On **November 8**, we have the chance to pass the Workers’ Rights Amendment that will enshrine workers’ rights in the Illinois Constitution.

We can also elect representatives to congress, the state legislature, and the state supreme court who will stand up for the best interests of our members, our professions, and those we serve.
The 2022 General Election is just a few weeks away. Inside this issue of Union Link you’ll find information about how and when to cast your ballot, the candidates who have earned our support through the IFT’s democratic Political Action Committee (PAC) process (Spoiler alert – JB Pritzker for governor and Alexi Giannoulias for secretary of state are among them!), and the important supreme court races. We are proud to endorse Judge Elizabeth Rochford in the race for the Illinois Supreme Court’s Second District and Judge Mary K. O’Brien for the Illinois Supreme Court’s Third District, both of whom are committed to bringing equity and fairness to the court.

This election is an important one; it’s a critical step toward electing lawmakers in November who share our union’s values and will strive to create the future we all deserve.

The Workers’ Rights Amendment (WRA) will be the first question on your ballot and it should be foremost on voters’ minds. Here’s why.

Put simply, if passed on November 8, the WRA will guarantee the fundamental rights of workers to unionize and collectively bargain by enshrining them in the Illinois Constitution. It would be an historic achievement for working people in our state and nation; only three other states (Hawaii, Missouri, and New York) have guaranteed these basic, fair rights.

Sadly, 27 states have enacted so-called “right-to-work” laws, which are designed to reduce workers’ rights, weaken our unions, and benefit big corporations.

Think back to just a few years ago, and you’ll no doubt remember that Bruce Rauner and his billionaire cronies tried to strip our bargaining rights with his “Turnaround Agenda.” Their plan was to eliminate our voice on the job and lower wages. Neighboring states (Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin) with similar laws have seen hourly wages reduced by 3 percent (on average).

Thanks to the collective strength of IFT members and our union partners, we were able to stop these devastating laws. By passing the WRA, we would prohibit such unfair laws from ever being enacted in Illinois.

The Workers’ Rights Amendment would further empower educators and school staff to bargain with employers to put students first by negotiating for smaller class sizes, additional technology for students, and more classroom resources.

And by passing the WRA, we would improve safety for all workers and our communities by protecting the right to speak up about dangerous conditions like food safety and low hospital staffing that puts patients’ lives at risk.

As a dedicated public servant and proud union member, I know you understand better than anyone why it is essential that all workers have the right to bargain for fair pay, safe working conditions, and essential benefits. Like me, you’ve seen firsthand how having a union contract benefits not only you and your family, but our students and communities.

Union contracts ensure fair treatment for all – including equal pay for women and people of color. Fair wages help to create a stronger middle class that benefits union and non-union workers alike. The saying “a rising tide lifts all boats” could not be more true!

I urge you to learn more about the Workers’ Rights Amendment and why you should support it. Tell your friends, family, and colleagues how the WRA will boost local economies and strengthen our communities. Then, plan to vote YES to protect workers’ rights when you cast your ballot in this important election.

In solidarity,

Thoughts? Email me at emaildan@ift-aft.org.
Union members who wish to redirect the portion ($35) of their 2022-23 IFT per capita dues that might be used for contributions to political candidates may do so using the following process:

Obtain a numbered IFT redirection request form from your local president. (Only original numbered forms will be accepted. No photocopies.)

Fill out the form and return it to your local president. The president will certify (sign) the form to indicate your membership is in good standing in your local and mail your form to the IFT.

You may designate your redirection to one of the following Executive Board-approved alternative, non-political expenditures:

**Carl J. Megel Special Education Scholarship**
An IFT-sponsored scholarship awarded annually to a special education student.

**IFT Robert G. Porter Scholarship**
The union offers two $10,000 scholarships annually to the children of IFT members who are high school seniors and will be enrolled in an Illinois public university. Winning students receive $2,500 per year for four years.

**IFT Union Professional Development Program**
The union’s newest program designed to provide quality, accessible professional development opportunities for all IFT members.

Your redirection of the $35 COPE (Committee on Political Education) portion of IFT dues will be good for the current dues year only and is not retroactive. You may reapply each year between Sept. 1-30.
The WRA would prohibit Illinois from passing any state law (and any municipality from passing a local ordinance) “that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety.” That means the WRA would prohibit the passage of any so-called “right-to-work” laws in our state, which are designed to reduce workers’ rights and benefit big corporations. Neighboring states (Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin) with these laws have seen reduced hourly wages (by 3 percent) and a lag in economic growth.

I’m a union member, so my rights are protected by my contract. Why should I care about the Workers’ Rights Amendment?

Union members receive benefits and protections in contracts bargained between the union and employer. But as we’ve seen in Illinois and other states, anti-union lawmakers and big corporations (for example, Bruce Rauner, Ken Griffin, and the Koch brothers) have tried to undermine or eliminate your right to collectively bargain. By passing the WRA, we can permanently enshrine the fundamental right to collectively bargain in the Illinois Constitution.

Will the Workers’ Rights Amendment help schools and students?

Yes! The Workers’ Rights Amendment empowers educators and school staff to put students first by negotiating for smaller class sizes, improved technology for students, and additional classroom resources. These things have been proven to increase student learning, help teachers teach, and improve our schools.

How will the Workers’ Rights Amendment help the economy?

Union contracts guarantee fair treatment for all, including equal pay for people of color and women. When people can secure good jobs with fair pay, that boosts local economies. The WRA will put more money in families’ bank accounts and strengthen our communities by building the middle class. This benefits everyone, both union and non-union workers alike.

November 8, help Illinois’ working people access good jobs and secure a respected voice in their workplace. Vote yes for workers!
DOES THE WORKERS’ RIGHTS AMENDMENT CHANGE ILLINOIS’ LABOR LAWS?

The amendment does not change our state’s current labor laws, it only creates a constitutional floor for collective bargaining that will prevent future attacks on workers’ rights like those we’ve seen in many other states.

HOW WILL THE WORKERS’ RIGHTS AMENDMENT IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY?

The WRA will keep workers and our communities safe by protecting their right to speak up about dangerous situations without fear of being fired. Unsafe construction, food safety issues, and dangerously low hospital staffing are threats to everyone when workers are afraid to report these conditions.

WILL THE WORKERS’ RIGHTS AMENDMENT INCREASE MY PROPERTY TAXES?

No. Workers don’t determine property tax rates. Opponents of the WRA are trying to scare voters by saying the WRA will increase property taxes. What the WRA will do is guarantee the rights of workers to bargain for fair wages and benefits. This means Illinois families would be better able to afford the rising cost of everything from gas to groceries to property taxes.

WHEN CAN I VOTE FOR THE WORKERS’ RIGHTS AMENDMENT?

On Tuesday, November 8, 2022, Illinois voters will have the opportunity to vote YES to protect worker rights. (You can also vote early in-person in many communities beginning September 29 or apply to vote by mail. Learn more about how you can vote at ift-aft.org/vote.)

HOW WILL THE WORKERS’ RIGHTS AMENDMENT APPEAR ON YOUR BALLOT?

The WRA will be the first item on your ballot. You will be asked whether the Illinois Constitution should be amended to add a new section to the Bill of Rights Article of the Illinois Constitution that would guarantee workers the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively and to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions, and to promote their economic welfare and safety at work. To support the Workers’ Rights Amendment vote “Yes” on the question.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

In the weeks ahead, please watch for more information about how we can pass the Workers’ Rights Amendment.

For more information about the Workers’ Rights Amendment, visit ift-aft.org/wra or contact your field service director.
NOVEMBER 8 GENERAL ELECTION | IFT-ENDORSED CANDIDATES

ADVOCATING FOR OUR MEMBERS IS THE IFT'S TOP PRIORITY.

That’s why we work to elect legislators in Springfield and Washington, D.C., who will stand up for the best interests of our members, our professions, and those we serve.

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U.S. SENATE
Tammy Duckworth (D)

U.S. HOUSE
1st Jonathan Jackson (D)
2nd Robin Kelly (D)
3rd Delia Ramirez (D)
4th Chuy García (D)
5th Mike Quigley (D)
6th Sean Casten (D)
7th Danny Davis (D)
8th Raja Krishnamoorthi (D)
9th Jan Schakowsky (D)*
10th Brad Schneider (D)
11th Bill Foster (D)
12th Chip Markel (D)
13th Nikki Bzdinski (D)
14th Lauren Underwood (D)
15th Erin Sorensen (D)

STATEWIDE
JB Pritzker, Governor
Julianna Stratton, Lt. Governor
Kwame Raoul, Attorney General
Alexi Giannoulias, Secretary of State
Susana Mendoza, Comptroller
Michael Frenichs, Treasurer

IL SENATE
1st Javier Cervantes (D)
2nd Omar Aquino (D)
3rd Mattie Hunter (D)
4th Kimberly Lightford (D)
5th Patricia Van Pelt (D)
6th Sara Feigenholtz (D)
7th Mike Simmons (D)
8th Ram Villivalam (D)
9th Laura Fine (D)
10th Robert Martwick (D)
11th Mike Purtiro (D)
12th Celina Villanueva (D)
13th Robert Peters (D)
14th Emil Jones, Ill (D)
15th Elgie Sims (D)
16th Bill Cunningham (D)
17th Cristina Pacione-Zayas (D)
18th Laura Ellman (D)
19th Michael Hastings (D)
20th Suzanne Glowiak Hilton (D)
21st Lauren “Laurie” Nowak (D)
22nd Karina Villa (D)
23rd Maria Peterson (D)
24th Laura Murphy (D)
25th Anne Gillespie (D)
26th Michael Halpin (D)
27th Sue Rezin (D)
28th Omar Williams (D)*
29th Cyril Nichols (D)
30th Mary Edly-Allen (D)*
31st Chris Welch (D)
32nd Michael Kelly (D)
33rd Karina Villa (D)
34th Steve Stadelman (D)
35th Suzanne Glowiak Hilton (D)
36th Laura Ellman (D)
37th Laura Murphy (D)
38th Ann Gillespie (D)
39th Michael Hastings (D)
40th Sean Casten (D)
41st John Curran (R)
42nd Linda Holmes (D)
43rd Rachel Ventura (D)
44th Julie Morrison (D)
45th Adriane Johnson (D)
46th Mary Edly-Allen (D)*
47th Steve Stadelman (D)
48th Michael Halpin (D)
49th Sue Rezin (R)
50th Don Harmon (D)
51st John Cullerton (D)
52nd Scott Bennett (D)
53rd Kris Tharp (D)
54th Christopher Belt (D)
55th Terri Bryant (R)
56th Dale Flower (R)

IL HOUSE
1st Aaron Ortiz (D)*
2nd Lisa Hernandez (D)
3rd Eva Dina Delgado (D)
4th Lilian Jimenez (D)
5th Lamont Robinson (D)
6th Sonya Harper (D)
7th Chris Welch (D)
8th La Shawn Ford (D)
9th Lakeesia Collins (O)*
10th Omar Williams (D)*
11th Ann Williams (D)
12th Margaret Croke (D)
13th Hoan Huynh (D)
14th Kelly Cassidy (D)
15th Michael Kelly (D)
16th Kevin Olickal (D)
17th Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D)
18th Christian Kaler (D)
19th Robyn Gabel (D)
20th Suzanne Glowiak Hilton (D)
21st Laura Ellman (D)
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34th Steve Stadelman (D)
36th Michael Halpin (D)
38th Sue Rezin (R)
39th Don Harmon (D)
40th Patrick Joyce (D)
41st John Currant (R)
42nd Linda Holmes (D)
43rd Rachel Ventura (D)
46th Dave Koehler (D)
47th Neil Anderson (R)
48th Doris Turner (D)
49th Megan Loughran Cappel (D)*
52nd Scott Bennett (D)
53rd Kris Tharp (D)
57th Christopher Belt (D)
58th Bob Rita (D)
59th Will Davis (D)
60th Mary Flowers (D)
62nd Angie Guerrero-Cuellier (D)
63rd Edgar Gonzalez, Jr., (D)
7th Laura Murphy (D)
8th Ann Gillespie (D)
9th Julie Morrison (D)
A. D. (D)
B. D. (D)
C. D. (D)
D. (D)
E. D. (D)
F. D. (D)
G. D. (D)
H. D. (D)
I. D. (D)
J. D. (D)
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Q. D. (D)
R. D. (D)
S. D. (D)
T. D. (D)
U. D. (D)
V. D. (D)
W. D. (D)
X. D. (D)
Y. D. (D)
Z. D. (D)

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This list reflects only districts in which the IFT has endorsed a candidate. *Union Member
IFT members know what’s at stake in November 2022. From passing the Workers’ Rights Amendment to electing candidates who will stand up for workers’ rights, protect employee pensions, and invest in the public education and services that benefit all Illinoisans.

In the November 8 General Election, the decisions about which candidates our union is endorsing were not made lightly, and they were made from the ground up. The IFT and our local unions worked hard over the last few months to ensure every member had the opportunity to have a voice in these important choices.

IFT political action committees (PACs) held meetings throughout the state where IFT members conducted interviews and reviewed voting records, position papers, questionnaires, and other information about candidates for the state legislature and congress. Regional PACs then forwarded their endorsement recommendations to the statewide PAC to finalize a list of endorsements before sending it to the IFT’s elected executive board for approval.

No matter how you choose to vote, be sure to first review the IFT’s 2022 General Election endorsements on the previous page to learn which women and men have earned our union’s support through this rigorous process. Tear it out and take it with you to the polls, or download a copy at ift-aft.org/candidates.

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE.
Be sure to cast your ballot in this critical General Election on November 8, 2022.

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

**ELECTION DAY | TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**REGISTER**
First, check your registration status at ift-aft.org/vote. If you need to register, follow the prompts to do so online. 
Grace Period is Wednesday, October 12, 2022 - Election Day. Election Day Registration & Voting is Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

**VOTING BY MAIL**
If you have not received a mail ballot application at your home address, visit the elections.il.gov to apply now.

**EARLY VOTING**
You can also cast your ballot in person before Election Day at select locations. Early voting is open now through Monday, November 7, 2022.

**ELECTION DAY**
If you don’t vote early or by mail, Election Day registration and voting will still be available on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

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**MORE AT**
IFT-AFT.ORG/VOTE
#VoteYesForWorkersRights
President Montgomery stresses the importance of voting for pro-labor candidates and passing the Workers’ Rights Amendment.

Workers’ Rights Amendment FAQs
Learn more about the Workers’ Rights Amendment and why it is crucial to enshrine these rights in the Illinois Constitution.

VOTE!
Important election information and a complete list of IFT’s endorsements for the November 8, 2022 General Election.

events

IFT Convention
October 21-23, 2022 | Marriott St. Louis Grand

Fall ULI
November 5-6, 2022 | IFT Robert M. Healey Center

I PLEDGE TO

VOTE YES

MAKE A PLAN TODAY.

VOTER REGISTRATION
In-person registration is available through Election Day at select sites.

EARLY VOTING
Begins Thursday, September 29.

ELECTION DAY
Tuesday, November 8.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Contact your local union office or email volunteer@ift-aft.org to find opportunities in your area.

VISIT IFT-AFT.ORG/VOTE FOR MORE INFORMATION.