

OCSEA

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EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION

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AFSCME LOCAL 11/AFL-CIO
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LABOR

AT THE

POLLS



OCSEA members share how the Governor's race will *shape the future of their jobs*, p 2-3

PLUS: SAMPLE BALLOT INSIDE

“When we talk about ‘vote your job,’ it’s not just a bumper sticker, it’s not a tagline,” said OCSEA President **Chris Mabe** at the OCSEA Presidents Conference in July. The event kicked off OCSEA’s Get Out the Vote (GOTV) season, inviting labor-friendly candidates and advocates to speak on the importance of electing candidates who support public workers, their unions and the services they provide.

The results of the November 3 election will be monumental for all Ohioans, and particularly for state employees as we elect the person who will lead the state in contract negotiations. “It’s time we get the best seat at the table to move us forward,” said Mabe.

Ohio’s razor-thin gubernatorial race is between Dr. Amy Acton, a pro-union Democrat and public servant, and Vivek Ramaswamy, a Republican billionaire with a record of cutting public services. The choice is clear: Acton supports public collective bargaining in Ohio

LABOR AT THE POLLS: **YOUR**

whereas Ramaswamy wants to reduce labor’s power and strip union rights in the name of “government efficiency.”

“This November, working people must vote like our jobs, our freedoms, and our families’ futures depend on it, because they do. We must elect candidates who will lower costs, protect public services, and stand up for working people, not billionaires,” said newly elected AFSCME International President **Patrick Moran** in his Labor Day message.

See more Vote Your Job Resources from Congress to the Ohio Statehouse on pages 4-5 and sample ballot attached to this magazine.

Maggie Selbe

Ohio EPA, Hocking Chapter 3700



For **Maggie Selbe**, an Environmental Specialist 2 in the Drinking Water and Ground Water Division of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the upcoming election is about electing the right leadership.

“I want a candidate that understands what our state agencies do and doesn’t make blanket comments about redundancies in state agencies or how some can be eliminated or rolled into federal regulation

agencies,” said Maggie. “I think what’s best for Ohio, and best for union members, is to elect someone that lives here, cares about our citizens, and realizes that this is not always an adversarial relationship.” Maggie, a union leader in Hocking Chapter 3700, says Amy Acton is that leader.

“We are citizens in these communities—we are invested in these communities, and we want what’s best for them,” she said. “So, when we are making decisions on how rules and laws should be applied, they’re impacting us too, because we live here. If we eliminated an agency like Dept. of Health, Ohio EPA or ODNR, then those decisions would get made elsewhere—in Chicago, Washington, D.C. by people that don’t live here.”

Maggie says this election is a turning point. “It’s all hands on deck to make sure that our union is protected; a strong union is vital for protecting not only state employees but the integrity of our programs,” she said.

Maggie said that’s why she’s voting her job this November 3: “Amy Acton cares about our communities, and she cares about our state workers enough, and she understands that a strong union contract bolsters the ability to retain experienced staff.”

Hagen O’Brien

BWC, Chapter 2535



Hagen O’Brien works as a Business Process Analyst in the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation’s IT division on the enterprise architecture team. As a union activist with BWC Chapter 2535 and OCSEA District 6, he says he’s been thinking a lot about the upcoming election and its impact on his job and his union co-workers.

“The most important thing on my mind right now is protecting our pension system and

keeping us away from privatization. I’ve seen the attacks coming, and they come in many different ways,” he said.

Although he says he holds some conservative beliefs personally, he feels today’s conservative politics often don’t protect unions, pensions or public employees. Because of that, “voting your job” has become central to his political thinking.

Hagen says the leadership he wants in Ohio is transparent, willing to do hard things, and focused on unifying people rather than dividing them. “That’s why I support Amy Acton, because true leadership means standing up rather than simply falling in line,” he said.

Hagen views attacks on federal unions and privatization efforts, especially at the hands of DOGE and Vivek Ramaswamy, as warning signs for state and local public employees. “If anti-union efforts are happening at one level of government, members should expect those efforts to eventually reach their own workplaces, chapters and communities,” he said.

His message is that members should stay alert and understand that the fight continues at every level. He says that starts with being educated and being involved in their union, especially in the chapter.

“People are feeling extremely deflated and aren’t sure that their vote matters,” he said, “but I tell them it does. Voting your job matters!”

JOB DEPENDS ON IT!

Amy Acton speaks to members at the OCSEA Steward Conference in June.



Dametra Carey

DR&C, Marysville Reformatory Chapter 8010



Dametra Carey is a Corrections Officer at the Ohio Reformatory for Women with 32 years of service. As a Chapter 8010 leader and chief steward, she has seen a lot of administrations come through the state. She emphasizes that the upcoming gubernatorial election matters because the governor ultimately shapes leadership, policy, staffing, and working conditions for state employees.

“The biggest thing for me is electing the right person that will be fair in representation of Ohioans and public service workers as well as doing what’s right for everyone as a whole,” said Dametra. She says Ohio’s next governor must listen to frontline workers, include union voices in decision-making, address prison understaffing, and support the safety, dignity, and everyday affordability needs of working families.

Dametra says she’s highly concerned about prison understaffing affecting physical safety, mental health, and the ability to run facilities responsibly.

“Looking at her background, I believe Amy Acton would be a better candidate,” she said. “Amy is a realist; she can relate to the problems and issues that Ohio families and workers face. I believe Amy has a pragmatic approach as to what it takes to run an agency!” she said.

Dametra says it’s important to elect candidates who will see union members as stakeholders, not adversaries. “The leadership should consider the voice of everyone inside the agency. A pro-union candidate means bringing us in and giving us a seat at the table—that’s huge,” she said. “Voting is your voice, let it be heard.”

Donald Campbell

ODOT, Montgomery Chapter 5700



Donald Campbell, an ODOT Highway Technician 3 and newly elected ODOT Assembly Vice President, has done his homework. As the midterm elections and state bargaining approaches, he is researching candidates and listening closely to ODOT members. He’s connecting their workplace concerns—wages, safety, staffing, retention and contracting out—to the political choices that shape public service in Ohio.

Donald’s practical, member-centered message is clear: ODOT workers know what it takes to keep Ohio moving, but they need leaders in Ohio who value that work. An independent who seldom votes down party lines, he says Amy Acton is that leader for him. “As a union activist, I like that she comes from actual working people. She understands our struggles, while you have Mr. Ramaswamy, who’s a billionaire. He basically made \$2 billion off of Covid, yet complains about how Amy Acton shut down the government,” he said.

Donald says good leadership from the Governor’s office to the Statehouse is directly tied to bargaining, agency leadership, public funding, retention, outsourcing and contract enforcement. In his union leadership roles on the ODOT Assembly, OCSEA District 2 and Chapter 5700, he encourages members to research candidates’ voting records and positions on workers, unions and public services.

“Our members want to see that they’re actually being valued,” he said about the realities of his job. “If you don’t vote somebody in there who supports and has your back for your job, how are you going to take care of your family?”

“Vote your job, plain and simple!” said Donald, reminding members how elections shape the bargaining table, and the future of their jobs.

WHO SHOULD BE OUR NEXT BOSS?

COMPARING CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR



**AMY
ACTON**

*Former Director, Ohio
Department of Health*

*Former professor of
maternal and child health
at Ohio State University*



**VIVEK
RAMASWAMY**

*Former CEO of
pharmaceutical company*

*Former co-leader of
Department of
Government Efficiency
(DOGE)*

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

- Vowed to be the most pro-union administration there has ever been in Ohio.
- Said she will change the workplace culture for state employees by “working alongside you and asking for your help.”
- Proud to be part of a union household. Her husband is a public school teacher and a long-time union member.

- As a presidential candidate, he proposed slashing the federal workforce by 75% through “large-scale reductions in force”.
- Worked with Elon Musk at DOGE to lay off thousands of federal workers.
- Has called American workers lazy and mediocre.

UNION RIGHTS

- Will use the Commerce Department and other state agencies to ensure employers follow Ohio’s Collective Bargaining law and crack down on wage theft and worker misclassification.
- Opposes Ohio ever becoming a right-to-work state.
- Has stood shoulder to shoulder with union members on the picket line to support collective bargaining rights.

- Said he wants to eliminate teachers’ unions because “our public schools are not about providing employment perks to members of unions.”
- Called for an end to federal worker unions and the elimination of civil service protections when he campaigned for president.

PENSIONS

- Has vowed to protect Ohio’s public pensions and to ensure that workers and retirees have a voice in their retirement system.

- Supports legislation allowing Ohio’s pension systems to make risky investments in cryptocurrency. (AFSCME opposes pension system investments in cryptocurrency.)

TAXES

- Has called for a Working Families tax cut to reduce costs for lower-and-middle income households.
- Expand Homestead Exemption for Seniors and create a Property Tax Spike rebate to offset sudden increases in property taxes.

- Wants to eliminate the state income tax which pays for public services and the salaries of state employees.
- Proposed rolling back property taxes to pre-pandemic rates. The cut would cost schools and local governments an estimated \$6.6 billion.

HEALTHCARE

- Reduce prescription drug prices for Ohioans by launching an online platform to leverage the purchasing power of the State of Ohio.
- Protect Ohioans against attacks on Medicaid and Medicare from Washington and Columbus.

- Called Medicaid and Medicare a “mistake”. (More than 5 million Ohioans depend on Medicare and Medicaid for their healthcare.)
- Criticized the number of employees at the Ohio Department of Medicaid. Plans to “simplify Medicaid bureaucracy” which could lead to job cuts.

WHY OHIO NEEDS SHERROD BROWN IN THE U.S. SENATE

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown has a long history of standing up for working Ohioans, including public employees and union members.



When **Sherrod Brown** says he fights for working people, it isn't campaign rhetoric—it's a record he has built throughout his career in public office. That's why AFSCME and OCSEA strongly support his bid to return to the U.S. Senate, where he has delivered real results for union members.

"Sherrod has always had our back, and he always will, because he knows when you love this country you fight for your people," OCSEA President **Chris Mabe** said at the OCSEA President's Conference in July where Sherrod was the featured speaker.

Brown has been running an aggressive campaign against **Jon Husted** who was appointed to the U.S. Senate when J.D. Vance became Vice President. He's called out Husted for his support of data centers and the Iran war, which has led to skyrocketing prices for gas and diesel fuel. "This year we're fighting for a government that works for you. Not for the utility companies, not for the drug companies, not for Wall Street and not for big oil," Brown said.

Sherrod has built an unmatched record of fighting for union members and working people. For decades, he's fought against unfair trade deals that have cost American jobs. He led the effort on Capitol Hill to restore pension benefits for union retirees—including more than 100,000 in Ohio—with the passage of the Butch Lewis Act, named after an Ohio union leader.

Throughout his life, Sherrod has never stopped fighting for working people no matter the odds. The last vote he cast in the Senate was to pass the Social Security Fairness Act, a bill he championed for many years. The legislation repealed the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), restoring full Social Security benefits for millions of public employees including OCSEA retirees who are finally receiving the benefits they earned. These are just a few of many reasons Sherrod deserves another term in the U.S. Senate. Sherrod supports working people. Now it's time to support him! □

Scan QR Code to see video highlights of Sherrod at the Presidents' Conference



Senator Brown poses with AFSCME members at a WEP/GPO hearing in 2024.



OCSEAVOTES.ORG

OUR JOBS DEPEND ON IT!

Find your union election resources at OCSEAVotes.org:



- Commit to Vote – Make a Plan
- Important Election Dates
- Vote Your Job News
- Union Endorsements
- Get Involved!

ELECTIONS, BARGAINING & THE FUTURE OF OCSEA

CHRISTOPHER MABE, OCSEA President



LOCAL 11 AFL-CIO

Ohio Civil Service Employees Association



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VICE PRESIDENT
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Christopher Mabe
Cynthia Watiker
Melissa Yank

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District 6: Scott Buckridge (Cosmetology Board), Leslie Tilton (DR&C), Marcus Harris (DBH), Donna Howard (Public Safety), Damon Neal (ODJFS), Matthew Tyack (Industrial Commission), Sharyn Perry (OOD)

District 7: Deborah Weaver (DODD), Sherry Little (BWC)

District 8: Tom Dearth (DR&C), Jason Underhill (DBH)

District 9: Jeff Condo (OVH), April Duckworth (DR&C)

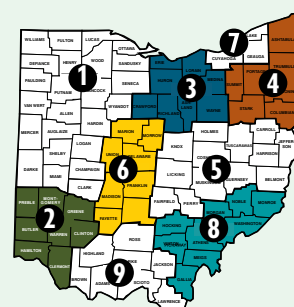
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OCSEA Districts

Bargaining our next contract

We need to keep in mind that Ohio's next governor will decide who sits across the table from us when we bargain our next state contract. OCSEA started gearing up for negotiations by contacting leaders and members during the spring and summer to ask what our bargaining priorities should be. More than 25% responded to the phone and email survey—which shows our members are motivated to win the best contract possible. The survey results will help our Bargaining Team put together the strongest game plan for negotiating our next three-year contract, a process that begins later this year. Read more about our Bargaining Team on page 8.

We chose "Our Contract, Our Future" as the theme for bargaining because our state contract is more than a book—it is the result of 40 years of hard work, sacrifice, and solidarity. Now it is our responsibility to honor that legacy and fight for a contract that protects our rights and secures our future.

Organizing for a stronger union

And speaking of our future, organizing will be a big priority over the next year as we work to grow OCSEA by reaching more of the employees we represent but who are not currently union members. We will be talking to these nonmembers, answering questions and asking them to become members of OCSEA.

We have asked **Mike Sukal** to lead this organizing effort. Mike worked for AFSCME for 24 years helping develop the successful AFSCME Strong program and

serving as the National Director of Organizing and Field Services for more than a decade. Mike and his team will be working with OCSEA leaders to become better organizers, expand our membership, and build a stronger union.

New leadership

Over the summer there was a changing of the guard, not only at OCSEA but also for AFSCME International. **Melissa Yank** has taken over as OCSEA's Secretary-Treasurer after the retirement of **Kathy Gersper**. We thank Kathy for her long and dedicated service to this union and for her charitable work on behalf of children across our state.

Melissa is no stranger to leadership roles with OCSEA. She's been a steward, chapter president and member of the Board of Directors while working at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Melissa has great ideas to help our chapters run more efficiently and effectively on behalf of our members. She is an outstanding addition to our senior leadership team.

It's also been a year of change for AFSCME with the retirement of International President **Lee Saunders**, a great friend and former member of OCSEA. Lee built a powerful legacy, and he will be a tough act to follow. But his successor, **Patrick Moran**, is the right person to lead AFSCME into the future. I've known Patrick for many years, and I was proud to nominate him for International President at the AFSCME Convention. Together, Patrick and new Secretary-Treasurer **Nicole Pollard** give AFSCME a dynamic leadership team. □

We often say elections have consequences, and this November those consequences will be felt directly by the members of our union. The choice in the governor's race could not be clearer between electing **Dr. Amy Acton**, an outspoken supporter of public employees, or **Vivek Ramaswamy**, a billionaire with a record of hostility toward unions. Two candidates. One obvious choice.

OCSEA and Ohio's other AFSCME affiliates endorsed Dr. Acton, because she has been an enthusiastic and consistent advocate for public employees and unions. You may have had the opportunity to hear her speak at one of our conferences, and each time she has talked about the deep respect she has for the work we do. She understands public service and cares about the people of Ohio. Having a pro-union governor would be a welcome and much-needed change.

Ramaswamy, by contrast, has repeatedly attacked the rights of public employees. During his failed campaign for President, he called for eliminating teachers' unions and for laying off 1.6 million federal employees, including many of our union brothers and sisters. For OCSEA members, this election is not just politics—it is about protecting our rights, our livelihoods and the future of this union. We must vote our jobs! For more on the governor's race, I encourage you to read the candidate comparison on page 4 of this magazine.

Meet Melissa Yank, OCSEA's new Secretary-Treasurer

The OCSEA Board of Directors appointed **Melissa Yank** to take over as the union's Secretary-Treasurer when Kathy Gersper retired in July. Yank is a longtime union activist who has worked at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) since 1990. She has served in several leadership positions including the OCSEA Board of Directors and as President of BWC Chapter 2535. *Public Employee Magazine* asked Yank a few questions about her new leadership role.

How did you get your start in public service?

I'm the third generation of my family to work for BWC—my grandmother worked there and then my mom followed her. I remember I was home one day, and my mom called and asked if I wanted to apply for a temporary job as a clerk with BWC. At the time they offered temporary work through a temp agency. I worked for, maybe, eight months before a position came open and I was able to get that job. As a temp worker I was only making \$5 something an hour and then I got a union job and was making \$9 for doing the same work.

After starting as a clerk at BWC, you moved into computer systems and software development. How did the union help you with your career?

I loved computers but I never applied for jobs because I didn't have the training. After I joined BWC and found out about educational opportunities, I thought I'll take a class to help me learn. Because I had been looking at different IT jobs I knew you had to have a degree to meet minimal qualifications. Thanks to union negotiated education benefits, I didn't have to spend a lot of money out of pocket. I am very thankful I was able to use those benefits.

You have been a longtime union activist. What motivated you to become involved in helping lead the union?

I've always been someone who wants to help. A few years after I joined the union, I got that tap on the shoulder and was asked



if I wanted to be a steward. I said OKAY without knowing what all was involved in the job, but I took to it very quickly because I enjoy helping people. Everybody deserves to be treated equally, so fair treatment is important to me. I also believe in paying it forward and that's a big aspect for me because of the help I received from other leaders along the way.

What goals do you have in your new role as Secretary-Treasurer of OCSEA?

There's a lot of paperwork for our chapters, and one of my first priorities is making that more accessible. We have created a SharePoint site, and I've been organizing that so it's easier for leaders to access information and increase transparency. We are also providing more support for chapters with a set schedule of financial trainings for treasurers and other officers who want to attend. I also want to make myself available for a quick response whenever there's an issue with one of our chapters so we can fix it before it becomes a problem.

OCSEA salutes Secretary-Treasurer Gersper on her retirement



This summer, OCSEA Secretary-Treasurer **Kathleen "Kathy" Gersper** retired from the State of Ohio and stepped down as the union's chief financial officer after 23 years of union service. Gersper has dedicated decades to maintaining the organization's financial solvency, being a union leader with an unwavering commitment to the labor movement and serving communities all around Ohio.



Sister Gersper, a union activist with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission and a State Board member, was a steward and leader for DAS Chapter 2570 and has served on many past OCSEA State Bargaining Teams. She served in various union positions around Central Ohio, including the Ohio AFL-CIO Executive Board and the Central Ohio Union Label Council.

Known by many throughout Ohio for her "Kathy's Creature Comforts" initiative, she annually—for nearly 20 years—collected hundreds of Teddy bears and stuffed animals for children at domestic violence shelters statewide.

We wish Kathy all the best on her retirement! □



Are you ready for State Contract Bargaining?

Meet your 2027 Bargaining Team

In early September, over 300 OCSEA activists attended the OCSEA Bargaining Council in Columbus to elect the next OCSEA State Contract Bargaining Team. The Team includes 24 OCSEA union members representing every state bargaining unit (nine in all) as well as the union's three executive officers. The Team will negotiate the state contract that expires at the end of February 2027.

Now that the Team has been elected, our next steps will be to build a winning strategy around our theme: **Our Contract! Our Future!** That means maintaining the legacy of our 40-year-old contract while strengthening it for future generations.

For the elected team members, that means working hard before the start of bargaining with trainings on procedure and strategy building. It also means taking a deeper dive into the bargaining survey results to focus on the priorities of the membership and create bargaining proposals.

"It's your contract, it's our contract, and it's worth fighting for. At the end of the day, we're trying to get a good contract for the benefit of everyone, now and into the future," said OCSEA President **Chris Mabe**.

"There are 52 days until we elect the next Governor of this state," said Mabe at the Sept. 12 Bargaining Council on why bargaining preparations have started a little earlier than normal as the gubernatorial election approaches. "We have a lot of gains to be made if we make the right choice at the ballot box," he said. □



2027 BARGAINING TEAM MEMBERS

- **OCSEA Executive Officers:** President Chris Mabe, Vice President Cynthia Watiker & Secretary-Treasurer Melissa Yank
- **Bargaining Unit 3:** Doug Korba, Brian Miller, Ray Harker, Bill Homer, Tom Holden, Wilson Humphrey
- **Bargaining Unit 4:** Marcus Harris, Deborah Weaver
- **Bargaining Unit 5:** Jeff Condo
- **Bargaining Unit 6:** Michael Sheeter
- **Bargaining Unit 7:** Scott Buckridge, Bill McAllister, Marie Pacer
- **Bargaining Unit 9:** Amy Mathews, Damon Neal, Eric Kusky
- **Bargaining Unit 13:** Bridget McGovern
- **Bargaining Unit 14:** Bryan Weaver, Matt Tyack, Natalie Qualls, Jennifer Wolfe

HOW TO SUPPORT THE BARGAINING TEAM

Winning a strong contract takes all of us! Show your support, stay informed and be ready to take action to support the Bargaining Team.

BUILD SOLIDARITY NOW:

- Sign up for bargaining text alerts: Text **OurContract** to **237-263** or scan the QR code.
- Visit **OCSEA.org/bargaining** for updates and ways to support the team.
- Check MyOCSEA or call the MRC at **888-627-3211** to make sure you have a personal email address on file.

Scan QR code
to sign up for
bargaining
text alerts

or text **OurContract**
to **237-263**



Delegates elect new leaders, honor public work and more at AFSCME Convention

It was a powerful and emotional week as thousands of delegates, including OCSEA delegates, gathered for AFSCME's 47th International Convention in Chicago in August. AFSCME President **Lee Saunders** gave his farewell address after leading AFSCME for 14 years. He rallied union members to continue organizing, mobilizing and fighting to build power for working people and protect public services.

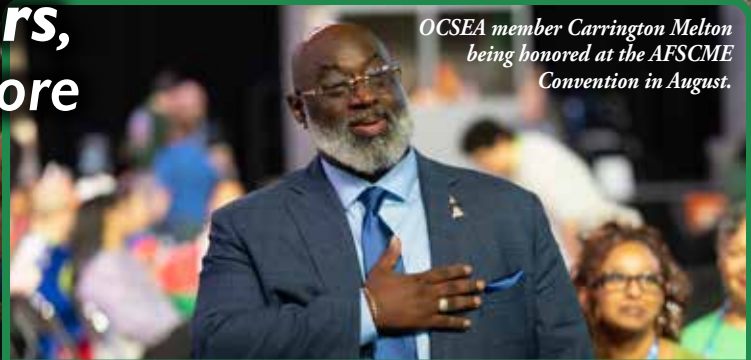
AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer **Elissa McBride** also delivered her final keynote speech to the AFSCME Convention, reminding attendees: "We cannot rest until every public service worker in our country has the freedom to collectively bargain," she said.

In addition to hearing from an amazing line up of guest speakers, like AFL-CIO President **Liz Shuler**, musicians like **Tom Morello** (Rage Against the Machine), union activists, labor and economic experts and so many more, delegates also attended to the business of the union. This included nominating and electing the next leaders of the union.

AFSCME Maryland Council 3 President **Patrick Moran** was nominated and elected by the delegation to serve as the new AFSCME President, representing 1.4 million members across the country. The floor nomination speech came from OCSEA President **Chris Mabe**, calling him "a labor leader who knows how to organize, how to fight and how to win."

Nicole R. Pollard was nominated and elected to serve as the next AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer. Pollard served as the Legal Counsel and Executive Assistant to the AFSCME President.

Delegates also attended a massive rally to show support for AFSCME members at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. They are currently fighting for a fair contract.



OCSEA member Carrington Melton being honored at the AFSCME Convention in August.



Melton's family surprises him at the Convention.



Ohio veterans specialist honored with AFSCME Never Quit Service Award

As an homage to hard-working public union members, the AFSCME convention honored OCSEA member **Carrington Melton**, a disabled veterans outreach specialist at the Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services, with the 2026 AFSCME Never Quits Service Award.

Melton has dedicated his career to helping Ohio's veterans find jobs as they transition from military life to civilian life. Several of Melton's clients spoke in a stirring video about how much his work meant to them.

Melton was awarded Veteran of the Year at last year's OCSEA Veterans Conference, and he will be a featured guest speaker at this year's Veterans Conference on November 14 at Salt Fork State Park. Get registration details at [OCSEA.org/veterans](https://ocsea.org/veterans).

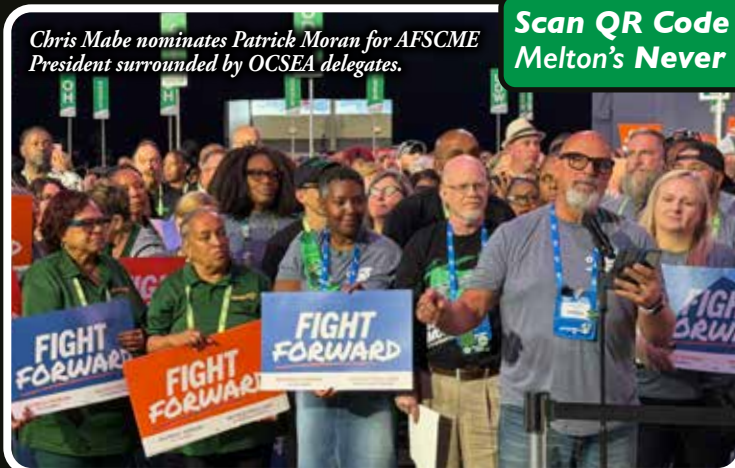
OCSEA is so proud that this honor could be bestowed upon union brother Melton. He does Ohio, and OCSEA proud. He truly Never Quits! □



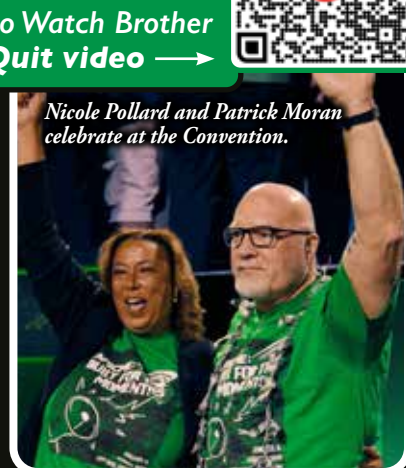
Scan QR Code to Watch Brother Melton's Never Quit video →



Lee Saunders gives his farewell address at the Convention.



Chris Mabe nominates Patrick Moran for AFSCME President surrounded by OCSEA delegates.



Nicole Pollard and Patrick Moran celebrate at the Convention.

OCSEA member uses Union Education Trust to pave a new path



Union Education Trust

Lorenzo pictured with his mother, who he calls "his superhero."



Lorenzo Surgeon
Chapter 2200 - OVH

For Lorenzo Surgeon, a Therapeutic Program Worker (TPW) caring for Ohio's veterans, switching fields in his mid-30s was a labor of love for helping others in need. And his Union Education Trust (UET) benefit was just another perk of the job and being a union member that has helped meet career goals he never even knew he had.

"I had never done anything in healthcare at all except when I was growing up, just helping out my family," said Lorenzo, formerly an in-home designer who found his way to the Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky about a year and a half ago. He always had a skill for helping others, he said, which came from caring for his ailing grandparents when younger, and from his mother's own passion for caregiving.

Lorenzo, a third-shift TPW on a Memory Care floor, which includes Alzheimer's care and Dementia care, said he is learning immeasurable skills

that support those living with these cognitive challenges. "It's something I truly love doing," he said.

"These are skills I wish I had earlier. And I thought I was doing an amazing job when I was younger, not saying I didn't, but as I got older, I had a chance of growing skills that I could have used to make their lives more comfortable or enjoyable," he said, referring to his grandparents living with dementia.

He was also inspired by his mother, who he watched as an aide and activity therapist at the Veterans Home where she also worked for six years. His mother eventually left that job to return home to care for her own mother, but Lorenzo said he was in awe of her. "During my time volunteering [at OVH], I fell in love with being there and what my mom was doing there. It was impressionable, yeah. My mom's my superhero!" he said.

From the first day on the job, Lorenzo knew he couldn't let his union education benefits go to waste. He is presently attending Lorain Community College, a 35-minute drive from home but

the closest school with an Activities Director program that focuses on behavioral health and dementia care. Lorenzo says the UET program has made growing that passion a reality. He is also throwing around the idea of pursuing education as a Surgical Technician. He doesn't know if it's a field he will enter but loves the idea of learning more about supporting those under his care who have undergone surgery. "We'll see," he says.

"I tell everyone who will listen that your UET benefits will help you further your education and knowledge and put you on track to being more successful in life. I tell them if they want to go to school, they can do it. It's right there in your contract," he said.

"I was having a conversation with a co-worker who is getting ready to retire in a year. I said, well, what are you going to do when you retire? She said, I don't know. And I said, there's so much you can do at nearby trade schools. You can do anything you want," he told her. "This money is available to you, right now. Why not

pursue something you want to do when you're done, when you retire?"

Lorenzo said life is all about learning and he will continue to pursue his passions and interests thanks to his UET benefit! He thanks his wife, his three children and his mother for always supporting him. "The greatest thing is when I decided to go back to school, I sat down with my kids (6, 8 and 13 now), and was, like, look, I'm ready to go back to school. Mama just finished school, and I want to see what I can pursue. You're in school too, and we're going to take this journey together," said Lorenzo. "I couldn't be happier!" □

Lorenzo pictured with his family.



Read more UET profiles at
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OCSEA STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

“I have had a **great experience** using the **OCSEA College Benefit** to attend **Franklin University**. The process of taking advantage of the benefit was **simple and straightforward**, making it easy to get started on my **educational journey**.”



LARISSA LOCKWOOD
 SOCF Chapter 7330 Member

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CONGRATULATIONS LES BEST SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

OCSEA is excited to announce the recipients of the **2026 OCSEA Les Best Scholarships**. Eight awards were given in the Dependents' College, Members' College and Spouses' College categories as well as two book scholarships for the member winners.

OCSEA's Les Best Scholarship program awards a total of \$12,000 in scholarships each year to OCSEA members, their dependents and spouses. An additional \$250 is also awarded to two members through the Pat Callanan-Castro Book Scholarship.

Applicants are encouraged to reapply yearly, as Les Best Scholarship recipients are eligible to win up to three total awards during their educational journey. **The application window runs from January 1 through April 30 each year.** See the winners on the next page and check out the dependent spotlight below.

\$12,000 in awards!



Learn more at OCSEA.org/LesBest

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Nathaniel Smith, Child of OCSEA member Daniel Smith

2026 First-Time Dependent Winner



Les Best Scholarship winner Nathaniel Smith.

Nathaniel Smith is a first-time dependent winner of the 2026 Les Best Scholarship. He is the child of OCSEA member **Daniel Smith** of Chapter 6555. Nathaniel will be attending Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University Bloomington and pursuing a Bachelors in Horn Performance.

In his scholarship essay, Nathaniel described the benefits of a union through the lens of his family's personal experience with hardship after a severe workplace injury. "My father is one of hundreds of thousands who have been injured on the job," he said. "While working at the juvenile correctional facility, he was violently assaulted in a wanton attack. In an instant, our whole family's lives were changed," said Nathaniel.

"He was put on Occupational Injury Leave (OIL) and is going through extensive rehabilitation and therapy services to work toward recovery. Wages lost from being out-of-work, medical fees, hours on end of fighting the medical system to ensure he gets the treatment he needs, and much emotional turmoil for our family weigh on us," he said.

Thanks to negotiations from the union, Occupational Injury Leave is available for those who cannot return to work from their workplace injuries. "If not for the negotiations from the union, our family would certainly be unable to continue without his wages. Furthermore, the union is making sure that my dad's job is protected while he is out of work recovering from his injuries," he said.

"Luckily, there are opportunities for me to continue my dream of going to college for my passions. There is a debt of gratitude that is owed to my dad's union for laying the groundwork that makes the benefits of his employment available. I know that as I continue through my life as a young adult, I will advocate for unions and likely join a union as many others who pursue the musician career path do."

OCSEA congratulates Nathaniel and all of this year's Les Best Scholarship winners!

See all 2026 Les Best Scholarship winners

DEPENDENT CATEGORY WINNERS



Erika Boggs

Erika is the child of **Ricky Boggs**, a member with the Civil Rights Commission in Summit Chapter 7700. She is attending Kent State University and studying Aviation.



Renee Williams

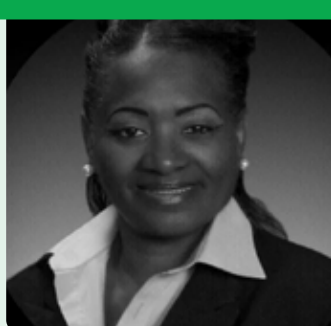
Renee is the child of **Joshua Williams**, a member of Monroe Chapter 5600 and an employee with the Ohio Dept. of Transportation. Renee is attending Belmont College and studying Early Childhood Education.



Sara Hintz

Sara is the child of **Pamela Hintz**, a member of Chapter 2560 and an employee at the Dept. of Health. Sara is studying Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences & Professional Deaf Resource Liaison Certificate at Ohio University.

MEMBER CATEGORY WINNERS



Sharon Crawford-Ward

Sharon is a member with Bureau of Workers' Compensation Chapter 2535. She is studying Information Technology with a Cybersecurity concentration at DeVry University.



Brittany Worlds

Brittany is a member with Bureau of Workers' Compensation Chapter 2535. She is studying Business Administration at Walden University.

SPOUSE CATEGORY WINNERS



Charles Ekpe

Charles is the spouse of **Adeline Simo**, a member of Marysville Reformatory Chapter 8010. Charles is attending Joyce University of Nursing and Health Sciences and pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.



Zahara Fullah

Zahara is the spouse of **Alfred Fullah**, a member of Madison Correctional Institution Chapter 4910. Zahara is attending Hondros College of Nursing and pursuing an Associate Degree in Nursing.

MORE EDUCATION RESOURCES



Scan QR Code to apply to the 2027 Union Plus Scholarship (Members, Spouses, & Dependents)



Scan QR Code to apply to the 2027 AFSCME Family Scholarship (Graduating High School Seniors Only)



For OCSEA Members & Families

See page 11 for information on our Discount College partners, Edvance and EBS Union College Benefit.

Subordinate Body Meeting & Election Notices

DISTRICT MEETINGS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
District 6	E-board: Nov. 23 - 6 p.m.-7 p.m.	OCSEA - Room 195, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
District 8	Nov. 17 - E-board: 6 p.m.; Delegate Meeting: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	Holiday Inn, 11 E. Park Dr., Athens, OH 45701

ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
BWC Assembly	Dec. 5 - 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.	OCSEA - Room 195, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
DBH/ DODD/OVH Assembly	Nov. 20 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.	OCSEA - Bowman Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
DYS Assembly	Nov. 21 - 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	On Zoom. Link will be sent out to delegation two weeks prior to meeting.
Industrial Commission Assembly	Nov. 21 - 10 a.m.-11 a.m.	On Zoom. Contact mtyack@ocsea.org to request meeting link.
ODNR Assembly	Dec. 5 - 9 a.m.-11 a.m. - E-Board: 9 a.m.; General Body Meeting to follow	OCSEA - Room 195, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
ODOT Assembly	Nov. 21 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.	OCSEA, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082

CHAPTER MEETINGS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
Chapter 1820	Nov. 12 - 6 p.m.-7 p.m.	Cuyahoga Falls Exam Station, 48 E. Bath Rd., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223
Chapter 2503	Nov. 16 - 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	On Zoom. Contact bmvchaptermeeting@gmail.com to request meeting link.
Chapter 2515	Dec. 7 - 12 p.m.-1:30 p.m.	ODNR Fountain Square, 2045 Morse Rd., Columbus, OH 43229

CHAPTER MEETINGS continued

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
Chapter 2535	Dec. 9 - 12 p.m.-1 p.m.	William Green Building, 30 W Spring St., Columbus, OH 43215
Chapter 2599	E-Board: Dec. 10 - 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.; Chapter Meeting: Dec. 17 - 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	On Teams. Contact tonya-reese@att.net to request link.
Chapter 3000 Holiday Party	Dec. 12 - 6 p.m.-9 p.m.	Francis Family Restaurant, 1038 E Wheeling Ave., Cambridge, OH 43725
Chapter 3510 Meeting & Holiday Party	Dec. 16 - E-Board: 6:30 p.m.; Chapter Meeting: 7 p.m.-8 p.m.	VFW Hall, 1133 N. Ottokee St., Wauseon, OH 43567
Chapter 5000	Nov. 9 - 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.	Cocca's Pizza, 5193 S. Canfield Niles Rd., Canfield, OH 44406
Chapter 7760	E-board: Nov. 10 - 12 p.m.-12:30 p.m.; Chapter Meeting: Dec. 8 - 12 p.m.-1 p.m.	Canyon Falls Corporate Center, 8957 Canyon Falls Blvd, Twinsburg, OH 44087

Notices in this magazine

OCSEA subordinate bodies have the option to publish notices in this union publication three times a year. This notice meets the 15-day requirement for election notices per the *OCSEA Subordinate Body Constitution Art. VI, Sect. 2 & 3*. **Submit online: ocsea.org/meetingnotices**

Magazine Notice Deadlines:

- **Winter 2027:** Submit no later than Jan. 11, 2027; *Nominations/Elections must be held on or after March 22, 2027*
- **Spring 2027*:** Submit no later than March 29, 2027; *Nominations/Elections must be held on or after May 31, 2027*
*Includes 2027 OCSEA Convention delegate notices
- **Fall 2027:** Submit no later than Sept. 13, 2027; *Nominations/Elections must be held on or after Nov. 8, 2027*

Per Article VI, Section 8 - Circumstances such as receipt of workers' compensation benefits, disability benefits, assignment to project staff, etc. may affect your eligibility to run for office in this election. If you are considering running for any office, executive board, or a delegate position, please contact OCSEA central office prior to the nomination date.

Subordinate Body Meeting & Election Notices

SUBORDINATE BODY ELECTIONS			
BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION	POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED
Chapter 2330 Election - Southeastern DRC	- Nominations: Nov. 18, 2026 - 6 a.m.-2 p.m.; - Elections: Nov. 19, 2026 - 6 a.m.-2 p.m.; - Run Offs: Nov. 20, 2026 - 6 a.m.-2 p.m.	A building/Zin Den, 5900 Bis Rd., Lancaster, OH 43130	President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board (3), District Delegate (1), District Alternate (1), Assembly Delegate (1), Assembly Alternate (1)
Chapter 2513 Election - Central Ohio ODOT	Nov. 12, 2026 - Nominations: 5 p.m.-5:15 p.m.; - Elections: 5:15 p.m.-5:45 p.m.; - Run Offs: 6 p.m.-6:15 p.m.	ODOT Central Office Headquarters, LL Conference Room, 1980 W. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43223	President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, 3 Executive Board, District Delegate (1), District Alternate (1), Assembly Delegate (1), Assembly Alternate (1), Delegate to Central Ohio Labor Council-AFL-CIO (1)
Chapter 7810 Election - Trumbull State	Nov. 16, 2026 - Nominations: 6:15 p.m.- 6:30 p.m.; - Elections: 6:30 p.m.-6:45 p.m.; - Run Offs: 7 p.m.-7:15 p.m.	Carl Dittmer - USW Union Hall, 1265 Main St., Niles, OH 44446	President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Board (4), District Delegate/Alternate (1) and Assembly Delegate/Alternate (1)

HOW TO SUBMIT TIMELY MEETING NOTICES

Per Article IX - Duties, Section 3 (D) of the OCSEA Subordinate Body Constitution: The Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer, where applicable, of the Chapter shall notify, in writing, OCSEA, the assigned Staff Representative of the Union, and the assigned State Board of Directors member, **at least ten (10) days in advance of each Chapter's meeting.**

Per Article IX - Duties, Section 3 (E) of the OCSEA Subordinate Body Constitution: The Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer, where applicable, of the District Council and Assembly shall notify OCSEA and the Secretary-Treasurer of the Union, in writing, **at least ten (10) days in advance of each District Council's or Assembly's meeting.**

Two options for submitting timely subordinate body meeting/election notices:

OPTION 1: Submit a meeting notice online at ocsea.org/meetingnotices.

This online form walks subordinate bodies through the submission process. A MyOCSEA account is required to submit notices.

Remember to also notify, in writing, your Staff Rep, State Board member and OCSEA Secretary-Treasurer Melissa Yank (for assemblies and districts) of your meetings in accordance with the updated Constitution.

OPTION 2: Email meeting notices to meetingnotices@ocsea.org. It's highly encouraged that all meetings for the year be submitted at once at the beginning of the year.

Email notification requests must include the following in order to be processed:

- Subordinate body name and chapter #
- Meeting type (general body, e-board, election, etc.)
- Date and start and end time
- Location with a full address or online link, if virtual.
- Contact person and phone number

Make sure to CC your Staff Representative and Board member on that email. You can find their contact information on the OCSEA website under the "Contact" tab. If submitting a notice for an assembly or district, make sure to also CC Secretary-Treasurer Melissa Yank at myank@ocsea.org in accordance with the updated Constitution.



Ohio Civil Service
Employees Association

390 WORTHINGTON ROAD, STE. A
WESTERVILLE, OH 43082-8331

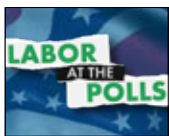


41

OCSEA

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE MAGAZINE | FALL 2026

FEATURE STORIES



2

LABOR AT THE POLLS

Your Job Depends On It



4

WHO SHOULD BE OUR NEXT BOSS?

Comparing the Candidates for Governor



5

WHY OHIO NEEDS SHERROD BROWN

Plus: OCSEA Votes



8

MEET YOUR 2027 BARGAINING TEAM

How to Support the Team



9

AFSCME CONVENTION RECAP

New leaders elected & OCSEA member honored



10

UNION EDUCATION TRUST SPOTLIGHT

OCSEA Member Paves a New Path



6

PRES. CHRIS MABE

Elections, Bargaining, and the Future of OCSEA

7

MEET SECRETARY-TREASURER MELISSA YANK

11

OCSEA DISCOUNT COLLEGE BENEFIT

12

2026 LES BEST SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS