Newsletter of the AFL-CIO Central New York Labor Council

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Representing thousands of workers in central New York

The Public Education Community Fires Back at Cuomo's Punish & Privatize Agenda

Note: This article is about the Rally for Public Education that was held on March 5th in Utica. However, as I write this, there is an emergency rally against the destructive Cuomo education agenda being organized for later today (March 26th) at the State Capital in Albany.

March 5th was a big day in Utica. Somewhere in the range of 1500 supporters of public education (teachers, stu-

dents, parents, district staff, local labor leaders and members, and concerned citizens) from throughout central New York converged on Oneida Square. Despite frigid temperatures, they marched down Genesee Street to the State Office Building for a Rally in Support of Public Education. Organized in just a few days, the turnout was an indication of the anger spawned by the governor's extreme anti-education agenda contained in his 2015 budget proposal.

The crowd at the State Office Building filled the plaza and spilled over onto the sidewalks all around. Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi applaud-



ed those who marched and spoke passionately of the importance to push back against Cuomo's plan that underfunds public education, lift the cap on charter schools, test our children to the extreme and unfairly evaluate and punish teachers. Assemblywoman Claudia Tenney disputed Cuomo's statements about the failure of public

Organized labor represents workers in all sectors of the labor movement. Right now public education is under attack, so that is what dominates this issue. But remember, we are all union brothers & sisters.



uomo

Billionnires

Loves

education in New York, pointing out that New York actually ranks near the top in the US as regards student performance. This is an issue that affects all of us and it was heartening to see two of our representatives (one a Republican and the other a Democrat) coming together and speaking out forcefully and unambiguously on behalf of their constituents in opposition to a destructive proposal

from Governor Cuomo. Sadly, Senator Joe Griffo, while at Oneida Square

to greet marchers, was not in attendance at the State Office Building to speak in support of the marchers.

Utica School District Superintent Bruce Karam and Rome Superintendent Jeffrey Simons were at the rally, voicing their total opposition to the Governor's education agenda and total

support for the marchers.

The marchers were from pretty much all area school districts and

much all area school districts and they were out in force, speaking (make that shouting) their minds. In a democracy it's the people who should be setting the agenda, not the politicians. For sure it should not be an arrogant governor who is beholden to big publishing and Wall Street money. News flash: Governor Cuomo, put people first... more importantly, **put students first**.

So what are teachers and parents and students asking for? First off... funding. Under the present formula, the districts that are poorest and most in need get the least funding. Utica is the perfect example. One of the poorest districts in the state and one in which over 40 different languages are spoken. Poverty and the lack of adequate funding have been shown be strong determinants of a lack of educational success. The multimillion dollar funding shortfall annually experienced by Utica is crippling and immoral. Enough! The teacher evaluation scheme the Governor is proposing is based on standardized test that have nothing to do with students' grades, were developed in secret by Pearson Publishing (for profit) and are planned to be the <u>deciding</u> element in a teacher evaluation system that has been purposely rigged so that teachers will fail. A standardized test as the basis for evaluating teachers is ludicrous... the classroom dynamic is impacted by more outside factors tan you can count, none of which a teacher can influence. Student scores on a standardized test that doesn't

count and teacher evaluation are apples and oranges. Also, Cuomos push to open the floodgates on private charter schools that siphon public money from public schools that are already grossly underfunded is practically criminal. But when a governor is beholden to big money Wall Street billionaires who want charters, that's what we get. There is nothing in the governor's education agenda that's good for public education (not for students, not for teachers, not for parents). We need to fight it at every turn.

Union brothers and sisters outside of education, we need you for this fight. Please contact your legislators asap and tell them to say "No" to Cuomo's destructive plan. The easiest way to do this is to download the NY-SUT app so with a click you can contact your legislators and let them know you stand with NYSUT on the side of students and teachers and public education.

ASK JOE GRIFFO: GENESEE STREET OR WALL STREET? District Office: 315-793-9072 Albany Office: 518-455-3334

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling because I am disappointed in the Senate's one house budget as it relates to public education. Although I am happy that the Senate decided to decouple the Governor's so-called education reforms from the budget, I am deeply concerned as to why the Senate decided to include those unacceptable and harmful proposals in separate bills.

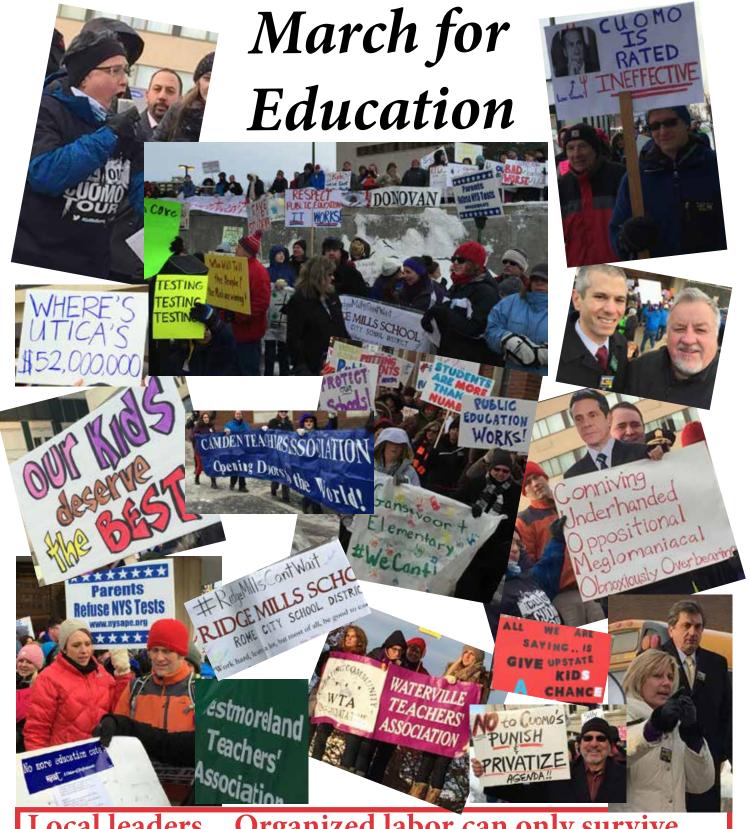
As a parent and voter in your district, I need know if you:

- *Reject the Governor Cuomo's changes to APPR and High-Stakes Testing? Yes/No
- *Reject attacks on Tenure and the 3020-a process? Yes/No
- *Reject state take-over/receivership and destroy local control? Yes/No
- *Oppose lifting the cap on Charter Schools and the pre-pupil increase? Yes/No
- *Support MOE and operational support for SUNY/CUNY/CC? Yes/No
- I want to assure you that if you stand up to Governor Cuomo and those who seek to destroy public education; I will stand up for you. Please stand with your constituents and not with the Governor, nor Senate Republican leader Dean Skelos.

Organized Labor is coming together to help our cherished Stanley Theater... Be there!



Let's sell out the Stanley!!!!!



Local leaders... Organized labor can only survive with an informed membership. Please do your part and share this newsletter with all your members. Nothing's more important than spreading the word.

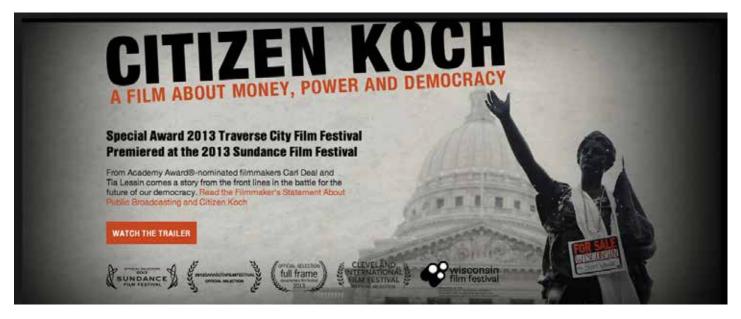
Labor turns out to celebrate St. Patty's Day

Marching behind the new Central New York Labor Council banner, members from many different locals celebrated parade day and at the same time strutted their own union's colors. Marchers handed out sweets to parade goers and also advertized the upcoming Irish Night at the Stanley with bright green cards that onlookers happily accepted. It's always a great day to see members from different locals together. As we marched, the chant of "We are the union... the mighty, mighty union" filled the air. Below are some snapshots from the day. Next year's goal... to be the single biggest group in the whole parade. Let's do it!!!



The film **Citizen Koch** will be shown at the **Other Side**, 2011 **Genesee St**, **Utica**

www.theothersideutica.org/ on Thursday, May 21 at 7:30PM Admission is free and discussion afterwards is welcome.



Wisconsin is now a "right to work" state, WI Governor Scott Walker is waging war on unions and worker rights and is being touted as a viable 2016 Republican presidential candidate, *Citizens United* and like court decisions have opened the floodgates to money in politics; the Koch brothers alone have pledged to spend nearly \$1 billion in the next presidential election, Governor Cuomo's "Opportunity 2015 Agenda" threatens the future of public education in New York, Republican governors and legislatures all over the US (under the guise of preventing voter fraud) are proposing and passing legislation that will suppress the vote of the poor, the elderly and ethnic minorities... the timing is perfect for us all to stop and consider the state of our democracy and where the "little guy" stands in it all.

Join the fight for public education

If all unionists stand together, we can win every fight. Right now it's education. Tomorrow? Who knows. Let's be ready. Let's be one.

Go to the NYSUT webpage to find out how to help. http://www.nysut.org/

Other helpful sites:

https://optoutcny.wordpress.com/ www.nysape.org/



For all those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die.

Ted Kennedy

Don't forget about Workers Memorial Day

Workers Memorial Day this year is April 28th. However, the Central Labor Council will celebrate this important day on Thursday, April 23rd. The day was established by the AFL-CIO "to remember those who have suffered

and died on the job and to renew our efforts for safe workplaces." Here we extend the memorial to include any of our union brothers and sisters who have passed during the past year. As is our custom, the ceremony will be conducted at the Workers Memorial Monument in Ilion, starting around 5PM. After the ceremony at the monument, there will be food and drink at Francesca's in Ilion where further commemorations will be held as well as the council's regular monthly meeting.

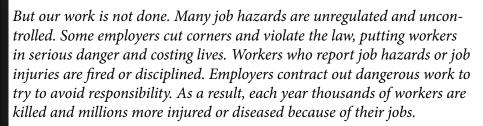
The following (in italics) was taken directly from the AFL-CIO website. Four decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that

Workers Memorial Day



promise a reality—winning protections that have made jobs safer, saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of workplace injuries and illnesses.

Mourn For The Dead Sticker



The Obama administration has strengthened safety and health protections through tougher enforcement and expanded workers' rights. New safeguards on silica and other workplace hazards have been proposed and are

close to being finalized. But this progress is threatened by business groups and the Republicans who now control Congress. They are trying to stop these protections and shut down all future regulations.

We cannot let them succeed – workers' lives are at stake.

This is an event at which every affiliate local should be represented. We're hoping to see many of you at this event. Never forget that whatever compensation and benefits we enjoy were built on the backs of our sisters and brothers who went before us. We will always stand on their shoulders.

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Hugh T. Farley	(518) 455-2181
James L. Seward	(518) 455-3131
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Peter D. Lopez	518-455-5363
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Ken Blankenbush	518-455-5797
Marc Butler	518-455-5393
Anthony Brindisi	518-455-5454
William Barclay	518-455-5841
William Magee	518-455-4807

Some phone numbers to use...

Local leaders... The Gompers dinner is coming up.

Current dates under consideration are 10/9, 10/15 or 10/16. Let us know your preference (735-6101) *In the news...* (Items of interest you can access on the internet.)

Walmart, Lowe's, Safeway, and Nordstrom Are Bankrolling a Nationwide Campaign to Gut Workers' Comp - Mother Jones - http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/03/arawc-walmart-campaign-against-workers-compensation

US Supreme Court Chooses Not to Address Wisconsin Voter Photo ID Law - League of Women Voters - http://lwv.org/blog/us-supreme-court-chooses-not-address-wisconsin-voter-photo-id-law

Gov. Rick Scott cuts state losses in long voting fight - Tampa Bay Times - http://www.tampa-bay.com/news/politics/legislature/bousquet-gov-rick-scott-cuts-state-losses-in-long-voting-fight/2218815



United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area

2-1-1 will bring huge and welcome change to central New York

The Central NY Labor Agency until recently operated a help line known as Information and Referrel. For many years working people and others could call the agency to get information about where they could find help for any of a number of problems. Honestly, it was a shoestring operation but one that was very valuable to folks in need in the Mohawk Valley. Some of the funding for the agency and I&R came from our local United Way (UWVGU). We are fortunate to enjoy a very close and mutually beneficial working relationship with the UWVGU. In fact, the CNY Labor Agency is a "proud partner" with the UWVGU and our labor liaison Enesa Sabanagic spends one day a week helping out in the UW office. Well, as already stated, I&R is gone. In its place after many years of hard work by UW staff is 2-1-1. It's I&R on steroids.

The call center is actually located in Rochester. Earlier this month a group of UW staff and board members (including one of the labor representatives on the board) travelled to Rochester to visit the center. All I can say after the visit is WOW! Workers in the call center are trained professionals, certified in the important work they do. The center runs 24/7 and can be accessed in any language imaginable. They work from databases provided by our UW and that information is being updated on a daily basis. UWVGU employs one staff member whose sole responsibility is 2-1-1. She works every day to spread the word within the 3-county area (Oneida-Herkimer-Madison) and to keep the databases updated. It's a huge job but the dividends to all in central NY is equally huge. So... goodbye I&R; hello 2-1-1.

This is an important number for all members of our affiliate locals to remember... and when in need, use.

Don't forget Irish Night!!!

Thanks to UFCW Local One for in-house printing.

Check out the Labor Council web page... cnylc.org

Thinking about contributing to the newsletter?

Contact: bill.perrotti@yahoo.com

The April Council meeting will be on Thursday, the 23rd at 6PM.
287 Genesee Street, Utica