



The Professional Retiree

AFT-W Retiree Council

September 2022

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From Your Vice-President and WCOA Representative, Bob Beglinger, including news from the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuity Holders (WCOA):

To say the upcoming fall election is the most important of your lifetime seems almost like the boy who called wolf once too often. Yet never in recent history has the difference between progressives and conservatives, on issues that are important to all of us, been more apparent. As the two ideologies have become more polarized, the rift between them has seemed to become an insurmountable chasm, and the hope of working across the aisle all but lost. In the current environment, amidst constant attacks on issues like gender equity, equal rights, respect for all people, respect for public service and those who serve, respect for our democratic institutions, the importance of a quality education, and the ability of all workers to be able to look forward to a safe and secure retirement, it is critical that this fall we elect a legislature that will actually meet and serve the people of Wisconsin. Unless there is a massive turnout of progressives around the state, the gerrymandering of political districts threatens to elect a legislature that does not reflect the wishes or values of the majority of the people of the state. For this reason, I am asking that each and every one of you commit to helping elect pro-worker candidates this fall.

As the fall election approaches, things are going to be fast and furious, and you can expect to be inundated with political ads. So, what can you do to help elect people to serve who will actually work for you and advocate for your interests? Following is a list of suggestions of possible ways for you to get involved in helping to advance your own interests.

1. Contribute to COPE (Committee on Political Education). Member dues money cannot be used to make political contributions to candidates so any money to contribute to candidates comes from voluntary COPE contributions. A number of retirees serve on the COPE committee which interviews candidates, recommends endorsements and contributions to the Executive Board, and helps establish and maintain relationships with elected officials so they are informed and supportive of our issues. Contributions to AFTW COPE can be sent to AFTW at any time and are much appreciated and put to good use. You can send a check to "AFTW COPE" or you can contribute online using this link:

<http://donate.billhighway.com/AFTWICOPE>

Just a note: You must be a member of an AFTW local or the AFTW Retiree Council to contribute to the AFTW COPE fund.

2. Commit to talking to at least ten friends and neighbors. Make sure they are registered to vote and that they actually do vote. Talk to them about why you are supporting progressive candidates and encourage them to do the same.

3. Contact the campaigns of local legislators to see how you might help. They almost always need volunteers for leafleting or phone banking or even staffing local offices. Find a couple of hours when you can commit to help.
4. Contact John Yaggi (yaggi@aft-wisconsin.org) at AFTW. He can help connect you to local staff who are helping to coordinate campaigns in your area. At the same time watch for news of local events and alerts you may receive from AFTW about events in your area.
5. Consider the endorsements of your Union. Those endorsements are not made lightly. They involve interviews by your COPE, a review of voting records when one exists, and a careful examination of a candidate's record and platform. Take advantage of the work of the COPE in helping to guide your vote.

The election in November is critical to our future and will determine the direction both our state and our nation pursue. Make sure your voice is included in the decisions that will affect your future.

Speaking of your future, the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuitants has been busily working on updating and amending their bylaws. At the same time, we meet monthly with representatives of SWIB and the ETF for updates on market performance and program issues. With the elimination of the WEAC Trust as an insurance provider there are a large number of members that have to select other health insurance options this year and the ETF is working hard to facilitate these changes with minimal disruptions. The Coalition held its annual meeting virtually again in May and participants again responded very positively and felt the meeting was very informative and worthwhile. The ETF is continuing with its modernization project which is designed to make the system more intuitive and allow participants more control over managing their accounts. With these changes, security issues become an increasing concern, and, with the help of the Coalition, the ETF was able to add a couple of additional positions to ensure cyber security. Unfortunately, the news isn't all good. If you have paid any attention to the markets this year you know things are pretty dismal. Unless there is a major upturn in the markets before the year's end, members will not see the increases of the past couple of years. Fortunately for members invested in the CORE fund, the excess returns of the past couple of years will help to cover losses this year and these members will likely be able to avoid a reduction in their annuity. On the other hand, those invested in the variable fund will likely see a significant reduction unless there is a major turnaround in the market before the end of the year.

With that, let me end by saying you are truly living through historic times. Perhaps no other generation has endured the changes of your generation. What we do today will help decide what kind of world we have tomorrow. You are a part of history and through all the ups and downs, you should be thrilled just to be alive in such exciting times. Be well!

From WIARA, by Bill Franks, WIARA Retiree Council Representative

For those you who are unusually lucky or numerically enhanced, the ever popular "Raffle" is back. Because of technicalities all of which I'm not familiar (Federal Regulations), you must obtain Raffle tickets directly from the holder of those tickets. Raffle Tickets can be obtained for \$20.00, as I recall. Alex Brower or Gary Mitchell can provide more specific and timely information. As you know, the goal of every audit is continuous improvement, not unpleasant surprises. If you're interested, please follow up with them.

The Annual Power Lunch is back after a three-year absence. This year the lunch is scheduled for **October 10, 2020** at the Hilton Garden Inn Milwaukee Northwest Conference Center (11600 W Park Pl, Milwaukee, WI 53224). Doors open at 10:30 am. Lunch is served at 11:30. The Program starts at 12:00 (Noon). Individual tickets - **\$75**. Once you order your tickets you will be contacted to select your meal

choices. For table orders you will need the names, emails and meal selections for your entire table. For advertising, donations, or to become a sponsor, please contact Alex Brower at wiaaraexecdir@gmail.com. To purchase tickets by check via mail, send payment to: Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans, 6333 West Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213.

Of additional Note and extremely important is the “Honoree” Nominations to be announced at the Power Lunch. Categories are Labor, Community, and Political. I assume for the Labor Category you’d have to be or have been in good standing with your Local or Retiree Council (I believe Nominations are still open) and information is available on the Alliance Website.

The Audit Committee reviewed the Alliance’s Finances and provided recommendations for the next fiscal period. No glaring irregularities or mismanagement surfaced, just some minor accounting adjustments. For information, I send every scheduled meeting invitation to Bob and Kathy before each meeting. The details are in the reports that accompany the link for each Meeting. Any Council Member who wants to receive this information can let me know they’re interested, and I’ll forward to you. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 29th at 12:00 PM (In person, location TBD) Virtual Options are always available for these meetings.

Justin Miller, Political Campaign Director for the Wisconsin AFL-CIO since 2020, provided an overview of this Election Cycle by District. Justin can be contacted at “justinmiller@aflcio.org.” Activities will be ramping up especially right after Labor Day. Justin described the goal of the Political Campaign as “Cutting Through the Noise.” Expect Phone Banks, Post Cards and Door Knocking opportunities, especially for Seniors (**COVID Protocols will be strictly observed**). Candidate Endorsements will be available after Candidates have responded to the Questionnaire.

As always, the Alliance is need of additional Affiliates and Associates, as a foundation and sustainer of the organization. Anticipate written communication from Alex and Gary if you haven’t received any up until now.

AFTW COPE Wants YOU Engaged for the Mid-Terms **By Jeff Richter, Retiree Council Legislative/COPE Representative**

Hello fellow retirees! In my last article I said: “The biggest challenge facing us in 2022 is activating our members and collaborating with our partners for the Fall elections that will cover Wisconsin’s state legislative seats, governor, and its eight US representatives and one of its US Senators.” Well, time flies and the last two months of that challenge are now upon on us. The AFT-WI Committee on Political Education (COPE) has been busy planning strategy for electing candidates supporting our objectives in the mid-term election November 8.

Sure, we have been laser focused on assuring that Governor Evers is reelected to continue his essential use of the veto pen in the interests of the vast majority of Wisconsinites against the unhelpful or even harmful legislative efforts of the inappropriately large Republican majorities in the Legislature--majorities only gotten through heavily gerrymandered districts. We have also been laser focused on replacing our notoriously embarrassing and anti-worker Sen. Ron Johnson with a progressive Democrat—Mandela Barnes. AFT Wisconsin has already endorsed both Evers and Barnes. Other endorsements include Josh Kaul for Attorney General, and in the Assembly: Katrina Shankland (71st), Kristine Shelton (90th), and Lee Snodgrass (57th). Keep up to date with endorsements on the AFTW website at this link: <https://www.aft-wisconsin.org/resources/fall-2022-elections>. But endorsements are just the tip of the iceberg in this election. We can’t stop there!

To achieve our statewide office objectives, we need to assure turnout. And to assure that turnout has benefits for both up and down ballot races, we need a strategy for both. COPE has recently recommended targeting of numerous district races for State Legislative seats. The idea is to closely work with our active locals in the districts of the targeted races. An important way we will accomplish this partnership is through 10 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Political Organizer (PO) positions funded by AFT. Six of those FTEs will be spread statewide and four will be in the Milwaukee area. The POs will be closely yoked with our locals as teams in the target race areas. If you are interested in one of these exciting opportunities, contact Kim Kohlhaas (at President@aft-wisconsin.org).

We AFTW Retirees could be vitally helpful in these efforts as well since we are also spread around the state. I'm asking you to consider getting connected with the efforts and activities in your area to maximize our effect as a statewide federation. This may mean working with a local other than the one you are a former member of. While that may be a little outside your comfort zone, I can assure you, you will be amazed and energized to meet and work with the current active AFTW local members in this ultra-critical election cycle. Let me (contact info below) or John Yaggi (AFTW Program Director at Yaggi@aft-wisconsin.org) know of your interest in engaging locally so your former local, or other AFTW locals in your vicinity, can keep you informed of opportunities to play a part in the efforts they will be spearheading in the next two months.

As retirees we may not find ourselves always available, emboldened, or physically able to do the boots on the ground tasks like delivering yard signs, door-to-door campaigning, phone work, etc., but we can still be a vital part of this mid-term election cycle work. We can provide donations to keep the political efforts we back funded for the battles as they arise. Remember, we now have a link that we can go to anytime to make a COPE contribution by card or from a checking account via ACH. That link is: <http://donate.billhighway.com/AFTWICOPE>. I have this address saved on my phone's home page so it's convenient to find. I have also set up a monthly reminder on my smartphone to donate. Please consider joining me and the many other retirees active in the mission-critical work of COPE in whatever way you can.

In Solidarity, Jeff.

jjrichter@charter.net or (608) 225-0012

Article on POWRS (Protect Our Wisconsin Retirement Security) by Roger Springman, AFTW Retiree Council Member

As in all election years, POWRS stepped up in early 2022 to provide retirees and the public with critical information on candidates and their views on retirement security. With so much at stake at the federal level and Senator Johnson's decidedly negative views on Social Security and Medicare, POWRS focused on the dozen or so senate candidates. Only the top four contenders, Barnes, Godlewski, Lasry, and Nelson ultimately responded to the survey.

POWRS website, www.powrs.org, provides a complete, unedited review of all candidate comments. But, with Mandela Barnes winning the August primary, interested readers may want to read exactly what he said. In general, all major candidates understood the nature and depth of the current retirement security crisis and the need for state and federal governments everywhere to offer flexible, low-cost incentives to help working families build retirement "nest eggs", including defined benefit pension systems.

2022 is certainly a major election year and POWRS many activist members took it upon themselves to get involved to make a difference. Here are some examples. In northern Wisconsin, Phil Anderson has been

working with Veterans for Peace to co-sponsor a 15-month boat tour of Eastern America, including the Great Lakes in 2023. In Oconto County, Kathleen Marsh helped co-found “Like-minded Women”, a current group of 25 centrist women to take action when local governments and school boards threaten library book removals and local injustice matters. In Milwaukee, Billie Feitlinger and others co-founded the Democratic Seniors Leadership Council to bring attention to critical issues of importance to state seniors. Statewide, Roger Springman worked with Nate Timm of the Democratic Party’s Rural Caucus to develop and deliver the first-ever, integrated political strategy for rural Wisconsin called PowerUP.

POWRS, like so many organizations, is filled with dedicated, passionate members, and 2022 brought those skills and energies into sharp focus for what will be the most important election of our lifetimes! **Make sure you VOTE on or before November 8th . . . our very democracy is on the ballot this year!!**

Thank you for your continued support of our Retiree Council. Any changes in your email addresses are appreciated so we can communicate quickly with you in our rapidly changing environment.

AFT-Wisconsin is currently seeking people to work 20 hours a week on the elections. The program will include house visits, virtual meetings, and days of actions with members and potential members. Any interested retirees should contact Kim Kohlhaas for more information at 218-310-0607 or president@aft-wisconsin.org.

AFT-WI Retiree Council
PO Box 285
Highland, WI 53543

kreul@aft-wisconsin.org
608-662-1444
<http://retirees.wi.aft.org>

PLEASE SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS