

Sticking with the union

Rodrigues urges action as court rules on Janus

“We must stay united, we must stay strong,” said Local 888 President **Brenda Rodrigues** after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against government workers and their unions in the *Janus vs AFSCME* case. The court reversed a 41-year-old precedent that said all public workers represented by a union could be required to pay “fair share” fees. This ensured that everyone who benefits from union contracts – including wages, benefits and on-the-job protections – has to pay their fair share for their representation.



RODRIGUES

The new ruling will allow employees to be free riders by refusing to pay their way.

“This Supreme Court decision is yet another

See page 4 for more on Janus



SOLIDARITY: Local 888 members **Rosa Matías, Mirna Polanco** and **Suze St.Val** at the Chelsea Soldiers Home show which side they're on after the Supreme Court's Janus decision.

Want to meet your union president?

Local 888 President **Brenda Rodrigues** would love to meet the members of your chapter. To schedule a visit with her, contact your field representative or chapter chair.

Wage hike, family leave ‘Raise Up’ Mass.

Following a campaign by the Raise Up coalition, the governor signed legislation that will increase the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour and create a Paid Family and Medical Leave program. These victories were only possible because union members and community activists gathered 350,000 signatures to get both proposals on the ballot, while at the same time organizing around the state to get the Legislature to enact these new laws. With these victories in hand, Raise Up – a coalition of labor, religious and

community groups – has agreed to drop its ballot initiatives.

Local 888 Executive Board member **Damali Simmonds** said “it's exciting” to have the medical leave act approved. “This means people can breathe a sigh of relief. They won't have to worry about paying their bills” if they take time off.

Simmonds – who testified at the State House for the legislation – learned first-hand about the need for such a program when she gave birth to her daughter Malia three years ago. Not long

See page 4 for more on Raise Up



SIMMONDS

Candidates spar ahead of Sept. 4 primary

As the countdown to the Sept. 4 primary begins, Local 888 leaders are sizing up the candidates and issues.

State representative candidate **Darrin Howell** has been endorsed in the Fifth Suffolk District by SEIU Locals 888 and 1199, where he previously worked as a political organizer. The seat is being vacated by **Evandro Carvalho**.



HOWELL

The district covers parts of Dorchester and Roxbury.

While with SEIU 1199, Howell advocated for raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and establishing a paid family and medical leave policy statewide.

Howell, 36, has also campaigned for criminal justice reform. While a young man he served time in jail, and later experienced the difficulties of finding work in the outside world.

Fortunately, he found work as a staffer for then-Boston City Councilor **Chuck Turner**. *For more information on candidate Howell, see:* <http://darrinhowell.com/>

In other election news, a Merrimack Valley State Legislative Candidates Forum sponsored by the SEIU State Council spotlighted candidates in that area. Local 888 member **Pedro Ayala** was the moderator at the forum,

Local 888 member **Alexcy Vega** (See <http://www.seiu888.org/2018/06/08/throwing-hat-in-ring/>) has launched a Democratic primary challenge to incumbent Northern Essex Register of Deeds Paul Iannuccillo.

Longtime Local 888 member **Deborah Moran** of Adams is running as an independent in the race for the Northern Berkshire District Register of Deeds. Another longtime member, **Maria Ziemba**, also of Adams, is running for the same



MERRIMACK VALLEY FORUM: Local 888 member **Pedro Ayala**, left, speaks up as legislative candidates listen. Seated in front, from left, are Local 888 leaders **Fred Simmons**, **Mike Kelly**, **Tom McKeever** and **Darcie Boyer**.

post in the Democratic primary. (See: <http://www.seiu888.org/2018/06/11/local-888s-big-role-in-berkshire-race/>)

Local 888 has helped spotlight the top congressional races slated for the Sept. 4 primary election.

A 3rd Congressional District forum, sponsored by the SEIU State Council in Lawrence, gave Local 888 members a chance to grill a field of seven Democratic candidates in a round-robin setup. The seat is open because U.S. Rep. **Niki Tsongas** (D-Lowell) is retiring.

In addition, a 7th Congressional District forum, held at the SEIU 1199 offices in Quincy, highlighted the race between U.S. Rep. **Michael Capuano** and his challenger, Boston City Councilor **Ayanna Pressley**.

Local 888 does not plan to endorse a congressional candidate in either race until after the primary.

According to the secretary of state, the deadline to register to vote in any election is 20 days prior to voting, so this year it will be August 15. See: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleifv/howreg.htm>



MEETING OF THE MINDS: Local 888 field rep Madeline Soto, teacher and shop steward **Jonathan Dudley** and teacher **Paula Mulligan** talk shop at the Leominster Head Start Center.

Getting Head Start on pay

Local 888's nearly 100 members at Montachusett Head Start have approved a three-year contract that includes guaranteed 3 percent-per-year raises.

Other major gains included that some workers got pay upgrades or had their hours increased from 37½ to 40, said Local 888 field rep **Madeline Soto**. In addition, teachers who work year-round will be paid overtime to work a couple Saturdays in order to work on curriculum and lesson planning.

Some people who are employed on a school-calendar basis already had this time built into their schedules. In addition, more workers are now eligible for mileage reimbursement and improved time-off provisions.

The Head Start teachers along with family services coordinators and family development coordinators work in centers in Clinton, Leominster, Fitchburg, Gardner and Athol.

Healthy staffing for nurses

At its monthly meeting on June 13, Local 888's Executive Board voted to support the Patient Safety Act, a ballot initiative that will be on the November ballot. If enacted, this law would

require hospitals to have minimum staffing levels, depending on the type of unit.

For example, emergency room nurses would be allowed to care for between one and five patients, depending on the patients' condition.

The ballot question has been put forward by the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) and the Committee to Ensure Safe Patient Care.

A recent survey of registered nurses in Massachusetts performed by the MNA said that 77 percent said unsafe patient assignments are a problem. In addition, nearly two-thirds reported injury and harm to patients due to staffing levels.

"Every patient has a right to safe and effective nursing care," said MNA President **Donna Kelly-Williams**. "Unfortunately, outside of intensive care units, there is no law limiting the number of patients who can be assigned to a nurse at one time in Massachusetts hospitals."

Members who would like to support the campaign by displaying a lawn sign or bumper sticker should contact Local 888's political director Tom McKeever at tmckeever@seiu888.org



WILD WORLD: Local 888 organizer **Penelope Jennewein** along with Chelsea Soldiers Home nurse assistants **Lyneth Martin**, **Speandilove Nelson**, **Chrissy Wilson** and **Helen Farrarher** took part in the Women's Institute for Leadership Development training in Amherst.

Marlborough techs on move

The Marlborough Public Schools behavioral techs approved their proposed contract with a 92 percent vote – cementing into place the big gains they had made last year. These 50-plus paraprofessionals are crucial to the city's special education program.

The new agreement builds on their one-year contract extension last year, which had raises of 8 to 12 percent. "That one-year extension formed the basis for these paraprofessionals to be treated on par with the others in the school system," said **Ronald Patenaude**, Local 888 field representative.

The new, three-year agreement boosts the behavioral techs' pay by an additional 2 percent per year. Longevity payments, which had been discontinued, are again included in the new pact.

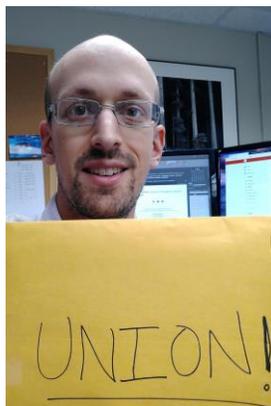
Janus ruling a call to action

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example of how billionaires have rigged the system against working people," said Rodrigues. "But we are not going to allow a court case to stand in our way. Instead, we will redouble our efforts to build unity on the job."

To begin the fight needed to move forward:

- Visit <https://america.needsunions.org/> to show support for America's working families by posting photos holding "UNION" signs on social media using #Union!
- Pledge to keep sticking with the union by visiting: www.seiu888.org/memberpledge/
- Send message at Local 888 Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SEIULocal888/>
- Email myunion@seiu888.org for a copy of the SEIU legal brief for the case.



LOCAL 888 PRIDE:
Sam Scoppettone
of the Framingham
professional unit
shows solidarity.

Raise Up lifts Mass. higher

Continued from page 1

after she was born, her daughter became seriously ill." And I didn't have any paid time off on the books," said Simmonds, who works for the Boston Water and Sewer Commission.

The new Paid Family and Medical Leave program will make the state a national leader in support of working families. The legislation would allow Massachusetts' workers to take paid time off to take care of themselves or a family member after a medical emergency or the birth or adoption of a new child.

The bill would provide more job-protected paid leave than any other state – 12 weeks of family leave and 20 weeks of medical leave. The costs will be split 50-50 between employers and employees.

In addition, the minimum wage will rise to \$15 by 2023. Raise Up strongly criticized some of the legislation's provisions – including the elimination of time-and-a-half pay on Sundays and holidays, something sought by the Retailers Association of Massachusetts.

Coming Attractions

Rally to support public defenders



Workers with the Massachusetts Committee for Public Counsel Services seek the right to unionize. Demonstration at 1 p.m., Thurs., July 26, State House steps, Boston. *For more info,* email *D.J. Cronin* at dcronin@seiu888.org

Moment of Silence



The officers of Local 888 extend our deepest sympathies to the family of member **Anthony Buonomo**, who worked at the Chelsea Soldiers Home and to his partner, **Lyneth Martin**, who works at the home.