CWA LOCAL 1032

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Dear CWA Local 1032 Member,

Two months ago, I wrote to members following the passage of health care and pension legislation. That story is well-known at this point: nearly 2 dozen Democrats, wholly owned by powerful political bosses, together with every Republican passed the bill and gift wrapped Governor Christie's biggest political victory to date. From the moment this legislation was introduced, CWA joined with other public sector unions, and many private sector unions committed to preserving bargaining rights, and we fought back. We fought this legislation – and the blatant assault on our union and our bargaining rights that it clearly represented – vigorously and with an eye towards building our union and our movement despite one of the worst attacks we have ever faced.

While certainly a setback, this fight also has served to define and focus our mobilization over the summer and into the fall. When the legislation was signed into law, CWA took an organizational position that ANY legislator who supported the bill would not receive the support of CWA in this November's elections. Our message was clear: if you voted to destroy bargaining rights, a core principle of labor and the Democratic Party, then you do not get a labor endorsement. It is that simple.

We took that message to the State AFL-CIO endorsement conference in August and, joining with our allies in the public and private sector, we succeeded in blocking the endorsements of every legislator that voted for the bill – even those that are alleged "labor candidates" and were sitting in the room. However symbolic, this sends a strong message that if you take action to promote and support anti-union and anti-worker legislation, you will not get the support of Labor. That is the kind of message that we must build on if we are going to change the way we do our political work and build our power as a union and as a labor movement.

Local 1032 has a long history of electoral mobilization and while we will seek to hold those that betrayed us accountable for their actions, we will also hit the streets to support those who stood with us. Make no mistake; we are grateful to the many brave Democrats who stood up to party bosses – and Legislative leadership – and joined our fight to support collective bargaining. This fall, Local 1032 activists will be participating in labor-to-labor walks, phone banks and other activities to make sure that members know who our friends are in the Legislature.

In August, we also took our fight for working families to the picket line, where we joined our CWA brothers and sisters who work at Verizon. Their fight was our fight – to protect the right to bargain, and to preserve a middle class standard of living that is under attack for all working families. Verizon had come to the table with a long list of concessionary demands and no real intention to bargain with the union, but after the largest strike in decades, they are now back to work and back at the bargaining table, where we hope that meaningful negotiations will take place.

Since January, the labor movement and working families have been under constant attack all across the country – in state house battles in Wisconsin, Ohio, and New Jersey, and in national debates about everything from the debt ceiling to how we jump start the economy. These are difficult times to be sure. In addition to the legislative attacks, State workers are still without a contract; bargaining at the local government level has been very difficult; and the Governor has shown no signs of stopping his attacks on public workers and public services. In such an environment, it is our responsibility to fight back as progressives committed to economic and social justice. It is not easy, but our fight is one that we must continue to wage because it represents what we want for our movement, our families, and our State.

On Thursday, September 22, 2011, Local 1032 will hold its annual General Membership Meeting at which we adopt the Local's budget for the coming year. We will also have updates on many issues, including our plans for the November elections. Please see the enclosed leaflet for details. I encourage all members to attend this meeting and make your voice heard.

Thank you all for your continued support. I look forward to working with each of you to build our union!

In Solidarity,

PJK

Patrick Kavanagh
President