

NETWORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF NURSES & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, LOCAL 5000, AFT, AFL-CIO

Making Our Voices Heard



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President's Podium

by Candice Owley, R.N.

Finally we have a seat at the table—

In November, Wisconsin elected a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer and Attorney General. All of these individuals pledged to work with our union to find ways to improve the lives of working people in our state. Of course, many candidates say what you want to hear during the election; but, what is refreshing is that in the case of these new state-wide officials they are following through with their promises.

Governor Evers and his healthcare staff have consulted our union and are truly only a phone call away if we have concerns. In his first budget, he made good on so many issues of importance—especially around healthcare and workers' rights. Some of the key provisions of the budget include:

- ♥ Ending "Right-to-Work" and restoring workers' rights.
- ♥ Expanding Medicaid which results in \$1.5 billion in new money to be used for expanding health programs such as postpartum care, long term care for disabled children, increases Medicaid payments to providers so there is more money for front line healthcare workers, and money for overburdened mental health systems.
- ♥ Taking on cost of prescription drugs and allowing importation from Canada.
- ♥ Expanding services for seniors.
- ♥ Increasing payments for nursing homes to allow them to pay workers more.

The Attorney General, Josh Kaul, and his chief of staff just last week spent almost an hour with me and Robert Kraig, the head of Citizen Action, to discuss how his office could look into prescription drug price gauging, overcharging by hospitals, "surprise" billing, and taking on the Opioid manufactures.

State Treasurer, Sarah Godlewski, is very concerned about **student debt** and is exploring the possibility of working with our union on a program that will allow professionals, like nurses and technologists, to refinance their student debt and greatly reduce the cost of those loans.

For over eight years there was no one in state government that asked or even wanted our union leaders and members' opinions. It is exciting to once again have partners in Madison and start thinking of how we can improve our members' working and personal lives, and the care of our patients. It is almost a bit overwhelming, because we could spend almost every day working on these issues, so we will have to find a way to exercise this new relationship.

One critical part of working with the Governor and AG was to restore their authority that was stripped away in a late night, **lame-duck session** at the end of last year, just days before the new governor was sworn in. I am proud that our union, along with other AFT locals and SEIU (supported by our national unions), brought a lawsuit because we believed the changes went too far and put extraordinary power in the legislature, which virtually eliminated the right of the executive branch of government. It was exciting news when on March 26th a Walker-appointed judge agreed with us and reversed most of these changes. We know the case will end up at the State Supreme Court, which is why who is on the court is so critically important. Still, I remain very optimistic that we have played at least a small part in the fight for democracy in Wisconsin.

As we move forward this year, we will need to do our part in supporting the Governor's budget. You will get email notices telling you where and when events will take place to help you participate in this process. It doesn't do much good if the Governor develops a budget with many things we support, if we do not also show our support. As soon as the first week of April, there will be hearings around the state where citizens can give their opinion. I will be encouraging members to do just that.

The other important action we will take is to establish a **Local Legislative Committee** to look at bills and programs, both in our state and nationally. For example, on a national level, we will want to support the bill to end workplace violence. But, there will be many more opportunities at the state level to take action on things like ending "surprise billing," expanding Medicaid, reducing costs of prescription drugs, and much more. If you are interested in being part of this legislative group, please email me at cowley@wfnhp.org. My hope is to use our conference call capabilities so, regardless of where you live, you can be part of this process and these exciting new opportunities.

The new administration has opened their doors and invited us in for a seat at the table. It is now up to us to accept this invitation and make sure the voice of front line healthcare workers is part of the discussion as laws and regulations are made for our state.



WDL Member Takes Professional Advocacy to D.C.

by Kathryn Golab, Chief Steward, Wisconsin Diagnostic Laboratories Chapter

In March of 2019, I had the distinct pleasure of attending my first ASCLS Legislative Symposium in Washington, D.C. as a delegate for the state of Wisconsin. The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) is the professional organization that provides advocacy, standards setting, education and professional development for clinical laboratory science practitioners. The first day of the conference was spent learning about issues directly relating to our profession. This year's topics included: the impending workforce shortage of allied healthcare professionals, the VALID Act, and PAMA Cuts. For the second day of the conference, we met with our legislators to educate them on these issues and advocate for resolutions.

Many outside of our profession are unaware that there is a rapidly growing shortage of qualified clinical laboratory scientists. More focus is usually put on the faces of healthcare that are seen, such as nurses or doctors, vs. those of us behind the scenes. But at the conference, we learned about a piece of legislation called the Allied Healthcare Workforce Shortage Act, which outlines three actions to help relieve this shortage. The first, would be to create scholarship opportunities and loan repayment options for students who enter into an allied healthcare profession, with a period of obligation to work in a known shortage area. Second, would be to help incentivize hospitals to open clinical education programs in allied health to improve access to training and produce quality employees for these professions. This will help also mitigate the expensive costs of running

clinical training programs. The final action, would be to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to identify what allied health professions are experiencing a significant shortage on an annual basis. After the conference, participants met with our legislators to tell them about our experiences with the current shortage as it stands, and urge them to take a look into this serious issue that will soon have a dramatic impact on healthcare.

This experience was honestly so much more than I could have asked for. It allowed me to build skills to have meaningful and impactful conversations about issues that are starting to very seriously hurt this profession that I love so much. Learning to #Labvocate (a term used by a fellow participant) was the experience of a lifetime. I can't wait to return again next year, ready to labvocate even harder to protect my patients and my profession.

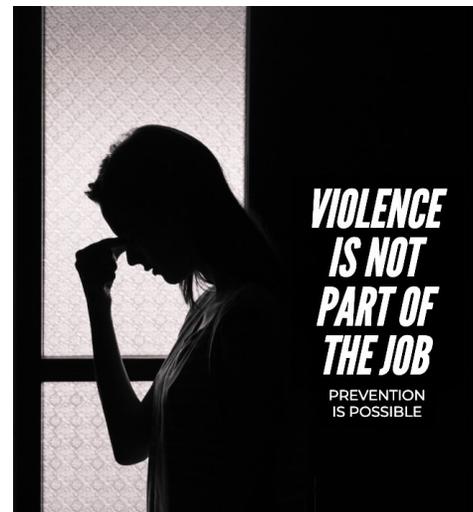
WFNHP NOTE: As #Labvocating can also be applied to bargaining good contracts and engaging other lab professionals in our union, we will be looking at ways to support these bills that support our members, as well as other ideas that will move the dial on these important issues.



Spring Membership Meeting Will Focus on Workplace Safety

Plan now to attend our union's Spring Membership Meeting on **Saturday, May 4th at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Milwaukee**. The theme for the meeting is **Workplace Safety: Keeping Healthcare Workers Safe**. The program will include educational discussion on how one WFNHP member's experience is shaping the national push for safer workplaces and how you can make that a reality, as well as other tools to safely perform your job. Lunch, coffee and snacks will be provided.

Registration begins at 8:30am and the program will take place from 9am-12pm, with lunch at Noon, followed by the business meeting from 1-3pm. You do not want to miss this free, educational opportunity! The deadline to register is Thursday, April 25th ~ **call Amy at 414-475-6065, ext. 10 to register today**.



Members to Vote on Amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws

At the May 4th membership meeting we will be voting on a series of changes to our current Constitution & Bylaws. Local 5000 was formed in January 2013 when all the WFNHP bargaining units in the state voted to combine into one unified local for strength and solidarity. As we moved forward with our new structure, it is not surprising that we periodically have to make some adjustment (*some minor, some major*) to improve operations and, in some cases, our democratic process. The following is a summary of the changes members will be asked to vote on at the May 4th, 2019 membership meeting. In the first column is the change and in the second column the reason for the change. Language to be added is underlined, and language to be deleted is in **red**.

Proposed Changes to the Constitution:

Article IV—Election of Local Officers and Delegates:

Article IV, Section 5a. The election committee shall consist of at least three members in good standing selected by the general membership at its first meeting of odd numbered **the** years and serve for a two-year term. The President shall recommend and the Executive Committee shall approve a chair of the election committee from among the selected members. The election committee shall oversee all elections including Local, Chapter and Labor Council delegates.

Article IV, Section 8. Add, and labor council delegates.

Article IV, Section 12. ...candidates shall assume office on January 1 of the even numbered year **within 30 days of the conclusion of the election.**

Article V—Duties of Officers, Section 1c. Shall appoint, with the approval of the executive board, the chairs of all standing and special committees including **except** the election committee.

Article X—Revenues, Section 2a. Regular members in a certified bargaining unit with payroll deduction shall pay 1.10% effective July 1, 2019 **1.05%** of all income. Effective September 2019 the percentage dues shall increase in an amount equal to any increase in per capita payments to AFT as is required by the AFT constitution and is referred to as the “pass through” provision.

Article X—Section 2c. VA chapter shall pay dues to the Local in accordance with an agreement between the VA chapter and the Local Executive Board adopted March 2017 (see Proviso for VA Chapter at end of Local Bylaws).

Article XII—Chapters, Section 5. Each Chapter shall have at minimum a President, Vice President, Chief Steward, Secretary and stewards according to the following formula: 0-100 members: 2 stewards; 101-200 members: 3 stewards; 201-300 members: 4 stewards; 301-400 members: 5 stewards; 401 and above: 6 stewards. All chapter officers shall be elected by the membership by secret mail ballot. **Chapters may also establish additional elected and appointed positions.** The VA chapter may also elect a treasurer.

Rationale:

For Clarification

Expands election committee to allow for more than 3 to be selected.

Clarifies labor council delegates are elected at same time as the rest of the Local officers.

Sets a clear date when newly elected officers take office.

Clarifies how chair of election committee is determined.

Percentage dues increase to 1.10%.

Add “pass through” provision to comply with AFT Constitution.

Special agreement with the VA unit as a condition of them merging into Local 5000.

Establish uniform elected leadership structure for all chapters.

Establish chapter elections must be by secret mail ballot.

Provision for VA chapter to elect a treasurer.

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws:

Article I—Rules of Operation for Chapters:

Article I, Section 1. Election of Chapter Officers.

1. Election of chapter officers shall be held by secret mail ballot in March of even numbered years.
2. Delete, **Prior to nominations, the Chapter officers shall identify which positions will be elected positions. At a minimum, each Chapter must elect the following: President, Chief Steward and Secretary. Additional elected positions are at the discretion of the Chapter.**
3. No Change
4. No Change
5. Delete, **Elections shall be either by mail or at a general membership meeting.**
6. No Change
7. Candidates receiving a majority of votes shall be considered elected and shall assume their duties as of May 1st of the even numbered year provided **soon as** the results are verified.
8. No Change
9. No Change
10. The chapter elections shall be overseen by the Local Election committee in accordance with the Local constitution and bylaws.

Article I, Section 2A. Chapter Executive Board.

1. Each Chapter shall have an Executive Board consisting of the Chapter President, Vice President, Chief Steward and Secretary plus the elected Stewards (and in the case of the VA the Treasurer)

Article 1, Section 2D. Arbitration Review Committee.

1. The Executive Board of each chapter **Each bargaining unit shall serve as an Arbitration Review Committee** **establish a committee and process** to review cases that may be referred for arbitration.
2. No Change
3. Add, The committee shall follow guidelines as adopted by the Local Board.
4. Eliminate language, **appointed by the Chapter officers.**

Article 1, Section 2G. Chapter Meetings.

Add, 2. A quorum shall consist of 5% plus two (2) Chapter officers.

Add, Proviso for VA Chapter which was adopted in March of 2017.

Rationale:

Provides for mail ballot elections.

Establishes uniform date of May 1 when chapter officers & stewards take office.

For clarification

For consistency with the Constitution.

Clarifies that the Chapter Executive Board is the Chapter's Arbitration Review Committee.

For clarification

To clarify the committee is not appointed.

Establishes amount needed for a quorum at membership meetings.

Added as clarification of the dues arrangement for the VA chapter.



Wisconsin Federation
of Nurses & Health
Professionals AFT,
AFL-CIO

A Union of Professionals

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Return Service Requested



WFNHP-Local 5000's *Spring Membership Meeting*

**“Keeping Healthcare
Workers Safe”**

Saturday, May 4th, 2019

8:30 am – 3:00 pm

Four Points Sheraton

5311 S. Howell Avenue, Milwaukee

❖ *See page 3 for more information*

Register by Thursday, April 25th, 2019

Please call Amy at the Union Office to register 414-475-6065 x10