

The Professional Retiree

AFT-WI Retiree Council

September 2013 Volume XIII, Issue 2

Help Expand Social Security

by Alliance for Retired Americans

It's time to expand Social Security, not cut it. That's why Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, D-CA, just introduced the Strengthening Social Security Act, H.R. 3118, in the House of Representatives.

Instead of a cold, calculated benefit cut like the Chained CPI, the Strengthen Social Security Act would actually increase annual Social Security benefits by an average of \$800 by making sure the cost of living adjustment reflects the actual costs of beneficiaries and by raising the cap on taxable income so that wealthy Americans pay their fair share into Social Security and strengthen the trust fund.

It's important that your member of Congress join Linda Sanchez in leading the charge to expand, not cut Social Security.

"At a time when the retirement income deficit is \$6.6 trillion, the American people are calling for strengthening – not cutting – Social Security," said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. "It is essential that Congress work to strengthen this lifeline of retirement, disability and survivors' security to ensure that Americans of all ages can count on the benefits that they have been promised."

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WRS One of Strongest Funded Pension Systems

from Department of Employee Trust Funds

The annual report of Morningstar, Inc., *The State of State Pension Plans 2013: A Deep Dive into Shortfalls and Surpluses*, found that the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) is the strongest funded state pension system in the country. Morningstar is an independent global investment research firm, which analyzes current data for pension plans administered by all 50 states.

The WRS's funded ratio of 99.9% is the strongest in the nation. Morningstar considers a funded ratio of 70% to be fiscally sound.

Wisconsin's unfunded liability per resident of \$18 is the lowest of any public pension plan in the country. Morningstar's threshold for a "good" unfunded liability level is \$1,500 per resident. Only 14 states pass this test.

RESOLUTION SUBMITTED FOR CONVENTION

Call for A Special AFT-Wisconsin Convention to Vote on Merger With WEAC

Whereas, the 2012 AFT-Wisconsin Convention unanimously approved a resolution to form a Unity Committee with the Wisconsin Education Association Council and further charged that committee with negotiating the terms and conditions of merger of the two state organizations; and

Whereas, the Unity Committee represented all sectors of AFT-Wisconsin; and

Whereas, the Unity Committee has been meeting since December 2012; and

Whereas, the Unity Committee has enthusiastically recommended a Constitution and Bylaws, and a Transition Document to oversee the merger of AFT-Wisconsin and WEAC;

(Continued on page two)

Merger Resolution *(Cont'd from page one)*

Whereas, the proposed documents for the new merged organization are consistent with the principles outlined in the 2012 resolution on merger; and

Whereas, the rationale behind the Unity Committee's work is that we are stronger together; and

Whereas, the AFT-Wisconsin delegates assembled at this convention support the principle that AFT-W and WEAC can best achieve our shared goals by combining the resources, talents, and personnel of the two organizations; and

Whereas, AFT-Wisconsin believes that a single, unified organization would best provide a strong voice for quality public education and public services along with an expanded commitment to the well-being of our members and communities; and

Whereas, guidelines from the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association dictate a process and timeline for approving merger of state affiliates; therefore, be it

Resolved, in accordance with AFT guidelines, the delegates assembled at the 2013 AFT-Wisconsin convention direct the officers and executive board to inform the AFT National that AFT-Wisconsin intends to merge with WEAC on September 1, 2014, subject to a vote at a special convention; and be it further

Resolved, that this 2013 AFT-W convention body directs the officers and executive board of AFT-Wisconsin to call a special convention to be held on Saturday, April 26, 2014 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, concurrent with the WEAC Representative Assembly; and be it further

Resolved, the purpose of the special convention is to put the new merged organization Constitution, Bylaws and Transition Document up for a ratification vote; and be it finally

Resolved, that the 2013 AFT-Wisconsin convention call on all AFT-Wisconsin locals to prepare to send delegates to the special convention in six months time.

Submitted by:

Deb Ausman, Local 2398, AFT-W Secretary

Donalea Dinsmore, Local 3732

Greg Georg, Local 4848

Bryan Kennedy, AFT-W President

Kim Kohlhaas, Local 202

Joe Lowndes, Local 243

Cheryl Myers, Local 1166

Jeff Pickron, Local 3535

Kaja Rebane, Local 3220

UNITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Bob Beglinger, Retiree Council representative

For the past year the Unity Committee has spent many long weekends attempting to develop a framework under which AFT-Wisconsin and WEAC would unite and form a new merged organization. Included in this process was the writing of a new constitution and bylaws for the newly merged organization as well as a transition document spelling out the procedures by which we would move from existing separate unions to a single merged union.

Throughout the process the Unity Committee worked with three basic underlying principles. First, we were not simply attempting to replicate either existing Union but instead were trying to develop a totally new Union. Second, the new Union should be greater than either of the existing Unions. Third, we would build a Union for the future, not the past.

Though it is often difficult to cast aside past loyalties, I can say that members of the Unity Committee, without exception, struggled honestly and sincerely to set aside those loyalties and truly attempted to build a stronger Union which could better advocate for all members. Whether or not they have been successful is a decision members will make.

In order for a merger to take place, notification of intent must first go to both AFT and NEA before the end of the year. Then both WEAC and AFT Wisconsin would need to vote in favor of a merger at a Spring Convention. If both voted for the merger, it could become effective in the fall of 2014.

In the near future a draft constitution and bylaws for a newly merged organization will be available. Information will be provided at the fall AFTW convention and delegates there will determine if the process is to go forward. It is absolutely imperative that members study the information provided carefully. Ask the tough questions.

The decisions you make about your Union's future will impact the future of our members as well as the future of the Union Movement in Wisconsin. Be confident that when you finally make the decision, it is the one that will best serve our members and their families.



**From Your President,
Kathy Monaghan**

Our annual AFT-W and AFT-W Retiree Convention is fast approaching. It will be held October 24-26 in Appleton at the Radisson Paper Valley. This convention will have a significant impact on the future of our organization as well as highlight issues important to retirees.

There are 13 constitutional amendments and a merger resolution with WEAC, which are described in this newsletter. Two special sessions will be offered on issues important to retirees. "National Efforts to Cut Public Employee Pensions" will be given at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 24. "Pensions, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid" will be offered at 7 a.m. on Friday, October 25.

Our Friday, October 25, council session will conduct the business of our retiree council, elect officers and feature a frank discussion of merger by Bob Beglinger, former AFT-W President, and your representative on the Merger/Unity Committee.

The noon luncheon will include another merger update and An Affordable Health Care Act (Obama Care) presentation.

This convention is jam packed with information for retirees. If you can possibly be present, plan to attend. Your noon luncheon will be provided for you if you are a paid member of our retiree council. Call the AFT-W office prior to October 1 at 1-800-362-7390, Ext. 226 to make your reservation.

As an AFT-W retiree, you are also automatically a member of the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans. Over the last six weeks, they have been holding informative town hall meeting across the state on Social Security, Medicare and Obama Care. They have been very well received.

Another upcoming activity of the WI-ARA will be their Power Luncheon in Milwaukee on October 14. If you are interested in attending, call the WIARA office at 414-771-9511. for information.

I hope to see many of you in person at the AFT-W Convention in Appleton.

AFT-W Retiree Council
Annual Meeting Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Treasurer's Report
 - A. Budget report 2013
 - B. Approval of 2014 Budget
4. Committee Reports
 - A. Membership - Marilyn Bunnell
 - B. Newsletter - Bonnie Greasby
 - C. 2014 Elections - Buzz Davis
5. President's Report
 - A. AFT-W Constitutional Amendments
 - B. AFT Grant Request
6. AFT-W Retiree Council Constitutional Amendments
7. Election of Officers
8. New Business
9. Adjournment
10. Guest Speaker--Bob Beglinger-AFT-W Unity/Merger Committee Report

Inauguration of DPI Superintendent

Marilynn Bunnell represented AFT-Wisconsin Retirees at Tony Evers' inauguration as State Superintendent of Public Instruction.



Evers was sworn into office for a second term a day after Governor Walker signed a budget, which Evers called "ideological and partisan".

During his inaugural address at LaFollette High School in Madison, Evers said we needed to stop trying to portray public educators as enemies and stop replacing public education with private schools. The expansion of voucher schools will cause disputes over funding public schools. "This divisiveness doesn't help our kids or our state," he said.

Superintendent Evers shared his optimism when he said, "Despite the great battles that are being waged in this state over the future direction of education, I still believe that we, as Wisconsinites, can come together in the pursuit of innovation and excellence."

Paraphrased PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL & BYLAWS AMENDMENTS 2013

Executive Board members will be removed if they are absent more than twice.

b. If an Executive Board member has more than two (2) ~~unexcused~~ absences from regularly scheduled Executive Board meetings in one year (Convention to Convention), her/his position shall become vacant. The vacant position shall be filled according to the terms of Article VI, Section 8, of the Constitution.

Even board representation by giving all bargaining units the same ability to have one at-large vice president on the Executive Board.

Section 1. Representation on the Executive Board shall be limited to one Vice President per local except that a local representing more than one bargaining unit may have one Vice President from each bargaining unit ~~and that a local having more than 20 percent of AFT-Wisconsin membership may have a maximum of two Vice Presidents, and locals having over 40 percent of AFT-Wisconsin membership may have a maximum of three Vice Presidents.~~ For purposes of this section, the term "bargaining unit" includes potential bargaining units for non-bargaining locals. Council VP positions take precedence over At Large VP positions when the number of representatives elected from a local exceeds the maximum allowed per this section. The Executive Vice President is a statewide officer of AFT-Wisconsin and shall not be considered in the maximum number of vice presidents per local.

President will post committee assignments within 60 days of convention.

New Language Section 13: Within 60 calendar days of the annual convention, the Executive Board Committee assignments shall be reviewed, updated and posted.

Board Members to resign from board if job is lost or member retires.

Proposed AFT-W language

Each candidate for the AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board must be a member in good standing of a local of the AFT-Wisconsin and be actively employed by an employer who qualifies the candidate/officer to be an AFT-Wisconsin member for the term of their office.

If a board members status changes while holding office, the following applies:

- 1) If the board member retires or is laid off from the qualifying job, they may serve until the next Convention, where a special election will be held to choose a replacement to complete the term.
- 2) If the board member resigns, is moved into or accepts a job that no longer qualifies them for union membership, or loses employment in the qualifying job, they must resign immediately at which time the executive board will find and approve a replacement.

Revise the structure/duties of the president position to allow for a volunteer president to take office while maintaining the position that qualifies them as an AFT-Wisconsin member in good standing.

~~Section 2. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the State Federation. The President shall preside at each Annual Convention. The President shall administer all of the affairs of the State Federation and put into effect the policies of the State Federation as determined by the Executive Board and the Annual Convention and shall act as a delegate for the AFT-Wisconsin to Annual AFT Conventions and to Conventions of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO.~~

Duties of a Volunteer President

- 1) Preside at Convention
- 2) Report to Annual Convention including
 - a. Resolutions from previous year
 - b. Member Mobilization Fund report
 - c. Work with COPE Officers to prepare COPE report
 - d. State of the Union.
- 3) Preside at and prepare agendas for Executive Board Meetings
- 4) Ensure that the policies of the State Federation as determined by the Annual Convention and Executive Board are put into effect by determining an accountability structure/process to accomplish this that is transparent and accessible to all board members

- 5) Call regular and special meetings, upon request made to the President by one-third of the members of the executive board and prepare and distribute agendas for such
 - 6) Make occasional trips to the AFT-W office when necessary to address the affairs of the union.
 - 7) Send out periodic updates to local leaders
 - 8) Confer periodically with the attorney about legal issues
 - 9) The President is ex-officio of all committees. Responsible for making sure committee members and duties are kept current and communicated to the board members.
 - 10) Confer regularly via phone or email with the Chief of Staff/Lead Worker and the Executive Assistant
 - 11) AFT-Wisconsin Delegate to the AFT Convention
 - 12) "Face of the Union"
 - Meet with press when appropriate
 - Statements issued will come from the President (might not always write them)
 - Will communicate with the public and members
 - Regularly scheduled email blast to members (input from others) as set by the board.
 - Press releases when appropriate
 - Meet with leaders of other unions/organizations: WEAC, AFL-CIO, other unions as deemed appropriate by the Board
 - 13) Other duties as assigned by the Executive Board
- Compensation is as set by the board through the budget process.

Consolidate the Secretary and Treasurer officer positions into one Secretary-Treasurer. Officer duties and authority changed to reflect one position.

Section 2. (a) The President, the Executive Vice President, the At Large Vice Presidents, the council Vice Presidents, the Secretary/Treasurer shall constitute the Executive Board.

Section 5. Secretary/Treasurer

1. Record, compile, maintain and distribute all minutes of the Executive Board meetings and the annual Convention.
2. Issue the call for all annual and special Conventions.
3. Process all official AFT-W correspondence that requires the signature of the Secretary and maintain all other official documents.

~~Section 6. Treasurer~~

44. Monitor and review all income, investments and expenses of the State Federation.
25. Prepare and submit a financial report to the Executive Board prior to each regular meeting.
36. Prepare and submit a Per Cap report to the Executive Board prior to each regular meeting showing Per Cap numbers in each category for each local, and the number of Hudson rebates for each local.
47. Prepare and present a yearly financial report to the Convention.
58. Chair the Budget Committee and Legal Committee.
69. Ensure accurate records of all receipts and disbursements.
710. Share with the President and ~~Controller~~ Executive Assistant the power to sign and endorse checks and make deposits.
811. Ensure an annual audit is completed.
912. Ensure the timely payment of all bills authorized by the adopted budget of the State Federation.
1013. Ensure the preparation and timely filing of all appropriate tax returns on behalf of the State Federation.
1114. Ensure assistance and training is provided for local treasurers.
1215. Ensure that locals are notified of arrears.
16. Negotiate retainer agreement with legal firm in coordination with Budget Committee.
17. Assist locals with/prepare the Legal Defense Fund grant applications for qualifying cases

Change to correct confusing language. The \$1.00 to the AFL-CIO is part of AFT National's dues structure. AFT National does not require Members At Large (MAL) to pay this \$1.00 per month assessment to the AFL-CIO. They pay only the AFTN and AFTW per cap amounts. Section 1. (d) Members at large shall pay per caps in the amount equal to the amount required for their AFT and AFT-Wisconsin per caps.

A change in the language to reflect that all workers, regardless of union affiliation, are banded together.

(New Language) Section 3. To assist affiliated locals and members of the State Federation in obtaining the rights and services to which they are entitled, in achieving common professional goals and in promoting general welfare of not only AFT-Wisconsin members, but also other AFL-CIO union members and workers.

Changes dues for special classes of membership. These changes are to bring the AFTW thresholds in line with the AFTN thresholds in order to make things easier for local treasurers. Adding a one-eighth category to match AFTN and to attempt to ease the per cap burden for folks making very little money but still want to be members. Other deletions are to simplify the document by getting rid of previous language from 2008 that isn't necessary

Section 1. Locals may establish the following special classes of membership:

(a) Employees who are eligible for membership whose salary are less than \$34,000 per year. Such locals pay per capita tax for such members at one-half the regular rate.

(b) Employees earning under \$14,454 per year. Such locals pay per capita tax for such members at one-quarter the regular rate.

(c) Employees earning under \$8,775 per year. Such locals pay per capita tax for such members at one-eighth the regular rate.

(d) Retirees, laid-off employees, employees on unpaid leave. Such locals pay per capita dues for such members at one-twentieth the regular rate.

(e) Locals that represent contingent employees, such as adjunct instructors, making less than \$12,000 per year in circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the payment of one quarter AFT-Wisconsin per capita would be an actual hardship for both the employees and the local may apply for a reduction in dues below the one-quarter rate. Locals that qualify for the exemption shall pay per capita tax for the covered members at the rate of \$2.00 per member per month.

(f) Applications for special classes of membership may be made on behalf of a bargaining unit or other clearly identified group within a local. The Executive Board shall adopt guidelines to govern the filing and consideration of such applications. All such members shall be entitled to receive full benefits of membership.

Section 2. Where a local of the American Federation of Teachers exists in or near a college or university having a department of education, that local may accept prospective teachers as associate members. Annual dues of \$2.50 per year shall be paid directly to the national office and \$1.50 to the AFT-Wisconsin office by the local for each associate member. Associate members shall have only visitor's privileges at the state and national conventions. A student teacher may also be accepted as a member at large of the State Federation.

Reduce number of At-Large V-Presidents on Exec Board from 6 to 3.

Section 1. The officers shall be a President, an Executive Vice President, ~~six (6)~~ three (3) At Large Vice Presidents, seven (7) council Vice Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer elected from among the active membership, pursuant to Section 5 and 6 of this Article, by the delegates to the Convention.

Section 3. At Large Vice Presidents shall be elected by vote of the entire Convention. The ~~six~~ three candidates for At Large Vice President who receive the most votes shall be elected.

Section 1. Nomination of officers may be made as follows:

(c) If an elected position is uncontested at any time within 14 days of the Convention, nominations shall be made as in subsection (b) above up until 9:00pm on the opening evening of the Convention. If no candidate files for an office, the incoming elected president will appoint the position with the advice and consent of the newly elected Executive Board. This situation applies when fewer than ~~six (6)~~ three (3) individuals run to fill the At Large Vice President positions.

Members of the Retiree Council will elect AFT-W Retiree Council President. (This amendment clarifies and describes the way the retiree council has functioned since it was formed and corresponds to the AFT-W retiree constitution and by-laws.)e) The AFT-W Retiree Council V-P/ President shall be nominated and elected at the annual retiree council meeting by the members present.

AFT-W will hold Biennial Conventions

Section 1. The Convention shall meet ~~annually~~ biennially in odd-numbered years at such time and place as the Executive Board may determine and the Convention call shall go out at least 60 days prior to the ~~Annual~~ Biennial Conventions.

Reduce the number of At-Large Vice Presidents to a range of 2-7 to allow the board the flexibility of having an odd number of voting members, without forcing the enlistment of Board candidates just to reach 17 members.

RETIREES MUST FIGHT CORPORATE ATTACKS ON PENSION

by Buzz Davis, AFT-W Retiree Council Exec. Bd., WI Coalition of Annuitants

To achieve financial security in retirement you need a monthly Social Security check AND a monthly pension check. **Only Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans provide a stable, guaranteed monthly check through the ups and downs of the stock market, wars and economic recessions and depressions.** The highly rated WRS (WI Retirement System) is a DB pension plan managed by state workers for most of the public workers in WI.

America's Attack On & Destruction Of Private Sector Defined Benefit Pension Plans

The majority of US private sector workers are employed by company owners or CEO's who do NOT offer any pension plan. The one-third of private workers who have a pension found that between the mid 1980's and now, owners/CEO's have changed the company pension plans from Defined Benefit plans (what people need) to Defined Contribution/401(k) plans (that don't work well).

With the ups and downs of the markets, the pension funds became underfunded. Next the companies said that because the funds were so underfunded it would be better for employees to have 401(k)'s. The underfunded DB pension funds were a heavy financial liability for the corporations.

Result: In the mid 1980's one-third of the private workers had a pension plan. Eighty-five percent of those plans were DB plans and 15% were DC plans. Today, still only one-third of private workers have pension plans. But the owners and CEO's have changed it so 85% of those plans are DC 401(k) type plans and only 15% are DB plans. **How did millions of private sector workers in the mid 1980's end up with DB pension plans? THEY JOINED AND MAINTAINED UNIONS.**

Percent of Unionized Wage & Salary Workers in America

	1945	1980	2012
Percent members of a union	35.5%	21.9%	11.3%
% of Public Workers Unionized			35.9%
% of Private Sector Workers Unionized			6.6%

Since WWII unions have fought for DB pensions for their members. They won pensions at the bargaining table and then owners/CEO's gave the same DB pension plans to all the company's non-union workers.

For the last 8 years or so there has developed an effort to destroy and privatize public worker Defined Benefit pension plans. The same corporate CEO's and politicians who destroyed DB pensions in the private sector have been attacking DB pensions in the public sector.

Destroy Public Workers' DB Pensions. First today's CEO's would like all workers to believe that corporations just cannot afford to pay for DB pensions. But the fact that over 80% of the public workers in America HAVE a DB plan does not fit the CEO big lie. Therefore, if CEO's help politicians destroy public workers' DB plans, the CEO's will save worker benefit costs and money saved can go towards CEO's pay and toward profits for investors.

Privatize Public Workers' DB Pension Plans. Secondly, Wall Street says, "Hey, let us manage those public pensions. We can do a much better job than all those public workers hired by public pension funds to manage the investments." That is Wall Street's big lie. What they want is to gain control of the TRILLIONS of dollars in public DB pension funds so they can make hundreds of billions of dollars per year in management fees.

[You can make a difference - advocate for ALL workers to have defined benefit pension plans!](#)

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Open Enrollment for Medicare?

Fall Open Enrollment occurs each year from October 15 to December 7. During Fall Open Enrollment, people with Medicare can make changes to their Medicare coverage with their new coverage taking effect January 1 of the following year.

Before making any changes during Fall Open Enrollment, it may be helpful for you to take a look at your current Medicare coverage to see whether your benefits and costs will change in 2014. If there aren't any changes to your Medicare coverage and you're satisfied with your coverage, you don't need to make any changes during this time. **Get answers to your Medicare questions from Medicare Interactive at <http://www.medicareinteractive.org>.**

2013 AFT-WI Retiree Council Executive Board Meetings

October 25 and 26 (Convention)

December Meeting to be announced

2013 Retiree Council Officers

Kathy Monaghan, President
Don Ganther, V-President
Joy Bashara, Secretary

Ed Gallagher, Treasurer
Marilynn Bunnell, Membership
Bonnie Greasby, Newsletter