



AFGE Local 2823

Newsletter

Issue 2 - September 2024

Chief editor: Cecelia Gray, secretary

Upcoming Events

With the end of the fiscal year (FY) quickly approaching, the local is encouraging every employee to write a self-assessment. This is your opportunity to remind your coach of the accomplishments over this past FY. This drives down any chance for the agency to overlook you for performance awards.

Exercise your right! No matter who you support, please go out and VOTE! Local and state elections are just as important as presidential elections because they impact your daily lives more closely. Up to 4 hours of administrative time is allowed. Please contact your coach with your request closer to election day.

Inside This Issue

The local is looking to switch all members to agency deduction. If you signed up for eDues a few years back, please reach out to a member of the executive board or a steward to help you with moving towards the preferred method.

We have recently learned that the AFGE National Presidential election has been appealed by former National Vice President Jeremy Lannan on the basis of violations concerning credentialing. Jeremy Lannan ran against incumbent Dr. Everett Kelly. Dr. Kelly was subsequently installed as National President winning by popular vote. As a result of the appeal, the elections committee will have to conduct an investigation to determine whether or not there were violations and the next steps. We will keep you posted on the outcome.



Membership Meeting

Local 2823 has moved to a new platform for our monthly meetings. The first meeting was a success. We did experience some folks not being allowed in this past Wednesday because the number of participants was too high. We will be looking into this issue as this platform allows up to 250 participants. Stay tuned for updates.

See you soon!

34th AFL-CIO Convention

The executive board attended the AFL-CIO biennial convention in downtown Cleveland September 23, 2024 through September 24, 2024. Dignitaries to include: Former United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge, Senator Sherrod Brown, Former Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor, and Current President of Ohio AFL-CIO Tim Burga (pictured below in the ordered mentioned) addressed attendees at the Diversity Forum.

After completing the work of our federation, we discussed the importance of our vote. Do you value your paycheck? How about your pension? The restriction of who is entitled to your Social Security benefit we've all worked so very hard to receive when it is needed most? Entitlement to proper healthcare mean anything to you or your children? How about the continued right to vote? These are the very issues at stake with this upcoming election. Do the research and see for yourself what could be in store for us all as citizens. The playbook is available to all that want to see for themselves. It is called Project 2025. The playbook can be found here: <https://www.project2025.org>. The document is over 900 pages and it tells you exactly what is in store for us whether you vote red or blue IF the candidate mentioned in this document should win this upcoming election. While we respect everyone's right to choose, it is my personal duty to ensure that we share vital information to help with making those choices. Local 2823 stands with our federation of AFL-CIO by endorsing the following candidates:

US House of Representative:

Congressional District 14 – Tamie Wilson

Ohio Court of Appeals:

9th District – Steve Elliot

11 District Robert Patton

Ohio House of Representatives:

House District 33 – Veronica Sims

House District 72 – Nathaniel Adams

House District 76 – Emily Adams

State Board of Education:

District 1 – Kristie Reighard

District 5 – Mary Binegar

District 6 – Chris Orban

District 7 – Rhonda Johnson

District 8 – Karen Lloyd

United States Senator

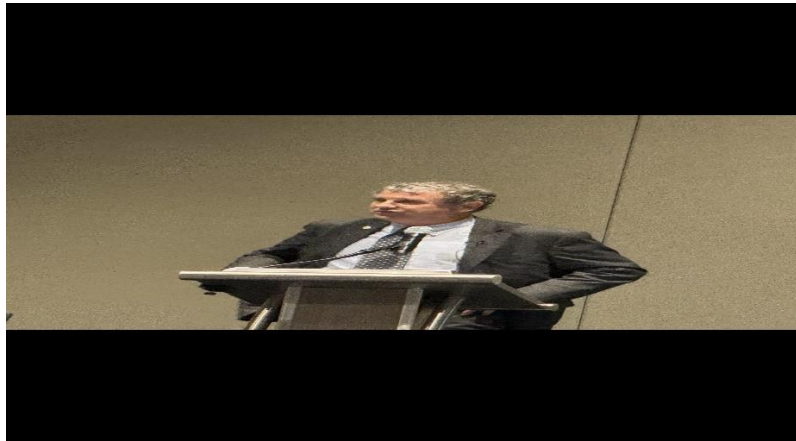
Sherrod Brown

Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates

Kamala Harris

Tim Walz

- Yes to issue 1 – End Gerrymandering and re-establish the proper maps for fair and equitable redistricting
- Please also educate yourselves on H.R.82 Social Security Fairness Act. You can find information on congress.gov.





Benefits corner

Did you know that membership has its privileges? As a member of AFGE, you have access to legal services. There is basic and a premium package. The basic package entitles you to a free initial thirty-minute consultation, 25 percent discount off attorney's rates and access to over 6800 law firms across the United States. The Premium package is available for a fee of \$22.95 per month and entitles you to everything included in the Basic plan plus a network of over 18,000 attorneys, expert legal advice and representation with attorney's fees being covered by the plan when using in-network attorneys. There is no limitation on hours or dollar caps under the Premium package. Please log into AFGE.org for more detailed information on each plan.

Local Updates

The VIP arbitration was scheduled to take place September 11, 2024. National VA Counsel Attorney Alec Summerfield traveled to Cleveland to represent the local. VSC employees and local board members worked very hard with Attorney Summerfield in preparation for the hearing; however, the agency failed to meet its obligations and the arbitration had to be canceled at the last minute. In the words of our past National Vice President of Womens and Fair Practices Jeremy Lannan, "You don't have to get ready if you stay ready." The local was more than prepared for round two. We are now waiting for a reschedule date.



Local 2823 for the win!

A grievance was filed and subsequently regarding the Letters of Concern the agency issued. The local requested the letters be rescinded and apologies extended to those employees that were impacted.

The temporary swing space is open for business.

We are still organizing our new space after reviewing years and years of paperwork. The task has been quite tedious as we have to be careful to not destroy any documentation that is required to be retained for legal purposes. A special shout out to Dwayne Walker, VP for handling the logistics of this project!

Ready to work for your local?

Have you heard the term, "There is power in numbers?" This local has grown by leaps and bounds with employees that keep us "in the know". With the amount of growth we are experiencing, we are in dire need of volunteers to assist with the work required to keep the local running effectively. We are still in need of volunteers for the audit, budget, election, legislative, and Womens and Fair Practices committees. We also need a volunteer or volunteers to manage our social media presence. I know you're out there and ready to get started. Please contact Cecelia Gray if you are interested in helping the local within the next 15 days. Help us start the new fiscal year off to a great new beginning!

As you can see from the report from the AFL-CIO convention above, it is of utmost importance that we hit the ground running with around 40 days left before we cast our votes. The union is more than about saving jobs and successfully removing adverse actions against our members. The job is bigger than just local business. It is more than just about our own personal struggle. There is power in numbers and we stand together with our sisters and brothers to fight for the rights of all people! We may not agree with every policy of any one candidate BUT we make the best decision based on what we have. Who's ready to knock on doors, send out mailings, and make phone calls?

President's corner

Hello to our union family,

First, I would like to thank everyone for their continued support. This has been a very busy month for the Local. We have been working on protecting employees from dismissals and resolving grievances without having to take the formal route.

We were scheduled for an arbitration that the agency failed to make necessary arrangements causing a delay. However, not to despair, we were well prepared to move forward. This arbitration is concerning the use of non-QRT members to perform in the capacity of QRT while training new employees. This is the same behavior that the Agency has been found guilty of in the last year but continued the same behavior. The Agency is within its right to assign work, but....they have to give employees a temporary promotion.

I would be deficient in my responsibilities if I did not address the upcoming election in November. Sisters and brothers, I know we hear this every election that this is the most important election we have had in many years. I won't tell anyone how to vote, but I will explain what we will lose. Our former president has already said that he will remove tens of thousands of VA jobs. He will gut the VA hospitals and push to privatize veteran health care. He will gut our retirement by forcing those fortunate enough to make it to retirement to pay more into retirement and get less in return. Keep in mind this has already been done to those employees hired since his last term.

There is a document written by the Heritage Foundation called Project 2025 (see the link above). The future of the VA begins on page 641. This is the Republican party's playbook should they win this upcoming election.

Brothers and sisters, don't take my word, educate yourself! Vote your pocket. Vote your family. Vote your retirement. Vote your future!

In solidarity,
Jim

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