

## New Revenue from "Millionaires Tax" Would Improve Public Services

Last fall, Local 888 members helped collect more than 158,000 signatures to qualify a new constitutional amendment for the ballot that would raise \$1.5 billion in new revenue by raising taxes on annual incomes over \$1 million.

It was a crucial first step. Now it needs support from 25 percent of state legislators. The first opportunity to win support was at a public hearing by the Joint Committee on Revenue, held on Jan. 19.

The proposal would invest over \$1.5 billion in new revenue in quality public schools, affordable higher education, and transportation by asking millionaires to pay an additional tax of four percentage points only on annual income above \$1 million.

"Currently, the highest income one percent of taxpayers in Mass pay a smaller share of their income in state and local taxes than the other 99 percent," said John Miller, an economist at Wheaton College. "If they paid their fair share – the same share as the rest of us – we would be able to make investments in people and physical infrastructure that could strengthen our economy, expand opportunity, and directly improve the life prospects of children and families across our state."

The Millionaires Tax already faces stiff -- and well-funded opposition. Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Beacon Hill Institute, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation and Citizens for Limited Taxation all had representatives testify against the amendment at the hearing.

If the proposal is advanced by the legislature at a Constitutional Conventions this session and in the 2017-2018 session, the question would go to voters in Nov. 2018.

## Supreme Court Hears Case that Could Weaken Our Union

Oral arguments heard at the Supreme Court on January 11 highlighted what's at stake for working people in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*. *Friedrichs* -- a case that billionaire extremists have pushed to the Supreme Court—is the latest in a long line of laws and lawsuits aimed at making it harder for working people to stand together, pool our resources and negotiate to improve our lives and our communities.

The groups behind this attack like the Center for Individual Rights are what working people dislike about Washington. They represent dishonest politics that ignore the voices of millions of working people around the country who have voluntarily joined together to form a union.

History has shown in cases like the challenges to the Affordable Care Act that it is impossible to predict from legal briefs or oral arguments how the Supreme Court will rule.

However the Supreme Court rarely overturns previously decided cases. The justification for fair share fees was put in place over 40 years ago by a unanimous court that included six justices appointed by Republican presidents.

Twenty-three states and thousands of labor-management relationships in the public sector have relied on this precedent in adopting fair share systems. Overturning this precedent would be an unjustified and radical act that would disrupt thousands of labor-management relationships and millions of public employees.



The Jan. 19 statehouse hearing was packed with supporters from labor unions, community organizations and public interest groups.

But it's not just public service workers and their employers who depend on the stability of strong and stable labor-management relationships. Everyone benefits from the better public services in our schools, hospitals, and communities where our friends and neighbors work to serve the public.

This case would have an especially disruptive effect on public safety. Unlike when so-called right-to-work was adopted in Wisconsin or Michigan, there would be no carve out for public safety, and contracts that have been negotiated with agency fees to allow for public safety equipment and training would disappear overnight.

In the coming months, working people will continue to make our voices heard. Over the next few months Local 888 leaders will be talking about why speaking up and having a voice on the job is good -- not just workers, but our country as a whole.

Wealthy special interests behind the Friedrichs lawsuit know that when workers are organized in unions, they make major gains like increasing pay and benefits —victories that interfere with these billionaires' extremist agenda. For example, thanks to people banding together in the Fight for \$15 movement, more than 11 million people across the country have won raises.

***Why should someone be compelled to pay a fee that the union then turns around and uses to support political causes that worker opposes?***

No one has to be involved in political work or pay for it. That's the law already, and this lawsuit will not change that. People contribute to the costs of negotiating agreements that improve our pay, benefits and other working conditions.

Everyone has the freedom to choose whether or not they want to contribute to support advocacy around issues that impact their lives outside of the contract—and there's nothing more democratic than that.

## BCYF Members Win Back Pay

**J**ust in time for the holidays, eleven Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) members finally were paid the back pay they were owed due to not receiving their step raises.

The back pay was a settlement for a grievance originally filed in 2011 for part time employees who had not received step raises -- in some cases going back as far as 2008. The grievance was revived and pushed by the new chapter leadership at BCYF. It was an agenda item at every joint Labor-Management meeting once the fight to have it settled was rekindled.

More than \$183,000 was collectively paid out by the city to the eleven BCYF members. Each member was paid based on how many step raises they had missed and for hours worked including any overtime.

The settlement agreement included language so that if any employees were missed, they could still make a claim. *If any members feel they should have been party to the settlement, they should contact the union with any supporting information.*

"I was totally shocked," said Maureen Clougherty who works part-time at the front desk at the Curley Center in South Boston. "I didn't know it was coming, in fact I kind of forgot about it. It was a substantial sum of money, so I'm just thrilled."

While the union cannot bargain for members who may have left employment with BCYF, former members who feel they might be owed money should contact the Office of Labor Relations at Boston City Hall.

## On the Job Tips

**F**rom *Work Rights Press* – publisher of the most popular union-side labor law handbooks in the United States.

**Q. My 84 year old grandmother lives with me. She has Alzheimer's disease. Can I use FMLA leave to take her to a doctor's appointment?**

**A.** Surprisingly, yes. Grandparents are not considered "family members" under the FMLA. But the Act permits an employee to take time off to care for a person for whom the employee stands in loco parentis, meaning "in place of the parent."

Given your grandmother's infirmities and dependence, you qualify as her parent. This entitles you to take FMLA family-care leave.

*For more on this topic, read The FMLA Handbook: A Union Guide to the Family and Medical Leave Act by Robert M. Schwartz. Available for \$20 on the [Work Rights Press website](http://www.workrightspress.com) or available for members at the Local 888 union hall for just \$16!*



## Coming Attractions

### MLK Day Rally for Justice for Airport Workers

When: Monday, January 18, 11am – 1pm  
Where: East Boston Memorial Park, 143 Porter St, Boston, MA 02128



On Martin Luther King day, rallies and marches will be held at airports across the country to protest gross injustices and humiliating working conditions that thousands of working men and women at our airports are forced to endure. Dr. King would have stood up for airport workers, will you?

### State House Hearing on Millionaire's Tax

When: Tuesday, January 19, 10:30am – 12:00pm  
Where: Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon St, Boston, MA

The hearing on the Millionaire's Tax (Fair Share Constitutional Amendment) will be Tuesday, January 19 at 10:30 at the State House. The hearing room is yet to be announced, but we will update you as soon as we have that information. This is one of our top legislative priorities.

*Please let your union rep know if you are interested in attending.*

### Local 888 Hockey Night at UMass Lowell

When: Sat, February 6, 6pm – 9pm  
Where: Paul E. Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell, 300 Arcand Dr, Lowell, MA 01852  
Includes a pre-game open skate and special members' reception at the Tsongas Center.



### Deadline to Register to Vote in Mass Primary

When: Wednesday, February 10  
Where: Registration cards must be postmarked or delivered 20 days before an election. - See more at:

<http://massvote.org/voterinfo/register/#sthash.Vqwfrg2w.dpuf>

### Save the Date! Jobs with Justice 2016 National Conference

When: Feb 12 – 14, 2016  
Where: Washington, DC  
Jobs with Justice 2016 National Conference  
The conference will provide an opportunity for the Jobs with Justice network and our partners, allies, leaders and staff to share strategies and learn from one another. Join us as we celebrate our victories, share successful and innovative strategies and continue to build towards a powerful future.

### New Members Join Local 888 Executive Board



Please welcome new Local 888 Executive Board members Tom McKeever (State Lottery Commission) and Regina Capone (Town of Winchester). Tom and Regina were sworn in at the December 16, 2015 Executive Board meeting by President Mark DelloRusso.



## Somerville Crossing Guards holiday party



Somerville Crossing Guards gathered on Dec. 18 at the Local 888 union hall to celebrate the holidays. They were joined by Ward One Alderman Matt McLaughlin.

## Local 888 Recognized for Contributions to Boston



## Scholarships

**S**EIU offers post-secondary educational scholarships for members and their immediate families.

Local 888 will award three \$500 scholarships for members (or family) to attend any post-secondary school of their choosing. Local 888 also awards scholarships for approved labor study programs or courses at the Labor Guild. Applications for the Local 888 scholarships will be available May 9 for Fall scholarship awards.



Members can also apply for national SEIU scholarships. To be eligible, membership must be for one continuous year as of September 1, 2016.

### Key points for national scholarships:

- Applications are available now.
- Applications should be filed online. See the individual scholarship information online for instructions.
- Applications must be postmarked or filed online by midnight March 3, 2016.
- Winners will be notified in late spring and announced on [www.seiu.org](http://www.seiu.org).

For more info on the national scholarships, visit <http://www.seiu.org/members#scholarships>.



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