

Countdown to Massive LA May Day March

A broad coalition of Los Angeles-based Unions, anti-Trump “resisters,” feminist groups, immigrant rights activists, and many others are aiming to make **May Day 2017** one for the history books. More than 60 organizations, including **AFSCME Council 36**, are mobilizing an expected crowd of 100,000 to march and rally on May 1st.

There are many reasons why people around the globe mark May Day, a holiday that traditionally honors workers worldwide.

But this year in LA, the day takes on more meaning in the face of a new right-wing **Labor Secretary, Alexander Acosta**, who is expected to stymie labor rights and offer no relief to most struggling workers. Additionally, the ultraconservative new **Supreme Court Justice, Neil Gorsuch**, is expected to side against public employee unions’ right to collect fair share “Agency Fees” for bargaining and representation that they provide, in a new challenge to the landmark 1977 law, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. The case could be decided by December, 2017.



AFSCME activists in **Locals 3339, 3634 and Retiree Chapter 36** are pictured with Council 36 staff at a publicity event for the May Day march.

AFSCME member **Alison Regan, a West Hollywood City Attorney in AFSCME Local 3339**, says she will be marching to oppose sham ‘right-to-work’ laws, which anti-worker interests have long pushed at the state level, but are now aggressively advancing as national legislation.

If that happens, “Even here in the bluest of blue states,” she warns, “we could see our labor protections disappear.”

Council 36 leaders and AFSCME Local Unions are urging members and families to join the march on May 1st. Bring handmade signs expressing YOUR reason for marching and wear AFSCME green! The rally starts at **Mac Arthur Park on Wilshire Blvd.** at 11am, and moves to **Grand Park, near Los Angeles City Hall.** For a route map, visit: <http://www.shutitdown.la/>

Legal Aid Workers Win AFSCME Representation

The wall-to-wall Los Angeles staff of a nonprofit legal aid organization, **Immigration Center for Women and Children (ICWC)**, recently joined Council 36’s family of AFSCME Local Unions after petitioning their Executive Director to recognize their desire to unionize in late January.

By more than 80 percent, the ICWC clerical workers, legal assistants, attorneys and other staff chose to petition for AFSCME representation in order to gain a voice in the decisions affecting their jobs.

Veronica Joya, an attorney and Union organizing committee member, said, “We deserve the legal guarantees to fair treatment and job security that come with a Union contract.”

While the Executive Director responded to the petition some days later by agreeing to sign a “Voluntary Recognition Agreement,” more recently Manage-

Continued on page 2

Tenacity Pays Off for Public Housing Assistance Workers

Following a year of Management intransigence and slow-going negotiations, the members of **AFSCME Local 143 (Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles)** were elated recently to celebrate their hard-won contract victory.

Throughout the protracted bargaining process and against what looked to them at times like impossible odds, Union leaders and rank-and-file members held the line to protect their pay and benefits. Throughout, the workers refused to accept takeaways to their health benefits and increased out of pocket costs that would have posed a serious financial hardship.

Management ratcheted up intimidation tactics – including arbitrarily announcing that negotiations were “over” and then imposing the takeaways, as if that would solve the dispute. It didn’t work.

Continued on page 2

500 LA County Workers Forge a New AFSCME Union

Hundreds of **Professional, Supervisory, and Professional-Supervisory employees** plus two additional units comprising dozens of **Energy Recovery and Confidential employees** working for the **Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts** have affiliated with AFSCME, in a strategic move to

obtain unprecedented power at the bargaining table. They have already begun negotiations.

"We need to be able to negotiate with the Districts' Management about the issues that affect us most: salaries, pensions, benefits, and conditions of employment," said

Ted Brodeur, a union organizing committee member who works as a Civil Engineer.

"We consider ourselves and those in Management as part of the same team," he said. "However, we must protect our own interests as our pensions and benefits are quickly

OC Eligibility Workers Demand Raises, Rights & Respect

1,500 Orange County Eligibility Workers in AFSCME Local 2076 have been embroiled in a two-year-long contract fight with Management over wages and work conditions. They continue to speak out at rallies and public hearings before the County Board of Supervisors.

In comparison with the Counties of Los Angeles and San Diego, the OC pays its Eligibility Workers much less. Even dog-catchers are paid more here than these workers, who provide assistance to the poor, the elderly and the disabled.

Meanwhile, Eligibility Workers' case-loads are also untenable – Orange County's own data show they are understaffed by nearly 50% – so

these employees say they cannot possibly keep up with demand. In one recent month, 75,000 calls for assistance came in to their Call Center – but 26, 300 of those – more than one-third – were unanswered because of staffing shortages. In rare instances, exhausted Eligibility Workers have literally been taken away in ambulances for medical care due to work-related stress.

In one recent month, 75,000 calls for assistance came in to their Call Center – but 26, 300 of those went unanswered due to the staffing shortage.

"We open the doors to financial assistance for Foster Care, Adoptions, Long Term Care and In Home Sup-

port Services," **AFSCME Local 2076 President Diana Corral** says. "We do important work for others, and it's time that the County treat us with importance."



Diana Corral, President of Local 2076

The need for these services is staggering. Nearly half of the children in Orange County are reportedly receiving Medi-Cal, while hundreds of thousands of others receive Cal-Fresh and "General Relief" assistance.

Legal Aid Workers Win AFSCME Representation

Continued from page 1

ment has taken a tough stance with anti-union tactics at the bargaining table - refusing to provide basic information requested by the Union and failing to meet on a regular schedule, according to Council 36 staff representative, **Gary Guthman**, who is working closely with the workers.

ICWC serves low-income immigrants with a variety of assistance, including advocating for victims of domestic violence, assault and other crimes. Now, thanks to their affiliation with AFSCME, its staff will have their own rights and protections defended.



ICWC Union Organizing Committee with supporter, Matt DeCarolis, President of AFSCME Local 964 (second to right).

Tenacity Pays Off for Public Housing Assistance Workers

Continued from page 1

Local 143 members, under the tenacious leadership of President Sharon Jordan, Vice President Betty Seals and others, refused to back down.



With Council 36's sustained assistance, the Local pursued legal charges against Manage-

Local 143 leaders and rank-and-file members are pictured with Council 36 staff at a late March victory celebration.

ment for alleged unfair labor practices. The members consistently showed up in large groups to pack Housing Authority hearings, and relayed stories of their commitment to serving the poor and homeless – while themselves struggling to make ends meet. Ultimately, Local 143 members overwhelmingly voted to strike, if need be.

In the end, Management saw that they had few options – and agreed to scrap the harshest proposals. The workers' persistence paid off on March 30 when a settlement was finally approved.