



NEWSLETTER

Labor Report from Jill Jones of Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT)

New Unions

On January 27, 2025, an overwhelming majority of staff at the Delaware County Public Library voted to form a union with the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). Their union consists of approximately 85 librarians and library workers. They are the sixth group of Ohio library workers to do so since 2021.

At the end of January, two unions at Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio were voluntarily recognized by the agency. A union for clinical staff, representing approximately 140 members, and a smaller union for administrators, advocates, and educators, representing about 30 members, make up P-P-go Workers United. They are affiliated with the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 98.

On February 19, 2025, stagehands and behind-the-scenes workers at the Schottenstein Center voted to form a union. They will be affiliated with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 12.

All new unions will now start the process of negotiating a contract that prioritizes the workers' issues. If interested in forming a union in your workplace, contact the Ohio AFL-CIO at www.ohioaflcio.org/form-a-union to get connected with a local union.

First Contracts

On November 11, 2024, the workers with Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) United, affiliated with OPEIU Local 792, ratified their first union contract. They negotiated two years to achieve this contract.

In December 2024, the Franklin County Public Defender Collective, affiliated with AFSCME Ohio Council 8, ratified their first contract. Their union represents the attorneys of the Franklin County Public Defenders office.

The Faculty Alliance of Miami, consisting of a faculty union and a librarian union, reached an agreement on both contracts the last week of February 2025 at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Their union is affiliated with the Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP/AFT/OFT).

After a year of negotiations, Pickerington Public Library United Staff ratified their first contract with Pickerington Public Library in mid-March. Their union is affiliated with the Ohio Federation of Teachers.



OAPSE on Strike

The IT staff, cafeteria workers, custodians, and maintenance workers at Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools, affiliated with OAPSE/AFSCME Local 686, went on strike January 7, 2025. After months of negotiating a first contract, both sides ended up before a third-party fact-finding mediator, which found that the union's proposal for a wage increase should actually be higher. The school administrators voted down that recommendation, which led to the strike. After seven weeks on the picket line, a tentative agreement between the parties was reached at the end of February. After both parties approved the tentative agreement, the union members returned to work on March 12.

Higher Education Destruction Act

Despite massive public opposition, on February 12 the Ohio Senate passed SB 1. It then quickly worked its way through the Ohio House as HB 6, passing on March 19. This bill bans diversity training and programs, limits collective bargaining rights for workers in Ohio's public colleges and universities, and prohibits their right to strike. The bill now heads back to the Senate for final approval, before it will go to DeWine, who has said he intends to sign it. Labor unions are united in opposition to this bill, and encourage people to tell their elected officials to oppose SB 1/HB 6 at <http://bit.ly/OFTSB1>





NEWSLETTER

COWC LEGISLATIVE, PUBLIC POLICY, AND LABOR NEWS REPORT

updates by Mike Smalz, board member of COWC

State Minimum wage Increase – On January 1, 2025, the Ohio minimum wage for non-tipped workers increased from \$10.45 an hour to \$10.70 an hour. The minimum wage for tipped workers increased from \$5.25 an hour to \$5.35 an hour. The new minimum wage applies to any businesses with annual gross receipts of \$394,000 or more.



Future Minimum Wage Annual Increases – New House Bill 34 would gradually increase the state minimum wage to \$15 an hour, starting with a \$1 increase on January 1, 2026, and culminating in a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2030. The minimum wage would increase by the cost of living each year thereafter based on the consumer price index. HB 34 has been referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

Driver's License Suspensions – House Bill 29 (HB 29) makes it easier for individuals to avoid driver's license suspensions or to reinstate their already suspended drivers' licenses. Specifically, HB 29 eliminates driver's license suspensions for failure to pay a court fee or fine; retroactively and automatically removes suspensions resulting from failure to pay court fines and fees; eliminates school truancy as a reason for license denial or suspension; removes the possible penalty of a driver's license suspension for most drug offenses, limits the use of driver's license suspensions for nonpayment of child support and broadens the conditions under which a person whose driver's license is suspended for failure to pay child support may file a motion for limited driving privileges; eliminates the suspension of motor vehicle registration rights and impoundment of a motor vehicle's license plates as penalties for operating a motor vehicle without insurance; reduces the lookback period for driving without insurance criminal offenses from five years to one year; and prohibits the Registrar of Motor Vehicles from charging any reinstatement fees for the reinstatement of a driver's license. The Ohio legislature passed HB 29 on December 18, 2024, and the Governor signed it on January 8, 2025. The new law takes effect on April 9, 2025.



COWC after HB106 was signed into law

Pay Stubs – House Bill 106 (HB 106), the Pay Stub Protection Act, requires Ohio employers to provide pay stubs to their employees. The COWC and Policy Matters Ohio supported and testified in support of HB 106. The Ohio legislature passed HB 106 on December 18, 2024, and the Governor signed it on January 8, 2025. This new law takes effect on April 9, 2025. The COWC and Policy Matters Ohio sent a letter to the Director of the Ohio Department of Commerce seeking information regarding how the Department will enforce the Pay Stub Protection Act and offering to collaborate with the Department on the implementation of the new law.

Learn more in the News section of the COWC page, or by [clicking here](#).

Higher Education Bill – New Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 6 (applicable to all public universities in Ohio) would ban all diversity and inclusion offices, courses, trainings, orientation and scholarships; ban strikes by university faculty, prohibit collective bargaining over university faculty evaluations and bargaining over post-tenure review policies; require post-tenure review and annual performance reviews of faculty; and prohibit "indoctrination" of students regarding any controversial beliefs." Having just passed the House on March 20, and the Senate on February 12, 2025, the bill will likely get re-approval from the Senate and be signed by Governor Mike DeWine.

These passages come despite overwhelming opponent testimony, as well as protests from University students, faculty, staff, and community members



OHIO STUDENT ASSOCIATION LEADS PROTESTORS TO THE OHIO STATEHOUSE TO PROTEST SENATE BILL 1 ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025 IN COLUMBUS, OHIO. SAMANTHA MADAR/COLUMBUS DISPATCH



NEWSLETTER

COWC LEGISLATIVE, PUBLIC POLICY, AND LABOR NEWS REPORT

updates compiled by Mike Smalz, board member of COWC

Ban on Release Time for Municipal Employees – New Senate Bill 8 would ban municipalities from paying union members for release time. (Union contracts often include “release time,” a negotiated provision that lets public employees be “released” from their jobs to attend to union matters that are vital to ensuring the employee and government employer relationship is working for all parties). The Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee has heard sponsor and proponent testimony.

Ban on Noncompete Agreements

New Senate bill 11 would ban noncompete contracts that restrict future employee job or career options after they leave their previous employment. The Senate Judiciary Committee has heard sponsor, proponent, and opponent testimony.



COWC SANCTUARY GATHERING.

Anti-Sanctuary Bill – New House Bill 26 would require state and local governments to cooperate with the federal government and trigger funding reductions for noncompliance.

Labor Law Notices – New Senate Bill 33 and House Bill 94 would allow Ohio employers to post notices regarding Ohio minimum wage, overtime, civil rights, child labor, prevailing wage, and workers’ compensation laws on the Internet instead of having to post them in a conspicuous location at the workplace. The Ohio Senate has passed SB 33. The House Commerce and Labor Committee has head sponsor and proponent testimony on HB 94.



Deregulating Child Labor – New Senate Bill 50 would allow Ohio employers to schedule children between ages 14 and 15 to work as late as 9:00 p.m., beyond the current 7:00 pm limit. The Senate Workforce Development Committee has heard testimony from the sponsors, proponents, and opponents.

Political Protest – New Senate Bill 53 would make organizations liable in civil lawsuits for injury or loss to a person or property due to vandalism or riot activity. It would also “encourage” criminal prosecution of protesters who commit such acts. The Senate Judiciary Committee has heard sponsor testimony.



CHILDREN IN PA COAL MINES, PHOTO BY LEWIS HINE/RECORDS OF THE NATIONAL CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS





NEWSLETTER

COWC LEGISLATIVE, PUBLIC POLICY, AND LABOR NEWS REPORT

updates compiled by Mike Smalz, board member of COWC

New U.S. Secretary of Labor and Anti-Labor Measures – The U.S. Senate confirmed former Republican U.S. Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer as his Secretary of Labor. Meanwhile, the new Trump-appointed NLRB General counsel has issued a memorandum rescinding thirty pro-labor NLRB memos and decisions, including a 2022 decision requiring make-whole remedies (beyond merely recovering back pay) for victims of unfair labor practices and a 2024 decision prohibiting mandatory anti-union “captive audience” meetings. In addition, Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) agents have been given access to sensitive data at the Department of Labor, potentially including the identities of vulnerable workers who have filed wage and hour or occupational safety complaints. President Trump has also issued executive orders weakening worker health and safety protections and eliminating the \$15 an hour minimum wage for employees of federal contractors.



Ohio's
economy
and families
are suffering

Need for Paid Leave in Ohio – A new study from the National Partnership for Women & Families found that about 72% of Ohioans do not have paid family leave through their employers, hurting workers, especially women, hurting Ohioans’ personal finances, and making Ohio less competitive, For more information go to:
<https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-ohio.pdf>

Mass Firings of Federal Employees – The Trump administration and its Office of Personnel and Management (OPM) have fired thousands of federal employees and threatened to fire many thousands of additional employees. However, on February 27, 2025, in response to a court case brought by labor unions, a federal judge ruled that the OPM has no authority to fire probationary employees at six federal government departments.



CREDIT: AL DRAGO / BLOOMBERG / GETTY IMAGES

Trump Fires Two Democratic EEOC Commissioners – On January 18, 2025, President Trump fired two Democratic members of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), leaving the Commission without a quorum and slowing down its work. The new Trump-appointed acting chair says that her priority will be “rooting out” and diversity, equity, and opportunity” (DEI) programs or activities by employers.



Trump Fires NLRB General Counsel and a Democratic Board Member --

On January 27, 2025, President Trump fired the pro-labor NLRB General Counsel and also fired Gwynne Wilcox, a Democratic member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). As a result, the agency lacks a quorum and its policy work and the agency’s litigation on behalf of employment discrimination victims will slow to a crawl. However, a federal judge has ruled that Trump’s firing of Wilcox was illegal and ordered that she be reinstated.



NEWSLETTER

COWC LEGISLATIVE, PUBLIC POLICY, AND LABOR NEWS REPORT

updates compiled by Mike Smalz, board member of COWC

Legal protections revoked- On March 21, 2025 The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced it will revoke legal protections for around 532,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans who arrived in the U.S. since October 2022. These individuals, who came under a humanitarian parole program, will lose their legal status on April 24, following a notice in the Federal Register.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem emphasized that parole is temporary and not a basis for immigration status. The policy change, which revokes the protections established during the Biden administration that allowed up to 30,000 people per month to work and live in the U.S., is being challenged in federal court. Activists warn this decision will create chaos and heartbreak for countless families. While Haiti has accepted some deportation flights, Cuba and Venezuela have been more resistant.

Trump Administration Anti-Immigrant Measures – Since taking office on January 20, 2025, President Trump has issued many anti-immigrant executive orders and policy memoranda; the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has launched a wave of deportation raids across the country, the Trump administration is promising “mass deportations” of undocumented migrants, and is saying that up to 30,000 undocumented immigrants will be imprisoned at the infamous Guantanamo Bay prison facility. In addition, the Trump administration has ended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 350,000

Venezuelans in the United States, effective in April 2025, and plans to end TPS for another 250,000 Venezuelans in September 2025. In addition, the Trump administration revoked the Biden administration’s extension of TPS for more than 300,000 Haitians (including many immigrant workers and their families in Springfield, Ohio), meaning that their protections will expire in August. President Trump also issued an executive order revoking the humanitarian parole programs for individuals from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, meaning that no new applications or sponsorships can be accepted after January 20, 2025, and pending applications may be delayed or re-evaluated. Existing parolees can remain in the U.S. until their two-year period expires, but they will lose work authorization and face potential deportation once their status lapses. Some people who lose their TPS or parole status may be able to avoid deportation by applying for asylum.

Meanwhile, so-called “sanctuary cities” are under attack. Trump issued an executive order calling for defunding cities with sanctuary policies. Cities in Connecticut, Oregon, and Washington have joined a February 2025 lawsuit led by the city and county of San Francisco and Santa Clara County in California against the executive order.

On February 27, 2025, DHS announced that it will soon issue a rule requiring all undocumented immigrants (“illegal aliens”) to carry proof of registration with them wherever they go and that DHS will criminally charge undocumented persons who do not produce proof of registration upon request by immigration enforcement officers. However, it is still the law that immigration enforcement officers cannot stop someone and ask them to show their papers unless they have a reasonable suspicion or probable cause for doing so and they should not engage in racial profiling.

On February 28, 2025, DHS issued a new Notice to Appear (NTA) guidance. (A NTA requires a person to appear at a deportation hearing.) The new language states, “USCIS will issue a Notice to Appear (NTA) where, upon issuance of any unfavorable decision on a benefit request, the alien is not lawfully present in the United States.” This could place unsuccessful applicants for U visas and possibly even unsuccessful T visa applicants at greater risk of deportation.

The Trump administration is now using a very old law, the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, to deport some undocumented immigrants, even though that law was intended to be used in wartime.



FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: DETAINEES ON ARRIVAL TO CAMP X-RAY, THE HOLDING FACILITY AT GUANTÁNAMO BAY, CUBA. © US DOD



JAPANESE AMERICANS WAITING IN LINE AT THE MANZANAR RELOCATION CENTER IN CALIFORNIA IN 1943. ANSEL ADAMS / UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES