

# Progressive Point

National News Updates  
from AFT Progressive Caucus



Volume 1, Issue 12

September 2015

## Progressive Caucus – Solutions Through Solidarity

*Caucus solidarity is epitome of solution-driven unionism.*

### Connection Between Strong Union Ties and Family Ties Addressed by President Randi Weingarten

On September 20, 2015, the Huffington Post highlighted an article written by President Weingarten, which clearly supported the powerful connection between strong union ties and strong family ties. The well-documented piece opened with the “signature issues” marked for attack by Republicans, including government shutdown, malicious denigration of immigrants, privatization of education, elimination of paid sick leave and equal pay rights, and finally, the rejection of working peoples’ negotiating rights for benefits and better wages.

Donna M. Chiera @DchieraM · 8h  
Unions like @AFTUnion are strengthening our families, schools & economy at the bargaining table, ballot box & beyond [huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingart](http://huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingart) ...

**When Unions Are Strong, Families Are Strong**  
Republicans have staked out endless signature issues: shutting down the government, vilifying immigrants, denouncing rights like paid sick leave ...

Randi’s well-wordsed and thorough commentary exemplified the life-altering issues we presently face. It will certainly resonate with our readers, who understand that the strength in solidarity is the lynchpin in moving forward proactively on behalf of middle America’s working class.

President Weingarten states, “New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie recently said that our teachers union deserves a “punch in the face.” Fellow presidential longshot and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker wants to nationalize his plan to destroy public sector unions. Yet unions are now more popular with Republicans than Christie and Walker are. That’s right, the latest polling shows that while Christie and Walker have negligible support among Republican voters (1.5 and 3 percent, respectively), a full 42 percent of Republicans support unions. In fact, support for unions is increasing. Last month’s Gallup poll showed that in just one year, support for unions grew five points to nearly 60 percent. And according to the Brookings Institution, more than 50 percent of nonunion workers say that if an election were held in their workplace tomorrow, they would vote for union representation.

So why would a governor advance an agenda that both presses his finger on the scale of inequality against working people and places a dead weight on the economy, as it has in Wisconsin? Especially since we know that when working people are supported, as they’ve been in neighboring Minnesota, the economy is strengthened? The same wealthy special interests and CEOs who back Walker’s policies and manipulate economic rules in their favor want to make it even harder for working people to come together, speak up and get ahead.”

Loretta Johnson @LorettaJohnson · 9h  
Unions are good for their families, I know they made a difference for mine the last 50 years [huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingart](http://huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingart) ...

The article contains numerous hyperlinks to fully support President Weingarten's words. Want to read more? Head to [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingarten/when-unions-are-strong-fa\\_b\\_8165444.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingarten/when-unions-are-strong-fa_b_8165444.html) . Please feel free to share!

**Twitter Users: Follow**

**Lorretta @LorrettaJohnson**

**Randi @rweingarten**

**Mary Cathryn @mcricker**

## **Senator Schumer and President Weingarten Issue Joint Statement in Honor of Sepsis Awareness Month**

On September 16, President Weingarten and Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) appeared, joined by advocates and health industry leaders, at an event of the Rory Staunton Foundation to raise sepsis awareness, an illness that affects nearly one million people in the U.S. each year.

In the joint statement, Randi stated, "Working in our schools, communities and hospitals, AFT healthcare professionals are the first responders to illnesses and injuries acquired both in daily life and in hospitals. Our members understand that investing in high-quality care and safe staffing go hand in hand with preventing deadly infections like those that can cause sepsis. The United Federation of Teachers helped lead the way to codify Rory's Regulations in New York. And our members across the country will continue to advance sepsis safeguards for patients and communities. Through our Patients Before Profits campaign, AFT Nurses and Health Professionals is standing up for high-quality, affordable, accessible care in our communities, including lifesaving solutions to prevent and treat sepsis."

## **Progressive Caucus Member Assist American Red Cross Unions in Moving Forward Toward First-Ever National Contract**

The coalition of American Red Cross unions has reached a tentative agreement on a first-ever national contract. Progressive Caucus members helped lead the charge in organizing a formal coalition.

Ann Twomey, president of the Health Professionals and Allied Employees, played a key role in keeping all the unions together in moving forward towards an agreement.

President Randi Weingarten successfully set the tone with her opening remarks to labor and management teams. This provided the impetus for the unions to proactively move forward in dealings with this employer, which has historically failed to treat employees appropriately.

Progressive Caucus Co-Chair Mark Richard served as chief negotiator for the eight-union coalition in this multi-union agreement. Mark's strong negotiating skills resulted in neutrality language for new organizing, job security, and a labor-management cooperation structure. Stay tuned for updates on ratification.

## **Vice President Ricker Tackles Rape and Responsibility in *Ms. Magazine* Article**

After the Labrie/St. Paul's verdict was announced, Vice President Mary Cathryn Ricker wrote an important piece for *Ms. Magazine*, focused on discussing sex and consent with our children. In the article, she states, "sexual assault goes unreported 68 percent of the time, in part because of the social pressure and scrutiny put on survivors.

Changing that culture will require a different approach. We can't be afraid to discuss sexual assault and to help our children—and our students—build values systems around healthy behavior, respect and affirmative consent." Read more at <http://msmagazine.com/blog/2015/09/17/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-sex-and-consent/>

**Progressive Caucus wants to hear your union news! Send your updates to the Progressive Caucus at [progressivecaucusaft@gmail.com](mailto:progressivecaucusaft@gmail.com)**

# A Glance at What's Happening Across the Country



AFT New Mexico @AFTNM · Sep 17

@AFTNM Celebrates Introduction of Senate Bill to Repeal Healthcare "Cadillac Tax" .@AFTUnion @rweingarten



**American Federation of Teachers New Mexico**  
Celebrates Introduction of Senate Bill to Repeal Healthcare "Cadillac Tax"

Sen. Martin Heinrich Leads Bi-Partisan Effort to Bring Relief to Working New Mexicans

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 17, 2015

Contact: John Dyrz  
505-554-8679

Albuquerque – American Federation of Teachers New Mexico President Stephanie Ly released the following statement:

"Working New Mexicans can be proud of Sen. Heinrich and his bi-partisan efforts to repeal the regressive healthcare 'Cadillac Tax' from the Affordable Care Act.

"As a union who represents thousands of educators across New Mexico, and often negotiates aspects of healthcare coverage, we're intimately familiar with the fight to ensure all New Mexicans have the best healthcare access possible at the lowest out-of-pocket cost.

"Some employers, in anticipation of increased healthcare-related taxes, have attempted to shift additional out-of-pocket costs to workers, and repealing this tax would prevent additional costs from being passed on to middle-class, working New Mexicans.

"Thank you, Senator Heinrich, for continuing to fight for New Mexicans, and for working to ensure adequate healthcare remains a reality for all workers," said Ly.



Melissa Cropper @mcropper1 · Sep 16

"Diversity is a key component to equality and opportunity," @rweingarten. The number of black teachers has dropped [wapo.st/1MadS2e](#)



Melissa Cropper retweeted



Ohio Senate Dems @OhioSenateDems · Sep 15

President of #Ohio Fed of Teachers tells State Board of Ed: original #HB70 was great, CEO takeover amendment not ok. @OFTadvocate @mcropper1



Denise Specht @DeniseSpecht · Sep 16

Example of a solution-driven agreement focusing on student needs and attracting, retaining quality educators.

Seattle EA @SeattleEA

Here's more information about the suspension of the #SPSstrike.

The Seattle Education Association's elected... [fb.me/7sj4b4Yz5](#)



Bob Morgenstern @MorgyWV · Sep 14

Show us the money! WV DOE shortchanging school districts on funding [bit.ly/1ipHjDU](#) @AFTUnion @rweingarten @AFTWV



candice owley @cmowley · Sep 16

Perhaps it is time to revisit the wide spread use of 12-hr shifts. 12-hour-plus shifts linked to nurse burnout [fiercehealthcare.com/story/12-hour...](#)



Daniel Santos @mr\_dsantos · Sep 7

#WeAreOurUnion #IamMyUnion @A\_Dewey @ivancas15 @vammed @AFTUnion

