



Spring 2019

CITY WORKER NEWS!

Newsletter of the Municipal Council of UE local 150, NC Public Service Workers Union

<http://UE150.org>

City Workers Organize for Affordable Healthcare - Support Medicare for All!

Cities across North Carolina, just like all employers have been charging their employees more for healthcare -- higher premiums, deductibles, co-pays and other hidden costs.

The City of Charlotte is the worst, with premiums for family plans that are \$434 per week and \$10,000 deductible. This means many workers cannot afford and often delay many important surgeries. Last year the union won an important demand to have “progressive” premium structure, meaning those that earn less pay less. Workers got the entire month of August 2018 free with no premium, and workers got discounts, up to \$900, based on income.

However, these small changes are not enough! We are still drowning and can't afford healthcare. This is why this year the Charlotte chapter is leading the fight, by **demanding that their City Council pass a resolution in support of the HR 1384 in US Congress for Expanded and Improved Medicare for All!**

WHAT IS MEDICARE FOR ALL??

HR1384 would provide one uniform health insurance system for all US residents, no matter where you work or live. The Federal government would provide health insurance, which means all those for-profit health insurance companies that make billions off us would no longer be needed. They don't provide any value

MEDICARE FOR ALL SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH CARE



- ✓ Covers Everyone
- ✓ Saves Money
- ✓ Supported by 70% of Americans
- ✓ Pre-existing conditions

to us anyway! All those profits would be re-invested back into our healthcare system so that everyone has access to quality care.

All employers, including cities in NC, would save millions of dollars per year, and workers would save thousands. Health costs are currently the most common cause of household bankruptcy. This would no longer happen!

ALSO INSIDE:

- ★ Durham workers fight for fair classification and win step pay plan
- ★ Greensboro workers fight for step plan, win fairness victories.

City Workers Organize for Fair Classification & Compensation

On Feb 21, over 80 people packed into the Durham City Workers Union speak-out including Mayor Schewel and City Council member DeDreana Freeman. 30 workers from 5 departments spoke out about concerns with the new changes in the City's Classification and Compensation plan. Some of the concerns include:

MORE ON-CALL DAYS

Some crews are being told they will have the number of on-call weeks increased from 4 to 15 per year!

The Union is demanding :

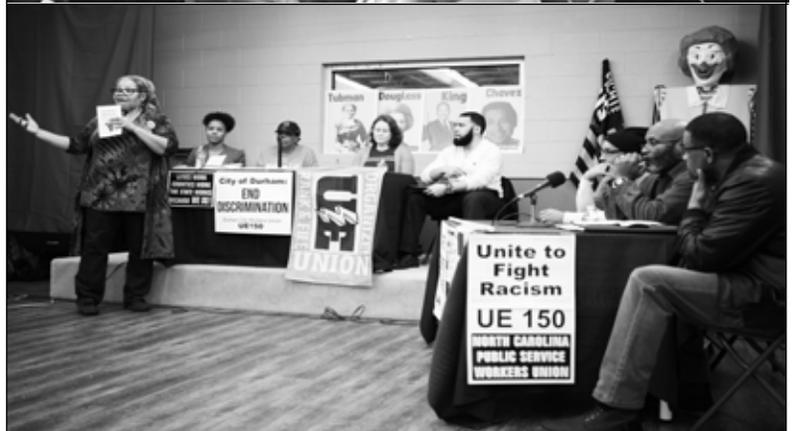
- 1) 8 hours of comp time for every week we are on-call.
- 2) To be paid daily overtime, and being allowed to take the day off after overtime/on-call without docking time, stop punishing us for being safe and resting on day after overtime work.

WORKERS FORCED TO HAVE MORE LICENSES and DEGREES

workers forced to have new requirements for the same jobs – CDL, high school and college diplomas - or can't even have lateral transfer!

WORK SPEED-UP

The new job classes while provide more “flexibility for management” allowing them to send us to cover other work crews, potentially even in other divisions and departments! The reclassification study proposes **merging 450 titles down to only 203 job titles**, which are incredibly vague, setting workers up to be pushed around more to fill in the gaps left by chronic, structural short-staffing, exacerbated by permanent vacancies. This is a speedup, designed in the name of efficiency to squeeze more work out of each worker(For instance, rear packer SWS truckers only have one laborer, rather than 2)



UNION WINS BIG ON NEW STEP PLAN after CITY TRIES TO CUT SALARY CAPS

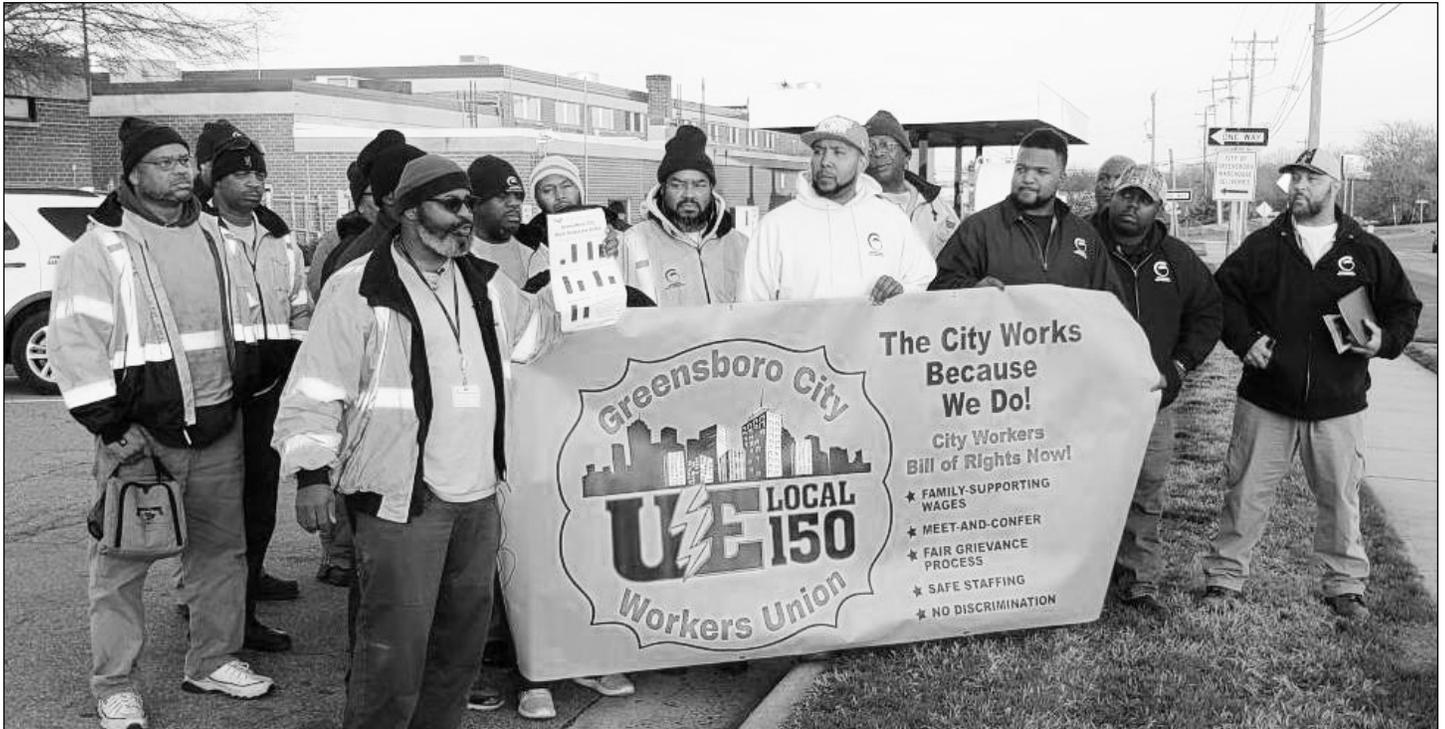
Sr. Laborer Salary cap was **LOWERED** from **\$50, 358** to **\$44, 969** now **HIGHER** to **57, 606!!**

Heavy Equipment Operator Salary cap was **LOWERED** from **\$57,597** to **\$51, 571** now **HIGHER** to **61, 350**

Crew Leaders Salary cap was **LOWERED** from **\$62, 608** to **\$52, 582** now **HIGHER** to **65, 332!**



GREENSBORO City Workers launch Campaign: **Stop Unfair Merit Raises, Pass A Step Pay Plan!**



Press conference at Field Ops building on January 15 where UE150 union announces campaign for fair pay, a step plan! President Charles French spoke eloquently about our demands!

81% of City workers from survey stated they believe a step plan is more fair than merit pay for city workers.

The Union is currently surveying all city employees about their opinions on a merit-only versus a step plan. So far, 81% say a step plan based on seniority is better for workers. We are continuing our campaign for a fair wage structure in the city and a Municipal Workers Bill of Rights.

City workers in Greensboro are already the most underpaid of the state's largest cities. Most city workers in Greensboro only get a chance at a small

annual raise based on their performance review, which allow biased managers to deny workers a fair wage. The state's two other largest cities, Charlotte and Raleigh, changed in recent years to a system paid by years of service. Greensboro Fire and Police departments already currently have such a "Step Plan" system, but all other departments are excluded.

"The City runs because city workers work. When hurricanes come or when water main lines burst, we are the first responders, yet we are paid like we are an after thought," stated Charles French, equipment operator in solid waste, President of the Greensboro City Workers Union. "All city workers deserve family-supporting wages, that means we need a Step Plan based on years of service."

Union Makes Advances in Struggles for Fairness!

The City of Greensboro Administration has established a regular system of meetings with elected UE150 Union officers to hear out issues of front-line employees. Through the course of these meetings there have been many improvements made that directly impact employees.

Union Petition Win Water Resources Workers Now Allowed Choice of Comp Time or paid Overtime.

After working many long hours to help clean up the city in the aftermath of hurricanes and tornadoes last year, many Water Resources workers wished to be able to take some time off to spend with their families. The City HR policy allows department heads to choose whether to pay workers overtime or allow them to accrue compensatory time (to use for paid time off later). However, in Water Resources, management decided that they would only pay workers overtime but not allow people to use comp time.

The Union circulated a petition, collecting signatures from a majority of Water Resources workers demanding the right to chose. In a memo sent to the union on February 8, 2019, after meeting with union elected officers, Matt Schweitzer, Senior Human Resources Manager indicated progress was being made on the issue. Then weeks later Water Resources management announced to workers that they would be allowed to chose once per year, how they will be compensated for hour worked beyond 40 per week!



Union Executive Officers meet with Matt Schweitzer, HR Director, Jamaiah Waterman and other city officials in Oct. 2018 and Feb. 2019 about union proposals.

Union wins Merit Pay improvement for Solid Waste

The union is currently engaged in a campaign to win a fair pay structure - a Step Plan based on years of service, rather than the biased merit system, which allows managers to use the evaluations to deny workers raises they earn, resulting in low pay for most front-line workers in Greensboro.

As part of that campaign, for the first time ever, workers in departments across the City collected information about how their departments determined their merit pay. **We found that in every department there are totally different standards, which is unfair in itself.**

In Solid Waste, Union President Charles French found that workers were being punished % points in merit pay for being injured, and also for unpreventable accidents. After raising this with the City Manager's office and HR, Schweitzer stated in his Feb. 8 memo that "work related injuries should not be one of the criteria involved in determining employees' merit increases." Another small victory for the union!

Raleigh City Workers Win Changes after a year of struggle & organizing



City workers meet with City Council member David Cox on Aug. 27, 2018 to review progress, and discuss next steps.



Raleigh city workers meet with several city council members in October 2017 highlighting many critical issues of fairness, wages and the need for a Municipal Workers Bill of Rights.

A year ago, around early Fall 2017, workers in the City of Raleigh began to rejuvenate the activity of the union. Since then, workers have done alot to build their union and won many improvements!

New excessive heat policy ensuring workers abilities to get hourly breaks for “moderate” work when heat index over 80, along with cooling PPE and training for management and front line workers to avoid heat-related illness.

Veteran’s day grievance won - Over a dozen workers had worked on the Saturday following the Veteran’s day holiday. When they received their paychecks, they realized the were not paid overtime for the Saturday work. They approached their union steward, filed a grievance and all won back pay! According to the State Wage and Hour Act, the City must tell workers of changes to how you get paid BEFORE you go to work.

10 hours of holiday pay rather than just 8 hours – Many workers only work 4 days a week, so when a holiday comes, they are now paid the full 10 hours they would have worked.

Boot allowance paid this year, increased from \$80 to \$100. In the last year or two the City hasn’t been consistent in giving out boot allowances, the union not only fought to make sure they were given out but also that they were increased!

Solid waste workers won spill kits in their trucks so that hydraulic fluid and other hazardous leaks get mitigated.

New job descriptions, got the crew leader positions filled, and not left empty.

Several Grievances won keeping workers from being unfairly suspended.

RECENT VICTORIES

Stopped CDL requirement in Water Management

March 2018, After Water Management management tried to force certain positions to have new CDL-A requirement, the union circulated a petition and had meeting with City Manager Bonfield who overturned management's requirement for new CDL-A's. This fight continues with the new Classification plans.

Helped organize press conferences to bring attention to Arsenic poisoning and sewer department workers robbery exposing the problems covered up by management.

Helped secure impacted workers extended paid leave from work to overcome traumatic experience. Other gains were also won, but many of demands not won because workers preferred to work with attorneys and law suit still pending.

Won City Council resolution in April 2018 calling on the state Legislature to overturn the ban on public sector workers collective bargaining to allow for union contracts.

Helped force the release of 2 abusive Public Works managers

March 2017, Superintendent Andy Brogden was let go after 2 union members filed grievances, reported unfair actions, exposed falsified documents and his cussing and unprofessional behavior. Months earlier, union struggle and documentation also resulted in release of manager Coleman Brown.

Won City Council adoption of a Workers Rights Commission

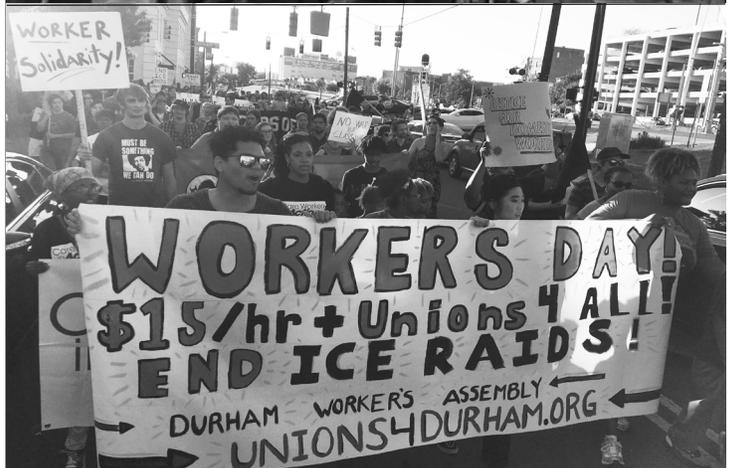
January 2019, DCWU working with other labor allies in the Durham Workers Assembly won the passage of a new city commission to oversee workers rights!



City Worker Union UE150 Officers Speak at City Council Budget hearing March 2018. Pictured include (Left to Right): Daryl Brunson, Solid Waste, Romey Gaddy, Water Management, and Donald Quick, Public Works.



City Worker Union UE150 Officers meet with Mayor Steve Schewel and Mayor Pro Tem Jillian Johnson.





EXPANDED AND IMPROVED MEDICARE FOR ALL ACT

Our health care system fails to provide quality care to every U.S. resident and wastes hundreds of billions of dollars a year in unnecessary administrative costs. A Medicare for All single-payer system — supported by UE since 1943 — would expand and improve the cost-effective and administratively efficient Medicare program to finance comprehensive, high-quality health care for everybody in the U.S.

Our Current System is Ineffective, Inefficient, and Expensive

- Roughly 30 million Americans are uninsured, and an additional 41 million adults are underinsured.
- In a recent poll, 20 percent of insured Americans reported having trouble paying their medical bills.
- The United States spends twice as much on health care as other major industrialized countries.
- Despite outsized spending on health care, the U.S. experiences extremely poor health outcomes.
- 33 percent of U.S. adults go without recommended care, do not see a doctor when sick, or fail to fill a prescription because of costs. Only 7–8 percent of people in the U.K., Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden experience these problems.
- In 2014, 68 percent of Americans over the age of 65 were living with two or more chronic conditions, compared to only 33 percent in the United Kingdom.

Medicare for All is Popular, Achievable and Affordable

- Support for Medicare for All (Reuters poll, 7/2018)

70% All Americans

84.5% Democrats

52% Republicans

- A study conducted by the Mercatus Center, a conservative think tank, concluded that the U.S. would save \$2 trillion over a ten year period by guaranteeing health care for everyone with Medicare.
- Medicare for All would require new taxes, but they would replace premiums, co-pays, and deductibles. 95% of Americans will pay less than they do now. A family of four making \$50,000 per year would save an estimated \$5,000 under Senator Bernie Sanders' plan.

How It Works »

- A single-payer system would expand the existing Medicare program to cover everyone in the United States and improve the program by eliminating out-of-pocket expenses.
- Patients would have their choice of health care providers.
- All medically necessary services would be covered.

How It's Financed »

- Replacing premiums, deductibles, and co-pays with a modest increase in the Medicare payroll tax on individuals and employers.
- Increasing taxes on the wealthy.
- Savings from eliminating health insurance industry profits and negotiating drug prices.

How It Would Affect Your Union Contract »

- No more employer demands for healthcare givebacks.
- Employers' savings can be redirected to wage increases or improvements to other benefits.

For more information visit www.ueunion.org/medicareforall



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CHARLOTTE CHAPTER

STS Workers Protest Management holding them to policies they have never seen

The STS Preventable Accident Policy has allegedly been updated by Robert Ballard, the new incoming Director of Special Transportation Services.

This was carried out on some unknown date, according to City HR.

This has led to the termination of Antoine Jackson and could lead to the termination of other workers unless we unite to challenge this new rule.

STS drivers have reported to the Union that they have not seen the new "3rd version" of the Preventable Accidents policy. We are under the impression that it is not until your 4th preventable accident that you are potentially terminated, and that after the 3rd accident you are allowed the option to take a Defensive Driving class, resulting in the 1st of 3 offenses being forgiven.

Management is claiming they eliminated your right to attend a Defensive Driving course to have your third offense forgiven. This is not right!

If we stand together and organize we can stop these unfair changes!

Special Transportation Services drivers host sticker day to Speak-Out against unsafe work conditions and work rule changes!



UE local 150 Municipal Council

Council President Nathanette Mayo 919-231-2660

Charlotte Chapter President Sharon Black 704-606-4501

Greensboro Chapter President Charles French 336-312-7343

Durham Chapter Recording Secretary Sarah Vukelich 619-609-3458

Raleigh Chapter President Charlen Parker 910-379-9681