

Professional & Technical Engineers, Local 21



AN ORGANIZATION FOR PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES

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Retirement Reform Headed for June Ballot

The Board of Supervisors voted on February 26, 2008, to put the agreement reached to improve city employee pensions while reforming retiree healthcare, on the June 2008 ballot. The vote was a surprising 10 to 0, reflecting the level of achievement all parties have reached to partially resolve a difficult, large scale issue.

Nothing ever seems easy in San Francisco, and the Mayor's office, the Board of Supervisors, and the city's major unions, must now turn attention towards developing a campaign to insure passage on the June 3rd ballot.

Although there has been no identified opposition to the ballot measure, it will be necessary to conduct an effective voter education drive to assure passage. Potential opponents could easily use the measure's complexity to confuse voters and defeat the measure if there is not a union-led large scale campaign.

Local 21 Political Director Michael Seville and Vice President for Legislative and Political Action Dean Coate hope to use the campaign to develop a dedicated team of Local 21 political member volunteers who will phone bank and walk precincts.

"Historically, Local 21 has been challenged to produce volunteers and for a union to be respected in political circles, we need to develop this capacity," said Coate. "We have to be able to produce people who are willing to be activists on behalf of propositions and candidates we endorse and believe in."

There are two different political teams working on the campaign. Jim Stearns is working on behalf of the unions and Barnes, Mosher, Whitehurst, Lauter & Partners are working on behalf of the Mayor and Supervisor Sean Elsbernd. Together, the campaign team is identifying messages which will carry this charter amendment to passage. They are getting ready for

the initial media outreach campaign which will focus on getting people accustomed to the charter amendment and what it proposes to do. This will be closely followed by the direct outreach campaign of phone banks, precinct walks and person to person campaigning.

This is the culmination of months of hard work by dedicated union members from all across the City. For more information on all the research and hard work that was performed, check out <http://www.ifpte21.org/retire/>.

SF Steward's Program Development Update

The Local 21 staff and the San Francisco Advisory Committee have been continuing discussions and moving closer to launching a fully functional steward program in San Francisco. Although Local 21 has always had stewards scattered across CCSF departments and chapters, there has never been a formal steward program with regular trainings and other support mechanisms. Local 21 staff conducted a series of one-on-one meetings with current Local 21 stewards and leaders to discuss their thoughts on steps needed to develop a stronger, more structured program. At prior San Francisco Advisory meetings, it was suggested that stewards be called "Professional Rights Representatives (PRR)" in recognition of the professional nature of our members and the reality that our issues often transcend traditional labor issues to professional issues and concerns.

"Very often what initially seems like a simple individual performance issue will actually be a deeper professional issue. Our goal is to create the safest, most secure environment for our members to meet professional standards, excel at their jobs, and produce a product that is truly best for the city," noted Local 21 Executive Director Bob Muscat.

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As a means of determining how a revitalized Local 21 PRR program should be organized to most effectively serve Local 21 members and address some of the challenges current stewards face, Local 21 staff will be holding a series of brown bag meetings at various CCSF worksites. The goal of these informal lunch-time discussions will be to solicit input from members regarding how a new member-driven representative structure should look across CCSF departments, chapters, and worksites. It will also focus on examining how we as a union can effectively recruit, retain, and support our stewards and PRRs.

Trying to create a truly open environment where professionals are free to carry out their work in the most competent fashion is the ultimate goal of the program. We cannot accomplish this without the involvement of our members. The first of several brown-bag discussions will take place at Noon on Tuesday March 25, 2008 at MTA at 1 South Van Ness Ave. in the 7th floor conference room #7080. For information on future scheduled brown bag discussions, visit our website at http://www.ifpte21.org/chp_sfc.shtml.

EDF Exhausted Early

For the third year in a row, the Employee Development Fund has been exhausted before the end of the fiscal year. Those who have already been approved for this fiscal year will be paid next fiscal year when more funds become available.

Based on the initial data the union has received, there were over 1,200 requests for funding. Local 21 staff are now reviewing the expenditures to ensure that they were used properly and that departments did not improperly use the EDF to pay for required or other trainings that departments have historically provided.

Exemplary Pay Grievance Settled at Port

Local 21 members at the Port of San Francisco recently won an ongoing Citywide battle to ensure departments are properly using the Exemplary Pay provision in our contract.

The department agreed to new criteria for evaluating employees for Exemplary performance. It also agreed to use the new criteria for back pay to

Fiscal Year 2006-2007, when the program was initiated. The department granted three employees Exemplary Pay for the first year and is in the process of applying the criteria to the current Fiscal Year.

COPE Drive Kicks Off and New Political Page Up and Running

We are beginning a new COPE campaign to sign up new contributors to our T.J. Anthony Fund which will help the union support candidates in this extremely important election cycle.

Our staff and Executive Officers are reaching out to CCSF Officers who are not contributing before a citywide campaign is kicked off in the coming weeks. Our leaders need to take this vital first step in building the participation needed to have a strong COPE Fund.

The current COPE Fund is underfunded and does not have enough funds to support all the deserving and supportive candidates that are running for election throughout the Bay Area. COPE contributions allow us to support candidates and propositions which are vitally important to our unions ability to negotiate sound contracts, and fight contracting out.

As part of our new political program, we have recently revamped our Political Action page on our website. New to the page is a political description of our general political philosophy as well as a new PayPal option for making online contributions to our COPE Fund.

Check out our new page and contribute to the T.J. Anthony Fund by going to www.ifpte21.org and clicking on Political Action.

PAC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 26

Vice President for Legislative and Political Action Dean Coate has called a PAC meeting for CCSF on March 26 at noon. On the agenda is a preliminary discussion for our Board of Supervisors Endorsements. We will be discussing questionnaires and a time table for making endorsements. Come out and let your voice be heard!



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