

# Classified Insider

UNION NEWS FOR THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

Fall-Winter 2010  
Volume 1, Number 1



CLASSIFIED CONFERENCE • OCTOBER 16-18 • PASADENA

## Annual conference celebrates the year's victories

Three distinguished legislators speaking at the annual Classified Conference shared their views on the budget crisis and lauded the year's victories for CFT classified employees.

Assemblymember Warren Furutani, D-Long Beach, carried the bill that would have given CFT support staff more voice in college governance with a seat on the Community College Consultation Council.

required employees to give students Diastat injections. They also preserved retirement benefits for classified employees in CalPERS, while other workers in CalPERS will pay more of their salaries toward retirement under the latest budget deal that created a two-tier system.

Addressing the state budget crisis, Anthony Portantino,

elected officials met with members of the public and explained how the measure could help their children receive better educations.

"In the end, 68 percent of a Republican city voted to approve the bond," he said. "So you bring in the people and tell them how they will benefit from the public



BOB RIHA, JR., JANE HUNDERMARK



Sharing of experiences...

There was bonding and collegiality...

But recognizing the role that CFT classified play, Chancellor Jack Scott announced mid-session that the seat would go to CFT, negating the need for legislation. (See story page 2)

In another milestone, the governor signed the CFT bill requiring that interior doors

D-Pasadena, called Sacramento "a mess, a dysfunctional system that has to be improved." He pointed to 2006, when legislators received a pay raise during that year's impasse. "Who in the hell takes a pay raise during a budget crisis?" he asked. "I was one of the few who turned down the pay raise."

Portantino offered some les-

Planning and preparing...

expenditure."

His colleague Mike Eng, a Democratic assemblyman from El Monte, called CFT's Proposition 25 a "game changer" in Sacramento that could build public trust in the Legislature.

"It means that we win and

I lose. We win because we will no longer be held hostage by the two-thirds vote. I lose, because I don't



Warren Furutani



Anthony Portantino



Mike Eng

"So you bring in the people and tell them how they will benefit from the public expenditure."

— Assemblyman Anthony Portantino

in new K-12 buildings be lockable from the inside to protect workers and students.

In defense of support staff, CFT leaders and lobbyists managed to defeat a bill that

sons about building public trust. Before becoming a legislator, he was mayor of La Cañada Flintridge, a city with a 3-to-1 conservative electorate. To pass a school bond measure,

get my per diem and perks for every day the budget is overdue. And I think that is a good thing." Another game changer is the election of Jerry Brown because "it's just so impor-

remember the material things, but that I would remember the relationships. I want to tell you that I love you all. I love what you stand for. You have helped me come to the truth many times."

Learning and fun...

tant to have a governor who is sympathetic."

Eng and his wife, Congresswoman Judy Chu,

are CFT members. In 2009, he earned a 100 percent scorecard from both the California Labor Federation and the Consumer Federation. He likened politics to personal relationships, and spoke fondly of his relationship to CFT.

"My dad told me I wouldn't

# Our voice will be heard at the Consultation Council

## CFT wins seat on advisory panel to the community colleges

**WHEN THE COUNCIL** of Classified Employees wanted to join the advisors for the state's community colleges, it lined up support from other unions, lobbied legislators, and found a friendly member of the Assembly, Warren Furutani, D- Long Beach, to introduce legislation.

On August 6, the union's efforts paid off when Jack Scott, chancellor of the California Community Colleges, added a second classified seat on the Consultation Council and filled it with a classified member of the CFT. Scott chairs the influential Council, which meets monthly to evaluate and

develop proposals, appoint task forces, and advise on legislation and budgeting.

CFT has the second largest representation among classified employees in the community colleges. CSEA, the largest, already holds a seat on the Council and supported the CFT proposal.

"We had senators and assemblymembers calling Scott, CFT officers, and the California Federation of Labor" said Velma Butler, president of the CCE. "We had a connection with Scott before he was state chancellor, and we're now going to improve upon it."

To fill the new CFT seat, Butler appointed Diana Ramon, a member of the Coast Federation of Classified Employees. Ramon is the local's elected vice president at Coastline Community College in Fountain Valley, where she works as administrative secretary for the graphics and publications department.

Ramon had lobbied the Council in the past. "The challenge was to overturn the belief of some Consultation Council members that classified workers lack sophistication enough to understand high-level policy issues." She countered that she holds a bachelors degree in English from UC Berkeley, and that other classified employees have



Diana Ramon brings the voice of CFT classified employees to the Consultation Council.

### Retirement credit for furlough days

Another new law, CFT-supported AB 1651, gives classified employees subject to mandatory furloughs the same CalPERS retirement service credit classified workers would have received if not furloughed.

masters' degrees.

Butler and Ramon often both attend the Council. They also helped pass the resolution in support of the new seat at CFT Convention in 2009. Butler said, "We set out to have our voice be heard in the community colleges — and we did it!"

## Workplaces will be safer with doors that lock from inside



### THE 1999 COLUMBINE

High shootings left 13 people dead and 23 wounded. In such horrific situations, schools often lock down their facilities to keep students in and perpetrators out. But within many school buildings, doors can only be locked from the out-

side, placing students, staff and teachers in jeopardy.

On September 30, the governor signed into law a CFT-sponsored bill that addresses this threat. AB 211 requires all new K-12 school construction projects to include "classroom security locks" that allow any rooms with occupancy of five or more persons to be lockable from the inside.

Assemblyman Tony Mendoza, D-Norwalk, carried the bill. As AB 211 moved through the Legislature, cost was a persistent issue. The Office of Public School Construction estimated that construction costs would increase by \$160,000 to

\$320,000 per project. CFT limited the bill to new construction and amended it to charge the cost to construction grants contained in voter-approved Proposition 1D. AB 211 passed with bipartisan support.

The security locks will allow classified employees, teacher aides, and teachers to lock the doors to offices, classrooms, and other rooms quickly, from the inside. Districts and unions together can decide whether

the locks should require a key or a mechanism such as a thumbturn or pushbutton that engages the lock without use of a key. Your local union can now take steps to protect workers and students by asserting its preferences at the collective bargaining table.

Mendoza has agreed to carry clean-up legislation in 2011 to also mandate security locks in new buildings at the community colleges.

### Get facilities updates from AFT

> Go to [www.aft.org/subscribe](http://www.aft.org/subscribe) to sign up for the email newsletter based on AFT's *Building Minds, Minding Buildings* campaign, which provides information on school infrastructure initiatives and legislation.

## Paras seek more equitable pensions

**PARAPROFESSIONALS IN** San Francisco are close to winning a long struggle for equitable and fair pensions. Their retirement plan, the Public Agency Retirement System, PARS, is less than adequate with complicated and unequal contribution formulas.

Since 2003, United Educators of San Francisco has been fighting for improvements to PARS, but the district strongly resisted. The union eventually commissioned an actuarial study to analyze the problem. Finally, threatened with a lawsuit, the district agreed to negotiate with the union.

The parties are nearing settlement on a new Social Security-based retirement program. Paraprofessionals will not lose benefits already earned and all monies will transfer into a 403(b) plan controlled by the individual. The district will pay nearly a half million dollars to make up some of the money shorted paras over the years.

Mary Lavalais, a 23-year para, says getting out of PARS is long overdue, and it's not just about the money she is owed.

"It's about being able to control my money and take it out as I need it."

Like many paras, Lavalais has worked at jobs covered by Social Security in addition to her district employment. Paras will not be subject to the Windfall Elimination Provision that can reduce a worker's earned Social Security benefit if he or she retires from a job without Social Security. Paraprofessionals will vote soon on the new settlement.

## Be a delegate to CFT Convention

**PLAN NOW** if you want to be a delegate to the CFT Convention that will be held March 18-20 at the Manhattan Beach Marriott. The Convention will elect CFT officers, and President Marty Hittelman will not seek reelection so expect competition to fill his shoes.

The Convention is open to all CFT members, but only elected delegates can vote. It is the Federation's highest body, where delegates shape union

policy and positions on issues affecting members.

The Council of Classified Employees will meet Friday, March 18. There will be a legal update workshop for classified employees and paras. Plus there's time for fun, with receptions and networking.

Delegates must be elected following union legal requirements and federal law. Contact your local union soon if you want to run as a delegate.

## Classified make outstanding election effort

Classified employees throughout the state stepped up to help elect Jerry Brown governor and pass Proposition 25. Here, Mary Lavalais, center, enjoyed an unexpected reunion with one of her former students while walking precincts. Lavalais and Diane Johnson, left, are paraprofessionals in San Francisco. Above, CCE President Velma Butler with California's new attorney general, Kamala Harris, who spoke at CFT State Council in September.



## Classified Calendar

The CFT will host a **Legislative Reception** for members and leaders to meet legislators in the newly seated California Legislature on **January 24** in Sacramento.

**Standing Committees** of the CFT meet on Saturday, **January 29** at Los Angeles Valley College in Valley Glen.

The **Leadership Conference** for local union presidents, treasurers, and staff will be held **February 7-8** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel near

the San Francisco Airport. General sessions feature the popular Q&A with attorneys followed by a breakout workshop for classified issues.

The annual **CFT Convention** will be held **March 18-20** at the Manhattan Beach Marriott (See story above). The Council of Classified Employees will meet Friday evening, **March 18**.

Plan now to attend the information-packed and always fun-filled **AFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel Conference** that

will be held **March 24-27** in Las Vegas. Meetings on Head Start, Communications, and Managing Student Behavior are on **March 23**. Register with AFT by February 17 to get the early bird rate.

The **Public Employees Healthcare Joint Conference** will be held **March 31-April 2** in Las Vegas.

Community college members, don't miss the **AFT Higher Education Conference** which is being held **April 1-3** in Philadelphia.

## From the conference...

“I see you want respect. Isn't that what everyone wants? God bless you for pushing these priorities.

— Assemblyman Anthony Portantino

Our legislators saw you engaged. When I'm followed by 50 classified employees, that makes a difference.

— Dolores Sanchez, CFT Legislative Representative

Remember in the debate, Meg said, 'When I came to California 30 years ago, it was a great state.' And Jerry Brown responded, 'That's when I was governor.'

— Jim Araby, CFT Statewide Affiliate Political Organizer”

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## Welcome to *Classified Insider*

Our new publication is designed to educate and communicate with classified and paraprofessional members of the CFT. We will cover issues affecting support staff in early childhood, K-12 and higher education. Our goal is to provide information that will help you become a leader in your workplace.



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## Workloads intensify during budget crisis

**IN THE FIRST WAVE** of the fiscal crisis, classified employees have experienced layoffs and furloughs. To those brothers and sisters who have been laid off, we are committed to helping restore positions and developing retraining programs that will hopefully lead to offers of reemployment.

For classified employees on the job, you must not threaten your health and well-being to accommodate the lack of appropriate staffing. Classified workers want to perform above

and beyond expectations, but we must look at job performance with a reasonable balance between workload and responsibility.

To reach such a balance, we must first consider our work environments. Inherent in this problem of overload, which is a major contributor to stressful work environments, are the following factors: reduced staffing, improper staffing, redistribution of work, increased paperwork, and fear of retaliation.

The AFT has researched member workload

issues. In 2001, the results showed more than 69 percent of members spend 30 minutes a day completing tasks outside of their work schedule. It showed that 22 percent took work home but only 5 percent got paid for the overtime.

In addition, 18 percent (rising to 44 percent in K-12 districts) were never able to take a break. Employees shared that they felt anxious coming to work, believed they could not complete the job they were hired to do, and often refrained from restroom breaks.

Looking back at this survey, what concerns me today is that conditions have only worsened. Workloads have tripled and quadrupled. This systematic attack on employees results in increased tension with co-workers, the inability to pursue professional development, problems scheduling leaves and vacations, and reoccurring health problems.

What can be done? The AFT and CFT continue to develop strategies to address workload. As president of the CCE, I commit to you that we will work together to provide the assistance needed to combat this ongoing crisis.



By Velma J. Butler  
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CFT Council  
of Classified  
Employees

California Federation  
of Teachers   
AFT, AFL-CIO  
A Union of Professionals

Classified Insider is published by the California Federation of Teachers, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

**President** Marty Hittelman  
**Secretary-Treasurer** Dennis Smith

### Council of Classified Employees

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