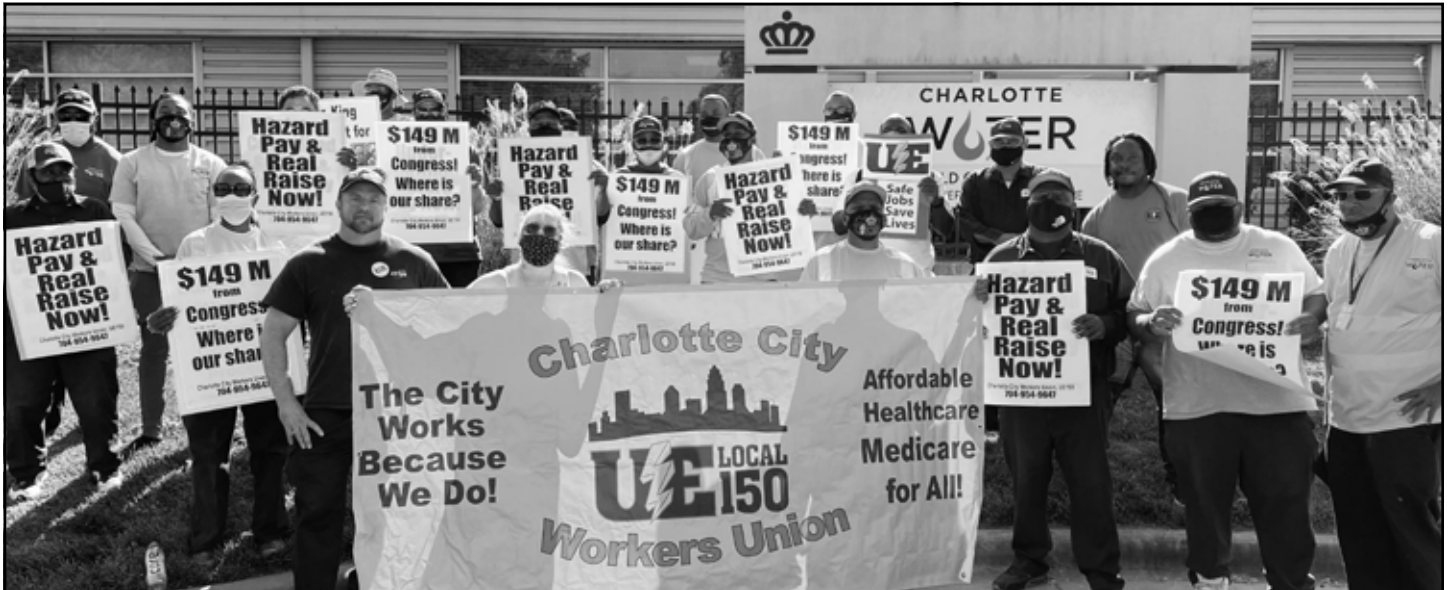


## City Workers Across the State Fight for Better Wages in Budget Campaigns



*Charlotte City Workers Press Conference on April 15.*

UE150 Municipal Chapters across the state waged campaigns including petitions, press conferences, and speaking at city council to win wage and other economic changes in this year's budget cycle. Here is what we won:

### CHARLOTTE

- **\$18.50 minimum wage** for all City workers
- **1.5% merit + 1.5% step** increase for all
- **5% Hazard premium back pay** from March 2020 to Jan 1, 2021 for LYNX mechanics
- **Shift Premium Pay** - Agreed to study shift premium pay for nights/weekends to start next year.

### GREENSBORO

- **Step Pay Plan** -- For equal pay increases based on years of service to start next year.
- **3% merit raise** with new language explaining how merit is determined by departments.

### DURHAM

- **\$3,000 bonus** - The City originally proposed just a \$1,500 bonus but the union, fighting for hazard back pay, secured an **additional \$1,500**
- **2% raise** while Fire gets 3% and Police get 4.5%
- **Creation of a new Community Safety Department** to respond to 911 calls with mental health workers, social workers and other alternatives to armed police. 20 positions from Police department will be moved into this new department this year and each of next 3 years. Total 60 positions.

### RALEIGH

- **\$17.33 minimum wage** for all city workers
- **2 or 4 % merit increases**

# Union Members Push State General Assembly on Hazard Pay, Safe Staffing and End Tax Cuts for Corporations and the Wealthy!

UE150 Political Action Day on May 19 in Raleigh at General Assembly had union members from DHHS, Municipal chapters and the UNC System representing the entire state. We met with 19 state Senators and Representatives, only 1 being a Republican.

The legislators were generally receptive to the issues we brought forth. Those issues included bringing back Covid hazard pay for state facilities employees using funds from the American Recovery Plan. We also advocated for longer-term issues related to pay such as fixing the wage compression created by raising the minimum starting wage. We noted the need to address worker retention. Another issue we highlighted was repeal of the state law banning collective bargaining, which North Carolina remains one of the few states to prohibit.

We discussed the potential for Medicaid expansion and Medicare to relieve working families of the burden of healthcare costs.

While receptive, the Democratic legislators reminded us of their limited ability to enact a progressive agenda while they are in the minority to the Republicans. This tied into our discussion focusing on the need to register voters and activate voters who will support our progressive agenda including rolling back some

for 2013 North Carolina tax cuts that have reduced the amount available to legislators to



*UE150 members meet with Rep. Wesley Harris.*

spend for programs to help working class.

In other efforts, Central Regional Hospital workers met with Rep. Lambeth's aid Blair Tuesday, May 25th. He is one of the "powerful chairs", Chair of Health Committee and Chair of Appropriations committee and is reportedly open to the DHHS appropriations proposals we made.



*Sekia Royall, President of UE150, speaks at Press Conference in front of the NC General Assembly on May 19 alongside other public worker union members*

Another legislative issue noted is the recent action on Government Transparency Bill SB 355 which would release more state employees' personnel records on discipline as public records. The issue is complicated because State Police records would be included, and Democrats might support it on that basis. Currently, write ups and evaluations are not grievable. No representation to appeal.

## Republican Senators Seek to Eliminate Corporate Taxes, Gut Funding for Public Jobs and Vital Public Services

Republican State Legislators are continuing their reckless course to eliminate more funding for the public services our members provide. They have spent years slashing taxes on corporations and the wealthy. In late May, state Senators called for moving the corporate income tax closer to extinction, potentially eliminating it completely in the next 5 years. They are seeking to eliminate funding for our schools, mental health care, quality child care, small businesses, universities, transportation, and housing while granting more sweeping tax breaks for corporations and the wealthiest among us instead of investments in our hard-working families and communities.

Our union's Another UNC Is Possible campaign seeks to push back against these corporate tax cuts.

# Charlotte City workers demand rescue from American Rescue Plan including hazard pay and a real raise

On Thursday, April 15, Charlotte City Workers Union chapter of UE Local 150 hosted a press action with over 40 workers from Charlotte Water, Solid Waste, LYNX Lighrail and Department of Transportation in attendance.

City of Charlotte workers who kept our city running through the course of the COVID-19 pandemic are now asking city officials to rescue them. The City of Charlotte is scheduled to receive nearly **\$149 million from the American Rescue Plan**, yet the raises planned in the City Manager's proposed budget do not reflect this.

"Ever since the pandemic, we have been working making sure the city is running. We were given 5% hazard pay for a few months, then it was cancelled at beginning of the year, despite the pandemic continuing," said **Dominic Harris**, Crew Chief 1, Charlotte Water, President of the Charlotte City Workers Union, UE Local 150. Harris continued, "It seems that city workers have been put on the back burner. Not one conversation that happens between City Council, City Manager and leadership prioritizes us. The city workers because we do."

## Greensboro Wins Step Plan -- Major Demand Since Founding of the Union!!

In other good news, the City of Greensboro chapter has been in a four year battle to win a Step Pay Plan. It has now been confirmed that the City Manager, City Council and city leadership are supportive of implementing this budget cycle. This would be a historic win for the chapter. City Manager David Parrish is proposing \$100,000 in this years budget to get it started, then fully implement next year. However, the City HR Manager is trying to throw confusion in the mix, by sending out deception employee surveys. So the struggle there continues but the chapter leadership is hopeful.

Watch Charlotte Press Conference at [bit.ly/CLTVid](https://bit.ly/CLTVid)



**Kris Barrows**, LYNX Lighrail rail car mechanic, and Vice President of the Charlotte City Workers Union stated that "we are also demanding retroactive hazard pay for the light rail mechanics who have kept the trains running throughout the pandemic. Their omission from the original list of hazard pay recipients is not only insulting, but just another example of the City's disregard for the health and safety of its employees and their families."

After this press conference, Kris was able to secure a meeting with CATS CEO John Lewis. During this meeting, Lewis committed to paying all Lighrail mechanics the 5% hazard premium retro pay from March 2020 until January 1, 2021.

## Durham City Worker Union Leaders Secure Added Bonus in Budget!

Durham City Worker Union leaders have been working hard the last 6 months to win better wage increases and funding in the budget for City workers, including diverting money from the police department to support the needs of other city workers, our Black communities and for the Safety and Wellness Task Force.

Union leaders met privately with Mayor Steve Schewel, Mayor Pro Tempore Jillian Johnson, and City Council members Pierce Freelon, Javiera Caballero and Charlie Reece, who all claimed that raises were their #1 priority. Through these meetings we demanded more, and **won an additional \$1,500 bonus**. However, this is not enough, and we must keep organizing!

# Improve Job Security!! New Grievance Policy Proposal Could be Model for Other Cities



With the support of the Durham Workers Rights Commission, the Durham City Workers Union chapter of UE150 met with Durham City Manager Wanda Page on May 9. Manager Page has now agreed to a regular quarterly meet-n-confer with the Union. We also had a follow-up meeting with HR Director Regina Youngblood on May 11, and are advancing our proposals to overhaul the City’s grievance process, with support of the Workers Rights Commission.

## Changes to the new policy would include:

- 1) Does **NOT** allow **City Manager to overturn rulings** of Step 3 HR Hearing Panel.
- 2) Requires departments to **publish a list of all types of infractions** and the corresponding disciplinary progression.
- 3) Grants **“just cause”** protections so that workers are no longer “at will” employees.
- 4) Applies to **part-time workers**, as well as full time.

- 5) All **disciplines automatically removed from file** after 1 year.
- 6) Investigations cannot extend beyond 45 days (currently its 60 days).
- 7) Workers will be allowed **representation** of their choice at all levels.
- 8) **More issues are “grievable”** including false and/or misleading information in personnel file, abuse by management, health and safety issues.
- 9) Gives workers **15 working days** (rather than 10 calendar days) to file a grievance.
- 10) Creates more opportunities at Step 1, 2 and 3 of the appeal process for workers to be heard.
- 11) Holding **management accountable** to deadlines.
- 12) Creates a better Step 3 Hearing Panel.

This is a great opportunity for City workers across the state to come together and to push their Cities to adopt a similar policy to help protect your job!

## Contact UE150 City and Statewide Union Leaders

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