nation, but especially here in Wisconsin, I couldn't be happier to join the ranks of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals.

Since arriving here in the last week of August, I have had the chance to meet many of you at LaborFest, rallies, phone banks, and at your local chapter meetings. The energy, passion, and spirit that I have seen so far have served as a warm welcome to the family. I know there is a great foundation on which to build as we move forward as a strong and unified union.

Since I am still in the process of getting to meet my WFNHP sisters and brothers, here is some of my background. I come to Wisconsin from Denver, Colorado, where I was born and raised. I went to college in Ft. Collins, Colorado at Colorado State University. In that time, I also worked as a milkman on a small farm just northeast of the city. I'd like to think that helped prepare me for my move to the dairy farm capitol of the country, but I'm not quite sure how. After my time in Ft. Collins, I moved back to my hometown of Denver. There, I worked on several political campaigns, including a city-wide City Council race, which we won, that elected the first openly gay Councilperson in Denver's history.

From the campaign trail, I went to work with the Service Employees International Union, Local 105, as an organizer. In my time with SEIU, I worked with janitorial workers, healthcare workers, and security officers in Denver, Philadelphia, Portland, and Houston. I was fortunate to be a part of some incredibly powerful solidarity events in that time. On June 2nd, 300 janitors in Denver were negotiating a new contract, and we faced a less-than-cooperative and hostile management team at



**Kim Peterson, RN, Local 5039-Racine County and WFNHP's new organizer, Jamie Lucas.**

the bargaining table. With the deadline fast approaching, we organized a strong and united community around the janitors' efforts that culminated in 600 people marching in the streets and shutting down one of the busiest intersections in downtown Denver. Word spread quickly to the bargaining table, as politicians and community members began contacting us to see how they could help. Understanding that the workers in the streets had real, undeniable power, the contractors agreed to negotiate a new contract just as the previous one expired. Because the workers and the community stood together, those janitors won a contract with a dignified wage, a reasonable workload, and affordable healthcare. It was a beautiful demonstration of unity that brought real results.

The political climate here is unlike anything I have experienced. Our fight will look different than that march in Denver, and wins aren't always measured in contracts; but, we will need the same pieces to be successful—unity, activism, and accountability to each other. It is an amazing time to be active in your union. In this time of transition and uncertainty, I wholeheartedly believe that we will play an integral role in redefining what a labor union does and how you, the workers, exercise your voice.

The future of collective bargaining for our public employees in Wisconsin is in the hands of the court, but our real power always has been and always will be collective action. I am honored to be a part of your fight and optimistic of what we can accomplish together.



**Jamie gets the crowd chanting in the annual LaborFest parade.**



## General Election Endorsements

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The following candidates were endorsed by the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals and/or the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO. (Note: \* denotes incumbent)

### U. S. President:

Barack Obama\*

### U.S. Senate:

Tammy Baldwin

### U.S. House of Representatives (Congress):

CD 1: Rob Zerban

CD 2: Mark Pocan

CD 3: Ron Kind\*

CD 4: Gwen Moore\*

CD 7: Pat Kreitlow

CD 8: Jamie Wall



### State Senate:

SD 4: Lena Taylor\*

SD 6: Nikiya Harris

SD 10: Daniel Olson

SD 12: Susan Sommer

SD 14: Margarete Worthington

SD 16: Mark Miller\*

SD 18: Jessica King\*

SD 20: Tanya Lohr

SD 22: Bob Wirsch\*

SD 24: Julie Lassa\*

SD 26: Fred Risser\*

SD 28: Jim Ward

SD 30: Dave Hansen\*

SD 32: Jennifer Shilling\*

### State Assembly:

AD 2: Larry Pruess

AD 6: John Powers

AD 7: Daniel Riemer

AD 8: JoCasta Zamarripa\*

AD 9: Josh Zepnick\*

AD 10: Sandy Pasch

AD 11: Mandela Barnes

AD 12: Fred Kessler\*

AD 13: John Pokrandt

AD 14: Chris Rockwood

AD 16: Leon Young\*

AD 17: LaTonya Johnson

AD 18: Evan Goyke

AD 19: Jon Richards\*

AD 20: Christine Sinicki\*

AD 21: William Kurtz

AD 23: Cris Rogers

AD 24: Shan Haqqi

AD 26: Mike Helmke

AD 27: Steven Bauer

AD 28: Adam Bever

AD 31: Ryan Schroeder

AD 32: Kim Peterson

AD 34: Merlin Van Buren

AD 35: Kevin Koth

AD 36: Dorothy Kegley

AD 37: Mary Arnold

AD 38: Scott Michalak

AD 39: Jim Grigg

AD 42: Paula Cooper

AD 54: Gordon Hintz\*

AD 61: John Steinbrink

AD 62: Melissa Lemke

AD 63: Kelly Albrecht

AD 64: Peter Barca\*

AD 65: Tod Ohnstad

AD 66: Cory Mason

AD 72: Justin Pluess

AD 73: Nick Milroy\*

AD 75: Stephen Smith

AD 81: Fred Clark

AD 82: Kathleen Weid-Vincent

AD 83: James Brownlow

AD 87: Elizabeth Riley

AD 97: Marga Krumins

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**Network** is a member of the following Communication Associations: AFTCA, AFTCN, ILCA, & MLPA

## Keeping Up-to-date

- ◆ **Third Monday of Every Month**  
WFNHP Legislative Committee Meeting  
5:30-6:30pm—Business Meeting  
6:30-7:30pm—Guest Speaker  
Union office—West Allis, WI
- ◆ **Tuesday, November 6th, 2012**  
**Election Day**  
Polls are open in WI from 7am to 8pm  
**Remember to get out and VOTE!**  
To find your polling place go to:  
<https://myvote.wi.gov>
- ◆ **Saturday, November 10th, 2012**  
WFNHP Public Sector Leadership Training  
9:30am-3:00pm  
Union office—West Allis, WI
- ◆ **Follow us on Facebook**  
 [www.facebook.com/wfnhp](http://www.facebook.com/wfnhp)
- ◆ **Calling all Texters:** Join the AFT Healthcare text group and get news alerts sent to your cell phone. Text **HEALTHCARE** TO 738674. (Your carrier's message and data rates may apply.)

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**Know Your Voter Rights!**

**To verify your local polling place** contact your municipal clerk's office, or call the WI Government Accountability Board at 608-266-8005, or go to: <https://myvote.wi.gov>.

**You do NOT need an ID to vote!** The photo ID provision of the 2011 election reform law has been struck down. You have the right to vote without providing proof of your identity or residence if your name is already on the list of registered voters.

**You are required to sign a poll book** and you must live in a ward 28 days to vote there.

**Wisconsin voters may register on Election Day** if you can show proof of residency in the election district for 28 days. However, you can no longer use corroboration (having another registered voter vouch for you). Electronic records showing a person's address are acceptable, so you can bring a laptop or smartphone to verify where you live.

**Stay in line if polls close while you are waiting**—you are entitled to vote. In Wisconsin cities with more than 10,000 residents, polls are open from 7am to 8pm.

**Call the Election Protection hotline** at **1-866-OUR-VOTE** (1-866-687-8683) if you encounter any problems at the polls.

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