

the Council Connection

Official Publication of the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

Published monthly by the WSCFF & provided to WSCFF Member Locals

Your Future Depends on What We Do in the Present- We're with You Every Step of the Way

We have received an increasing number of calls regarding the benefits the WSCFF provides. As new firefighters are brought onto the job, they receive an orientation about the benefits of joining the IAFF, WSCFF and their local. In some instances, this may be the one and only time that they hear this message. Here are a few examples of what the WSCFF offers outside of the work your Executive Board does for you and your local in the political action area or at the negotiation table.

Short-and Long-Term Disability

The WSCFF has sponsored a disability plan for over 30 years. We currently have a partnership with the Standard Insurance Company to provide one of the most comprehensive disability plans available: tailored for firefighters and catered to our state pension system. This disability plan provides 60% of pre-disability income should you be hurt off the job and an optional small monthly benefit even if you are hurt on the job and unable to work.

Northwest Fire Fighters Benefits Trust

Four years ago, the WSCFF started this medical and dental trust. We currently have 37 participating locals covering more than 6900 lives. The trust continues to grow each year as locals negotiate with their employers to join. We have had a great outcome since inception and continue to expand coverage while limiting increases in premiums. This will be our second year as a self-insured trust, and that was no small accomplishment. We are expanding this plan nationwide and have locals in Connecticut and Illinois outside of the 7th District. A key benefit for most members is that we offer retiree health care coverage for participating locals.

Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP)

The WSCFF started this plan in 1999, and we now have more than 7,200 members from 218 locals in the IAFF 7th District. The monthly, tax-free lifetime benefit you receive depends on the monthly contribution that you make while you are active. As an example, if you were to contribute \$100 per month for 25 years, your monthly benefit would be \$492 per month for life. With that benefit amount, you would receive your principle back in just over five years after retirement. The plan recently crossed the \$100 million in assets level.

Firefighter Action Support Team Political Action Committee (FAST PAC)

This fund was created in 2004 by the WSCFF to allow members to personally contribute to our political action efforts. We have over 2,150 members who give voluntarily each month. Please consider joining FAST PAC through your local. Every dollar helps us achieve our political agenda.

As always, we continue to look at programs that benefit you and your families now and into retirement. Please keep those phone calls coming as we are happy to help with any issue you may have.

~Greg Markley
WSCFF Secretary/Treasurer



December 2017

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GREG MARKLEY
Secretary-Treasurer

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Washington State
Council of Fire Fighters

FIRE and SAFER Grant Programs are Due to Sunset on January 2, 2018

This is NOT a funding issue. This is a sunset included in the underlying statute governing the grants – meaning the programs will be completely eliminated on January 2 if Congress does not act to reauthorize the grants. We have been working with Congress for two years now to do just that. Earlier this summer, the Senate passed S. 829 to reauthorize the programs and eliminate the sunset. We have been working with the House to take up and pass the Senate bill. They have not as of yet for a variety of reasons, and we are running out of time.

I encourage you and your local leaders to take this extremely seriously. The House will leave for the year on December 22, leaving us very few days to reauthorize the programs. You all know the importance of FIRE and SAFER – the consequences of losing these programs are dire not only for local fire departments but also for the IAFF as a whole and its members as individuals.

So I'm asking for your help. To the extent you can encourage your members to take this action, please do so. To the extent you can apply pressure to your elected Representatives, particularly Republicans, please do so. Rest assured we are working nonstop in DC to get this done; but as I always say, I cannot and never will have the unique influence that do our fire fighter constituents.

I thank you all.

Shannon Meissner

Director, Governmental Affairs

International Association of Fire Fighters

(202) 824-1581

WSCFF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Washington State Council of Fire Fighters Benevolent Fund offers a scholarship program for dependents of current and past members of the WSCFF. Applicants must be a senior in high school for the 2017-2018 school year and planning to attend an accredited university, community college, or trade school.



For more information or for an applications, please visit the Benevolent Fund page on our website @ www.wscff.org or contact the Council office at (360) 943-3030.

Please note: The application period opens December 15, 2017, and closes February 15, 2018. Applications must be postmarked no later than February 15, 2018.

IAFF Media Awards CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LOCALS!



This competition pays tribute to those who, in the public media and through their affiliates, document the great and the small in the life of fire fighters everywhere.

Best Blog

First Place: Local 27
Seattle, WA

To view the winning entries, go to www.iaff.org/mediaawards/

Affiliate Publication

Second Place: Local 27
Seattle, WA

Best Electronic Communication

First Place: WSCFF
Healthy In, Healthy Out Cancer Prevention Video
First Place: WSCFF
WashingtonFireFighters.org

Social Media Video

Honorable Mention: Local 1537
Anacortes, WA

the Council.
Connection

Is Your Local Ready?

Washington's Mandatory Statewide Paid Sick Leave Law



On January 1, 2018, Washington's new paid sick leave law will take effect and immediately impact sick leave benefits in collective bargaining agreements and require attention during the next round of bargaining.

The new paid sick leave law was adopted by voters in 2016 as part of the statewide minimum wage initiative. Implementing regulations have been finalized. Enforcement regulations will not be final until mid-December 2017.

The new paid leave law applies to all employers, private and public, regardless of size. In some respects, the new law provides better benefits than many CBAs; in other areas, it provides inferior benefits relative to existing CBAs. Union leaders will have to assess how the law affects their labor agreements.

As a general rule, state law establishes a floor when it comes to benefits: unions may negotiate sick leave terms that are *better*, but may not negotiate sick leave terms that fall below what the new paid sick leave law provides. Where the terms of a CBA provide a greater benefit than the new law, no adjustment is needed. However, if the law provides a new benefit not contained in a CBA, or provides the same type of benefit as the CBA but at a superior level, union leaders will need to decide how to address the differences.

Which sections of the paid sick leave law should unions focus on?

Each union will need to make that determination for itself. The list of key points below is a start, but it is not exhaustive. This list may not include elements of the law that are important in your situation. A comparison of the law, employers' policies, and CBAs is recommended.

1. Unions Cannot Waive the Statewide Paid Sick Leave Law

Unions cannot waive the new statewide law by adopting CBA terms. Unlike other paid leave laws previously adopted by some cities, this statewide law does not allow the negotiation of express opt-out terms in CBAs. Accordingly, all unions need to understand and react to the new paid leave law.

2. No Discipline for Use of Sick Leave

The law forbids an employer from disciplining a worker for using sick leave. RCW 49.46.210(3); WAC 296-128-770(2). (This provision raises issues for unions with "no fault" sick leave policies in their CBAs.)

3. Three Days of Absence Before a Doctor's Note Can Be Required

The new law prevents an employer from demanding a doctor's note until three days of work have been missed. RCW 49.46.210(1)(g); WAC 296-128-660. (This provision raises issues under CBAs that give the employer the right to a doctor's note before three days of absence.)

4. Employee Right to Charge Violations

The law creates a right for individual workers to charge employers with violations of the law through a state agency. The details of the process have yet to be finalized, but are expected before January 1, 2018.

5. Definition of Family Members.

The list of family members for whom a worker can take paid leave may include family members who are included in current CBAs. For example, the state law defines parent to include a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child. RCW 49.46.210(2)(b).

6. Applies to Washington's Domestic Violence Leave Act

Paid sick leave may be used for absences that qualify for leave under Washington's Domestic Violence Leave Act. RCW 49.46.210(1)(c); RCW 49.76.

7. Use Before Accrual.

The law entitles an employer to provide paid sick leave *before* it has been accrued. RCW 49.46.210(1)(a). The law does not *require* pre-accrual use, but authorizes it.

8. Employee Notice to Employer of Intent to Take Leave.

Under the law an employer can demand advance notice of foreseeable sick leave use. RCW 49.46.210(1)(f); WAC 296-128-650.

9. Only 6.5 Days of Sick Leave Earned Per Year

The state law requires the accrual of sick leave at only 6.5 days of sick leave per year. (One hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked.) RCW 49.46.210(1)(f).

10. 90-Day Eligibility Waiting Period

Under the law, an employer may prohibit the use of paid sick leave until an employee has been employed for 90 calendar days. RCW 49.46.210(1)(d).

11. Do Snow Days Qualify?

The answer is not clear. Do not assume that school closures due to weather will qualify as "health-related" closures subject to the law. The law creates a right to use paid sick leave when the workplace is closed by order of a public official for any health-related reason, or when an employee's child's school or place of care is closed for a health-related reason. RCW 49.46.210(1)(b)(iii).

~Terry Costello -costello@workerlaw.com

Terry's practice focuses on advising union officers and staff in all aspects of leading unions and representing workers. He specializes in private and public sector organizing, contract campaigns, litigation, and contract enforcement. His practice has recently expanded to include representation of a growing number of local unions affiliated with the IAFF. (The Law Offices of Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin & Lavitt LLP)

****WSCFF 2018 Legislative Conference – January 9, 2018****

Please note date change ~ Registration due by December 15

REGISTRATIONS DUE:

In order to avoid conflicts with the IAFF's ALTS, we have moved our **Legislative Conference** to early January 2018 and are trying something we've talked about for a long time: having the whole conference in one day!

Registration, briefing, appointments, and the reception are all still on the agenda. The difference will be that the event will conclude at the end of the reception---no morning session the next day.

Registration packets were mailed, so please take note of the deadlines outlined in the packets for rooms, etc., and make your plans accordingly.



Changes to your roster? New officers? Call Laura at (360) 943-3030 or email Laura@wscff.org.

Calendar of Events

December

25-Jan 1 Winter Holiday, WSCFF office closed

Jan-2018

8, 10 WSCFF Board Meeting
9 WSCFF Legislative conference—Hotel RL Olympia, WA

March

22, 23 Fire Ops—Hammer, Richland, WA

April

16, 20 WSCFF Board Meeting
17-19 IAFF/WSCFF Educational Seminar-The Davenport Hotel, Spokane, WA

May

16-18 IAFF 7th District Young Fire Fighter Conference-Red Lion, Kennewick, WA

June

24, 25, 29 WSCFF Board Meeting
18-20 WSCFF Annual Convention-Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, WA



If you don't have your Professional Firefighter special license plate, now is the time to get one. Each purchase or renewal of a set of special plates generates a tax-deductible \$28 donation to the WSCFF Benevolent Fund. www.wscff.org.



**Washington State
Council of Fire Fighters**

Send letters & submissions to:
Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
1069 Adams Street Southeast
Olympia, WA 98501
Phone: 800-572-5762, 360-943-3030
Fax: 360-943-2333
Website: www.wscff.org
E-mail: wscff@wscff.org
Affiliated with AFL-CIO, IAFF, WSLC



UNION MADE



WSCFF STAFF
OPEIU23/AFL-CIO



Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

December 1, 2017

WSCFF Local Leaders:

On November 28, the 2017 elections were finalized. As a labor organization we did quite well – many of our endorsed candidates were elected into office. The WSCFF has invested a great deal in the political process, and we would not be successful without your continued support as a local. Many locals have worked hard to ensure the election of quality candidates.

Political action is a cornerstone of our collective success as firefighters and public sector EMS providers. We look around the nation and see other IAFF members' benefits being taken away. We see IAFF members in states near and far struggle for years to achieve benefits Washington's members have enjoyed for decades, such as presumptive coverage for various cancers and other occupational diseases. Our successes would not have been possible without the collective efforts and financial support of the WSCFF membership.

For those locals that have yet to establish a segregated political account or a formal political action account, your legislative team stands ready to assist you in this process. We all must find a way to be engaged in the political process so that our voices can be heard.

Your district representatives will be making contact with your local leadership to see how we can best help, so please take the time to talk to them when they reach out.

On behalf of the entire WSCFF Legislative Committee and WSCFF Executive Board, thank you for your work and support.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Lawson
President

DJL:hck
opeiu8/aflcio

IAFF 7TH DISTRICT

Alaska – Idaho – Montana – Washington

December 1, 2017

Brothers and Sisters of the Magnificent 7th District:

For three days in November, the leadership of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, and Washington gathered in Whitefish, Montana, to participate in our annual 7th District Caucus. Once again, the representatives of the four states and a select group of others were invited to participate. Unfortunately, not everyone was able to attend or elected to not participate. The purpose of the caucus is for your state leaders to participate in education and team building exercises, learn about the various issues in the district, and build relationships with each other. The caucus was extremely beneficial, positive and very much needed.

Our 7th District family has continued to operate at a very high level bringing us great results with the IAFF and beyond. However, like any family or organization, there are times when we don't see eye to eye which can create discomfort and become frustrating to say the least. While in Whitefish, we had the opportunity to have open, candid conversations regarding the issues in our district. All positions were respected and each person spoke his or her truth and was heard and treated respectfully. We collectively determined that we need to move past the hyperbole and continue to use our collective energy and efforts to address the upcoming opportunities and challenges in front of us for the betterment of the members of the 7th District and IAFF.

In the true sense of professionalism we must learn to accept our differences of opinion that have caused the district pain, embarrassment, or grief. Unfortunately, there is no easy answer, no magic eight ball, no wizard behind the curtain to solve our issues - only the realization that time, communication and individual efforts will be required if we are to move forward. We in the 7th District are choosing to forgive and work toward reconciliation rather than be mired in hostility and divisiveness. Regardless of our challenges, we must put our personal feelings aside for the benefit of the IAFF as a whole.

Our presenter on day three used an analogy that unresolved issues are like planes in the sky. When a plane is overhead we look into the sky. This distraction causes us to lose focus on the work at hand and think about the plane (issue). We wonder who is on the plane (those involved), where it is going (what's next) and how it will land (issue ends). The challenge for us as a District is to land those planes. Your state organizations are committed to doing just that, and will take the necessary steps to move on. Some of the ways we can achieve this are: talking to each other more often, verifying statements, challenging each other to be accountable and remembering we are all on the same team. These conversations may be difficult in some instances, and failing to address a false statement, insinuation, or comment allows the next issue to take off.

We have all stepped forward to voluntarily serve as labor leaders in the IAFF. With that service comes the responsibility to do our best for the members we serve. The one absolute to which we all subscribe is we are a stronger and better 7th District and IAFF when we are all present, involved, and engaged.

A United 7th District is truly -- The Magnificent 7th District.

In Solidarity,

Tom Wescott
Alaska

Tom Lovell
Idaho

Joel Fassbinder
Montana

Dennis Lawson
Washington

opeiu8/aflcio



Affiliated with: AFL-CIO
International Association of Fire Fighters
Washington State Labor Council

Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

~ Meeting Announcement ~

WSCFF 4th District Pre-Legislative Conference Meeting

Friday, January 5, 2018

10:00 a.m. – Noon

Pierce County Fire Fighters, Local 726 Union Building

427 North Meridian

Puyallup, Washington 98373

Subjects:

- **2018 WSCFF Kelly L. Fox Legislative Conference**
- **2018 WSCFF Legislative Session Agenda**
- **IAFF 7th District Report**

Please have a representative from your local in attendance. The information that will be presented is very important and will be useful during the WSCFF Legislative Conference.

RSVP to: Mike Westland ~ 253-355-0863 or backcountryski@comcast.net

Fraternally,

Mike Westland, WSCFF 4th District Representative

cc: Dennis Lawson, Greg Markley, Mike Bacon, Geoff Simpson and Mike White

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Dennis J. Lawson, President • Greg B. Markley, Secretary-Treasurer
1069 Adams Street Southeast, Olympia, WA 98501 • 1-800-572-5762 • (360) 943-3030
Fax (360) 943-2333 • E-mail: wscff@wscff.org • Website: www.wscff.org



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Washington State Labor Council

Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

~ Meeting Announcement ~

WSCFF 8th & 9th Districts Pre-Legislative Conference Meeting

**Thursday, January 4, 2018
10:00 a.m. – Noon
Kent Fire Training (SKCFTC)
20811 84th Avenue S.
Kent, WA 98032**

Subjects:

- **2018 WSCFF Kelly L. Fox Legislative Conference**
- **2018 WSCFF Legislative Session Agenda**
- **IAFF 7th District Report**

Please have a representative from your local in attendance. The information that will be presented is very important and will be useful during the WSCFF Legislative Conference.

RSVP to: Bill Mack ~ 253-312-2250 or bmackdaddy@comcast.net
Keven Rojecki ~ 253-666-0303 or krojecki@me.com

Fraternally,
Bill Mack, WSCFF 8th District Representative
Keven Rojecki, WSCFF 9th District Representative

cc: Dennis Lawson, Greg Markley, Mike Bacon, Geoff Simpson and Michael White

opeiu8/afl-cio

Dennis J. Lawson, President • Greg B. Markley, Secretary-Treasurer
1069 Adams Street Southeast, Olympia, WA 98501 • 1-800-572-5762 • (360) 943-3030
Fax (360) 943-2333 • E-mail: wscff@wscff.org • Website: www.wscff.org