LCFT Endorses JB Pritzker in the 2018 Gubernatorial Democratic Primary

by Kelly Regnier,
504 Word Editor

At the LCFT Executive Board meeting on August 29, 2017 the Lake County Federation of Teachers Executive Board delegates voted unanimously to endorse JB Pritzker in the 2018 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary. The LCFT delegates expressed their strong desire to support a candidate for governor who will fight for working families and public education in Lake County and across Illinois.

On his website, Pritzker says, “Illinois is my home. This is where I’ve raised my family, where I started businesses and where I’ve created programs to improve the lives of people across the state.

What’s happening now in Springfield is offensive to our values and who we are as a state. Bruce Rauner’s failure as Governor isn’t just about numbers, it’s creating real damage every day to people across Illinois.

None of us can afford to sit on the sidelines. We have to stand up for what we believe in. That’s why I’m running for Governor.”

Pritzker has a vision that includes five crucial points.

* Set Children Up For Success From Cradle To Career
* Restore and Rebuild Illinois’ Social Services
* Invest in Community and Economic Development
* Protect Health Care

Pritzker also honestly addresses an important question on his website, “With Bruce Rauner as Governor and Donald Trump as President, why do we need another rich guy running for office?” He says, “My answer is that it’s a matter of values, and that Trump and Rauner are trying to destroy many of the things I’ve spent my life fighting for.

About a century ago, my great-grandfather Nicholas arrived in Chicago penniless. He worked hard — but he had help. A social service agency helped him find a place to live. A good public school helped him learn English. A state university allowed him to get a higher education degree.

You can’t pull yourself up by your bootstraps if you don’t have any, and this state gave my great grandfather his bootstraps.

It’s what everyone in Illinois deserves, it’s what I’ve been fighting for my whole life, and it’s what I’ll be fighting for every day as your next governor.”
Real Consequences

The worst outcome of the recent passage of Illinois Senate Bill One into law is “mandate relief.” If you don’t know, mandate relief is the by-product of an often heard yet misguided claim that the private sector (meaning business for profit) always performs more efficiently and effectively than government. This misperception is rooted in an American sentiment that asserts that because the government takes my money (taxes) the government must be bad. The propagandists have finely crafted and promoted this erroneous relationship throughout the years to the point that many Americans believe that the typical government worker, like you, is little more than a financial drain who unjustly receives taxpayer money for providing wasteful services in return.

A real consequence of this unfounded belief has come home to us in Lake County by allowing short-sided school boards to eliminate the four-year requirement for physical education and/or to opt for private providers for driver’s education. Many boards may choose these options believing that they can no longer afford these requirements as they push for alternatives in the curriculum or just plainly feel it’s their duty to spend less of the taxpayer money. There are unfortunate and potentially disastrous consequences for these decisions for the safety and health of all of us. We all know intuitively that physical activity leads to healthier individuals. These sound physical habits for a lifetime of improved health are often learned in school. In addition, we know by observation and by statistical evidence that the value of driver’s education is self-evident. Yet once again, there exists the notion that someone making a profit will do as good or an even better job than those of us that are trained in educational methods, child development and the subject at hand.

Another real consequence of Senate Bill One, proposed and insisted upon by Republican Governor Rauner, are tuition tax credits. These “vouchers” allow folks to take their children out of public schools and assist them in paying for private schools, many of them parochial. If you’ve read this column before you know that it’s my belief that this is tantamount to de facto segregation: my child will be better off when he or she is not learning with your child…

All of these real consequences were the result of compromises necessary in order to reach the goal of the most important restructuring of school funding in Illinois history. Please make no mistake about it: I firmly believe that the good of Senate Bill One should not be overlooked. The school funding reformulation along with an ongoing re-evaluation of funding based on need will address funding inequality in Illinois for the better. Personally, I have lobbied for a new formula that sends more money to the neediest schools for nearly my

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--LOFT President Michael T. McGue

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entire professional life. In the end, Democratic leaders consulted with me and I agreed that the funding restructuring was far too important to let slip away this time. We had schools in our Local that would close in short order without some fiscal solution and several contract negotiations that came to a standstill as a result of the gridlock in Springfield. A critical element to this process was dealing with a Republican Governor who for months proposed even more onerous demands. Rauner’s earlier stipulations included taking away collective bargaining rights and providing even more money to private education. This is a Governor that has no empathy for public schools and outright hatred for their employees’ Unions.

At our last Executive Board meeting we asked State Senator and Democratic Majority Whip, Terry Link, to explain how Senate Bill One evolved in its current form. In explaining the lengthy negotiations he pointed out that nearly 4 out of 10 Union households in Illinois voted for Governor Rauner. Had that not been the case, he would not have been elected. Maybe you support this Governor. Maybe you voted for him for reasons that had nothing to do with education, but sadly for our profession, the election of Governor Rauner has created real, negative consequences for public education. No political party is without blame here, but one political party proposed mandate relief and tuition tax credits.

What can we do now? We can fight back when school boards move to cut physical education or privatize driver’s education. Several years ago a middle administrator with a mediocre track record in Waukegan found his way to a brief and infamous stint as Superintendent at Zion-Benton Township High School. In one of his first moves he tried to privatize driver’s education. Our Union working with a parent group, mobilized several hundred individuals to attend the next Z-BTHS Board meeting along with an expert on driver’s training who sited the poor statistics of private driver’s education outcomes. I also invited then Republican State Senator Adeline Geo-Karis to speak. To the thunderous approval of the crowd the Senator stated her opposition to the privatization. The Board later voted down the proposal. Shortly thereafter the Board parted ways with Superintendent Alvino and the District maintains a vibrant driver’s education program to this day.

All of us know that education is, by nature, an incubator for new ideas. These ideas can often result in enlightened and positive curriculum changes. However, implementing new ideas should not be at the expense of our public health and welfare as they often tend to be when it comes to cutting back on physical and drivers’ education in our schools. We must resist the temptation to dismiss these requirements because of a lack of support that comes from public misinformation. We must continue to resist these self-serving forces and fight vigilantly to fend off these attacks which ultimately reduce the quality of our services to our students and our communities.

On a final note, the LCFT Executive Board unanimously endorsed J. B. Pritzker in his bid for governor in the Democratic primary. At a recent appearance at our Union Hall in September, Mr. Pritzker promised to roll back these onerous outcomes of Senate Bill One. It’s time we elected a friend of PUBLIC education for Illinois and I am encouraged by the early support for Mr. Pritzker by our LCFT Political Action Committee and Executive Board. Please make every effort to follow the 2018 race for governor and listen to what the candidates are saying about their visions for the future of public education because, as we have just witnessed firsthand, there are real consequences.

In Unity,

Michael T. McGue,
LCFT President
Waukegan Professional Support Staff Ratifies Three Year Contract
WPSS Also Initiates Second Bargaining Table to Mitigate Damage of District-Imposed Layoffs

by Matt Beverly, IFT Field Service Director

The Waukegan Professional Support Staff Council (WPSS) voted to ratify its new 2017-2020 contract August 17, 2017, which officially ended contract negotiations that began in early spring of 2017. The board of education approved the deal in the middle of September. The negotiations entailed changes to multiple aspects of the new contract, including some clean-up provisions, but the parties agreed to more substantive changes also, with the most noteworthy being dramatic improvements to the single insurance premium benefit. Some other highlights include:

· Inclusion of print department employees into the bargaining unit
· Strengthened bargaining unit work language
· An improved evaluation plan
· Improved “supervision of students” language
· Contract language related to 2-year piloting of new electronic swiping in and out procedures
· Improvements to early retirement, regular retirement and tuition reimbursement benefits

District Technology Specialist and Bargaining Unit President Deb Phelps said, “Overall, the process ended fairly, though we had to make our voices heard at certain points during bargaining to get there. In the end, our bargaining team believed the board was bargaining in good faith, and because we were able to convey that reality to our members, we were able to ratify a fair multi-year agreement.”

The biggest priority for the members was to bring parity to the single insurance employee premium cost. The bargaining unit agreed in the last contract to begin to pay a share of the single premium, but last year’s amount for WPSS members ($600 annually) was substantially more than almost all other employee groups in the district, including administrators. With the new contract, most members will be paying about $150 annually or less, or approximately 75% less annually compared to the old contract.

The 3-year deal also includes maintenance of the wage schedule, with dollars added on to each cell each year of the agreement. With step, members will receive an average 4.53% raise each year, with longevity (reached after 23 steps) equaling the same 4.53% annual raise. Dependent insurance benefits were also maintained, with members adding on to their share of that member premium cost 35% of each year’s increase, which historically is about several hundred dollars more per year with each of the dependent insurance policies (12 dependent options). The contract was retroactive to July 1, 2017.

WPSS also opened a second and separate bargaining
table with the board with its formal May 25, 2017, demand to bargain letter to negotiate district-imposed layoffs, which the unit became aware of very late in the academic year compared to other years when layoffs have occurred. Though more than 30 positions were impacted by this most recent employer reduction of force, because the union demanded to bargain that decision with the relatively new District 60 administrative team, only 13 people were ultimately laid off, but since those layoffs at the beginning of the summer, all 13 individuals have since been offered jobs back at the district, though some did not accept those offers.

The bargaining team consisted of WPSS members Deborah Phelps, Brenda Durben, Mary Anne Goetz, Tanja Lloyd-Blaustein and Angeline Roberson, and Matt Beverly.

Retirees Corner

by Carolyn Scaccia, Retirees Council President

On September 13, 2017, the Retirees’ Council had a luncheon to honor our newest members – the 2017 Retirees. It was our most well-attended event to date.

On December 7, 2017, we will be having our Taste of 504. We meet at the Union Hall at 11:00 a.m. Each attendee brings a dish to share and a copy of the recipe for that dish. While we socialize and sample all the different foods, the recipes are duplicated. You end up with a cookbook and some new ideas for holiday entertaining.

Please feel free to bring a spouse or friend. We don’t want anyone to not attend because they don’t know anyone else who is coming. Hopefully, you will also make some new friends.

During the Taste of 504 we also have a food drive. Please bring non-perishable items that can be donated to a local food bank. If you are unable to join us that day but still want to contribute to the food drive, you may drop off items at the Union Hall prior to the December 7 date.
REGISTRATION FORM  
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2017 FALL  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)  
Name: ____________________________________ Home Phone: _____________________

Home Address: ____________________________________________________________________

City: ____________________________________ State: _____ Zip: ______________

Personal E-mail: __________________________ (School District): ________________

IEIN Number: ______________________

Select courses you will attend:

FALL  DAILY ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED

☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS 101  
Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 15 PDU’s 15 hours  
October 3 through October 17

☐ STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS (PART I)  
Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) 30 PDU’s 30 hours  
October 19 – November 21

Number of courses selected: x Cost per course: $50 = $ __________

CHECKS AND REGISTRATION FORM MUST BE IN THE UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE CLASS. PLEASE DON’T JEOPARDIZE THE CLASS BY REGISTERING LATE. ALL CLASSES ARE HELD IN THE UNION HALL.

Enclose check or money order (no cash) made payable to: AFT Local 504

Return form with non-refundable payment to: Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504  
248 Ambrogio Drive  
Gurnee, IL  60031
Our first class for the fall didn’t quite happen as the timing for it just didn’t work out. So sorry about that for those that were interested in taking the Foundations class this fall. We will be offering it again later in the school year. Also English Language Learners 101 did not have enough participants so we will be offering that one as well later this year. Keep checking the 504 for current and upcoming classes. The winter schedule will be in the next issue. One of the classes being scheduled for the winter is Middle School Math. The dates will be in the next issue with the full schedule.

The next class for this fall is Strategies For Student Success (Part 1). It starts on October 19 and goes until November 21.

As a reminder, attendance for all sessions of the ER&D classes is mandatory. If for some reason, you are not able to attend a session, you will be expected to complete an assignment that will make up for the time you have missed. If this is not complied with, you will not receive any credit for the class.

Classes still only cost you $50 and provide everyone with credits for recertification as well as two hours of graduate credit if your counsel’s contract provides this. Otherwise, you can receive graduate credits from Governor’s State University for a substantial cost.

If your council does not provide these credits, feel free to talk to me about it and perhaps we can work something out in order to achieve this advantage.
IFT Offers Union Leadership Institute Classes

from www.ift-aft.org

Union Leadership Institute (ULI) North courses are held at the IFT Robert M. Healey Center in Westmont, Ill. Most courses are held over three weekends and participants must attend all three sessions to complete the course. In addition to the core three-weekend courses, we are also offering one-weekend sessions, including “Worksite Leader Training” and “Youth @ Work.”

The 2017-18 ULI North training sessions will be held on the following dates:
*Fall Session: November 4-5, 2017
*Winter Session: February 10-11, 2018
*Spring Session: April 28-29, 2018

IFT’s Union Leadership Institute (ULI) program has been designed to meet the needs of both new and experienced local leaders and activists in all IFT constituency groups. ULI provides participants with hands-on learning of union skills, professional development opportunities and a chance to network with other IFT members from throughout the state. ULI course descriptions and registration are also available at the IFT website, www.ift-aft.org.

Participants can select and complete one of the ULI core courses over three weekend-long sessions. The core courses for the upcoming year are:

**Boot Camp for Union Leaders**

Designed for newly elected leaders, prospective leaders or for veteran leaders who want to recharge their skills, this newly revamped course will help participants develop and enhance their leadership skills to ensure the success of their locals/councils in today’s challenging education, economic and political climate. Participants will:

- Build skills and clarify roles of local officers and activists;
- Learn skills to work with different learning and leadership styles in order to build an effective team;
- Compile a leadership toolbox of valuable skills and resources;
- Enhance the essential skills to empower and motivate others to be actively engaged in the union; and,
- Have fun in the leadership role!

**Effective Grievance Administration**

This interactive course will help participants master the grievance process with group practice and simulated role play. This course will help participants develop critical skills designed to:
- Separate gripes from grievances;
- Develop grievance investigation and research skills;
- Take problem-solving approaches to settlement;
- Write, prepare and present grievances.

**Introduction to Collective Bargaining**

This training provides those with little or no bargaining experience with an understanding of how and why negotiations work and prepares participants to actively engage in the bargaining process. Participants will:

- Review collective bargaining laws;
- Learn the different stages in a negotiation;
- Prepare and write negotiation proposals;
- Learn what makes the negotiation team work well together; and,
- Learn how the mediation process works.

In addition to these core ULI courses, we have added workshops that participants can complete within a single ULI weekend session:

**Worksite Leader Training**

*Youth @ Work*

We are also offering two “train-the-trainer” workshops that can be completed in half-day sessions:

**Evaluation Empowerment**

**SB100 - From Punitive to Restorative:**

**Transforming School Discipline**

Lake County Federation of Teachers

AFT Local #504

IFT-AFT/AFL-CIO

847/623-7725

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- Waukegan Paraprofessionals
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The 504 Word is devoted to the interests of the Education Workers’ Union movement and is published five times each year by the Lake County Federation of Teachers.