

LEARN^{ing} Together

SUMMER 2024

Feature Article:

To Defend
Democracy, The
Right of Workers to
Organize Must be
Strengthened

Book Talk:

Les Leopold
October 1, 2024

Online Classes
Resume in
September

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New Online Union Leadership Academy Classes:

Sept: Unions and Democracy | Nov: Labor and Employment Law for Workers

Upcoming Online Certificate Classes and More!

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF RUTGERS LEARN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Director.....	2
Instructor and Intern Spotlight.....	3
Feature: To Defend Democracy, The Right of Workers to Organize Must be Strengthened.....	5
Feature: The State of Labor Report 2021-2023.....	7
The Labor Education Center: Labor's Home in NJ	9
What We've Been Up To - Review of Winter 2024 Programs and Class	10
What's on the Menu for 2025? Upcoming Programs.....	13
What's on the Menu for 2025? Upcoming Classes	14
NEW LEARN Lessons	18
NEW White Papers	19
LEARN in the News	20

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Newsletter designed by Djar Horn. Cover Art by Nina Horn-Scordo 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Greetings, LEARN community -

Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of Learning Together, the official newsletter of the Labor Education Action Research Network. In this edition, you will find a recap of some of our programs this past spring, including some of our custom trainings and our graduation ceremony at the LEC. You'll also find important information about our upcoming classes and public programming for the Fall.

The theme for this summer's newsletter as well as the topic of our first ULA class this fall is unions and democracy. We are living in unprecedented times in the U.S., and around the world. The rising threat of authoritarianism and eroding faith in democracy is threatening the stability of some of the world's most stable democracies, including our very own.

The United States is considered the oldest continuous democracy in the World. Our Constitution, adopted in 1789, famously opens with "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Today, over 235 years later, working people are losing faith in our democracy to deliver on these promises. They see a federal government that is woefully uninterested in tackling the issues they deal with every day.

The reason is straightforward: there has been a decades long effort by corporate elites to take over our democratic systems to protect their own interests, no matter what. As a result, we have experienced the extreme concentration of income and wealth in the hands of the very few. The share of all income going to the top 1% of earners nearly tripled from 7.3% of total earnings in 1979 to 21% in 2022. The top 10% now own 70% of wealth in the U.S.

This runaway inequality has fueled a growing apathy of working people. Many have gravitated towards candidates who rail against the system but do little to actually improve the lives of working people (and actually exacerbate our problems by further limiting democracy). The erosion of democracy and the rise of runaway inequality are two sides of the same coin, both perpetuated by the same people to enrich and empower themselves at the expense of everyone else.

Unions have been shown over and over again to be one of the most effective ways to reduce inequality, create shared prosperity, build the middle class, and increase participation in democracy, including elections but also in more direct ways. As I describe in this issue's feature article, unions have been on the forefront of democracy rising in new nations, and have been the first target of authoritarian regimes when eliminating democracy. That's why it is so crucial for us to ensure a strong, vibrant, and independent labor movement, not just to reduce extreme inequality, but stand as a strong line of defense for democracy itself.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Blachar".

INSTRUCTOR SPOTLIGHT: STEVEN LAWTON

Steve Lawton: Staff Rep CWA Local 1101, Curriculum Development CWA District 1, Adjunct Instructor SUNY-Empire Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies

Steve's journey in the labor movement began 31 years ago when he joined the Communications Workers of America at 19. Quickly rising through the ranks, he served as strike captain, shop steward, business agent, vice president, and ultimately, president of CWA Local 1102. His proudest achievement was organizing call center workers, a majority of whom were women of color and immigrants.



He cites the call center campaign as shaping his views on labor, race, and gender injustice. As president, he democratized the local union and championed equity within the leadership ranks by changing the bylaws to ensure proper representation of the membership. This led to the election of the first Black and Latina women as business agent and secretary-treasurer of the local.

Steve holds a M.A in Labor and Public Policy from SUNY Empire State University. Now an adjunct instructor at the Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies-SUNY Empire State University and curriculum developer and instructor for CWA District. His current focus is how labor movement is needed to transform U.S. democracy.

Sign up for **Unions and Democracy**
with Steve Lawton & Tunisia Allah-Byrd

[Click here to register](#)

Dates: September 10, 2024 - October 15, 2024 (Tuesdays)

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (EST)

In this workshop, we will review the decline of democracy and its ties to economic and political disparities within our society. We'll also examine how authoritarianism creates scapegoats to gain power. Lastly, we'll challenge workers to envision a more democratic society, which can serve as a platform to both expand democracy and revive the labor movement.

LABOR INTERN SPOTLIGHT: JESSICA ROSADO

Jessica Rosado is currently a rising third-year undergraduate student at Oberlin College, where she is pursuing dual majors in Law & Society and Latin American Studies, complemented by an integrative concentration in Peace & Conflicts Studies. Hailing from Newark, NJ, Jessica brings a deep commitment to social justice, immigrant rights, and peaceful conflict resolution to her academic and professional endeavors.



Inspired by her upbringing as the child of a union pipefitter (shout out UA Local #475), Jessica is dedicated to advancing the labor movement and advocating for the benefits of unionized labor. Her background in urban community outreach and non-profit work has equipped her with strong communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. Post-graduation, she plans to pursue a Masters of Social Work to further her goal of supporting immigrant communities and addressing systemic inequalities.

Jessica is working hard this summer as the LEARN Labor Intern. She is working with Professor William Brucher, on a labor history curriculum for the IUOE Local 875 apprentices. Jessica is also contacting Unions around the state to connect them with our labor education programs.

Union Internships Wanted

Students currently enrolled in the Labor Studies programs at Rutgers **are looking for internship opportunities with unions and worker organizations in New Jersey.**

It is important for students to attain work experience with Unions to prepare them for work in the labor movement.

Consider taking an intern, or two, for the Fall 2024 semester.

Our students are interested in everything from political organizing to communications and everything in between. We have interns ready for placement in your organization.

Contact Djarhorn@rutgers.edu.



**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
AND LABOR RELATIONS**

To Defend Democracy, The Right of Workers to Organize Must be Strengthened*

By Todd E. Vachon, PhD

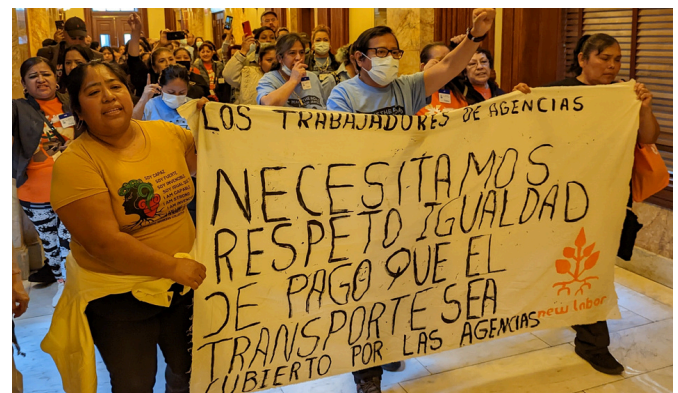


CWA Local 1037 members canvassing and speaking to union members about the 2023 General Election. Photo Credit: CWA 1037

Political theorists often argue that a prerequisite for a democratic society is the existence of a *demos*: a constituency with a sense of shared identity and interests in common. The construction of such a consciousness, they argue, typically occurs through participation in civic organizations such as churches, community groups, and unions. It is through these forms of civic engagement that a genuine “will of the people” is constructed. In fact, as Alexis de Tocqueville noted in his famed *Democracy in America*, the perseverance of democracy in the United States was due in part to the unprecedented degree of civic engagement by ordinary citizens. “Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of dispositions are forever forming associations,” he stated in an often-quoted passage. Unfortunately, as has been well-documented in Robert D. Putnam’s bestselling *Bowling Alone*, participation in civic organizations has been declining steadily in the U.S. for decades.

Like so many other organizations, unions have also been experiencing a decline in membership, to the point where just 11% of workers belong to unions compared to 35% in the 1950s. The decline in unions has been cited as one of the key contributors to rising income inequality since the 1980s. Less often considered is the impact it has had on democracy. Unions, the late sociologist Erik Olin Wright argued, play a particularly important role in democratic societies by providing a site for the creation of “organic solidarities” that are embedded in one vitally important sphere of most people’s lives—the workplace. Unions not only help build shared interests and capacities for participation in electoral politics, but they also bring varying degrees of democracy into the otherwise authoritarian sphere of employment. In fact, early proponents of industrial democracy, Sidney and Beatrice Webb argued that workers should have a legitimate voice in decision-making in the world of work, typically through trade unions—a notion that has since become widely accepted in most advanced capitalist democracies.

Unlike many other civic organizations, the decline of unions cannot be attributed to a lack of interest by would-be participants. On the contrary, Gallup polls have shown public support for unions to be at an all-time high and a recent study by MIT researchers found that more than half of non-union workers would like to have a union in their workplace. If so many workers would like to have a union, why do we have such a low rate of unionization?



Members of New Labor fight for and Win Temporary Bill of Rights legislation. Photo Credit: New Labor

*earlier version published in *Common Dreams*, April 2021

To Defend Democracy, con't



CWA 1037 Childcare Providers with their organizing partner NJ Communities United at the Lobby Day at the NJ Statehouse to make childcare more accessible and affordable! 2024 Photo Credit: Paul Karr

The causes for union decline have been studied at great length and some of the major explanations include globalization, deindustrialization, shifts in the labor market away from traditionally unionized occupations, misclassification of workers as managers or independent contractors, and of course increased employer hostility toward new unionization efforts, as we have seen so often in the news this past few years.

In a recent study I conducted with Michael Wallace from the University of Connecticut and Allen Hyde from the Georgia Institute of Technology, we explore the role that labor laws play in shaping unionization rates. In particular, we explore the differences between federal and state labor laws which respectively set the rules for private and public sector unionization. We asked, why is it that public sector workers who are 34% unionized are five times more likely to have a union than workers in the private sector, where the unionization rate is just 6%.

We also explored the great degree of variation in public sector unionization across the 50 states. In sum, we found that unionization rates in states with stronger labor protections more closely mirrored the percent of workers who said they'd like to have a union, whereas states with restrictive laws such as Right to Work and other laws which benefit anti-union employers had much lower unionization rates.

New labor legislation, like the PRO Act, would go a long way to adjust federal labor law and create a playing field where the percent of workers who have a union would look a lot more like the percent who want to have a one.

So, why does any of this matter?
It's the democracy, stupid.



NJ Domestic Worker Coalition waits for news of the passage of the NJ Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. Photo Credit: New Labor

It should be no secret by now that some of the first things authoritarian regimes do when coming to power is they seek to undermine independent labor unions and to eliminate the free press. It's also the case that the emergence of democracy in countries around the world happened alongside and in conjunction with the formation of voluntary associations and free trade unions.

Given the ongoing threats to democracy around the world and at home here, in the U.S., it should be clear why a strong and independent labor movement is needed. As an important vehicle for collective identity and shared interest formation as well as increased democratic practice in the daily lives of citizens, unionization plays a vitally important role in advancing both economic and political democracy. In other words, increasing the rights and protections for workers to form and join unions is good for democracy and good for America.

Feature: The State of Labor in New Jersey, 2021-2023 A Profile of Organized Labor in the Garden State

By Joseph van der Naald & Todd E. Vachon, released May 2024

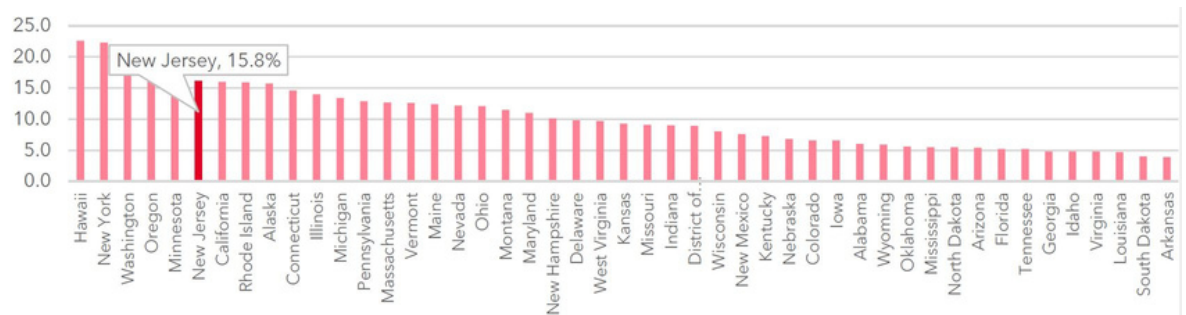
One of our traditions at LEARN is to release a biannual state of labor report in even years on May Day. This year's report is available now!

Over the past three years, New Jersey - like the rest of the United States - has experienced meteoric shifts in employment, increased levels of workplace unrest, and new union organizing efforts in sectors that have historically lagged behind the average unionization rate for the rest of the economy. The [latest LEARN report](#) on the State of Labor in New Jersey offers some insight into the changes that have been underway between January 2021 and December 2023.

Overall, union density in the United States is only a fraction of what it was in the years immediately following World War II. Organized labor hit its highwater mark when 35% of workers belonged to a union in 1953. Today just 10.1% of all workers are unionized in the US, with the rate even lower in the private sector—just 6.1%. Public sector workers have fared better and maintain a unionization rate of 36% nationally. Notably, New Jersey workers have maintained higher unionization rates than most other states, with total union density at 15.8%—making it the sixth most unionized state in the U.S. And from the year prior to the year after the onset of COVID, union density increased by 0.66% in the Garden State.

The full State of Labor [Report](#), which explores unionization rates, union wage premiums, and changes in unionization for various groups of workers, including by sector, industry, occupation, and demographic characteristics can be read online or downloaded at the link below.

Figure 3. Union Density by Industry, 2021-23





Feature: The State of Labor in New Jersey, 2021-2023, con't

Some Highlights from the Report

New Jersey's unionization rate currently stands at 15.8% based on the 2021-23 average. Our findings show that overall unionization among all workers in the state declined slightly from 16.1% in the previous three-year period (which included the COVID shutdown)

- Private sector density increased by about 1%, while public sector density declined by almost 2%, since the last report in 2022.
- Union members are roughly evenly split between the private and public sectors, due in part to a slight increase in private sector density since the last report (2022).
- There appears to be a blue collar-white collar divide when looking at unionization trends in the public vs. private sector. Most private-sector union members are located in production occupations, while most public-sector union members are found in professional occupations.
- Public administration (52.7%), transportation and utilities (32.6%), education and health services (26.1%), and construction (21%) are the most highly unionized industries in New Jersey.
- Education instruction and library (56.1%), protective service (44.4%), and installation, maintenance and repair (31.9%) are the most highly unionized occupations in the state.
- Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations saw gains in unionization since the previous report issued in 2022, up from 17% to over 20%, as did education, instruction and library, up from 53% to 56%.
- Similar to national trends, Black workers remain more likely to be union members than white and other non-white workers. Black men have the highest union density among all workers in the state. Private-sector union membership remains slightly more diverse than in the public sector.
- On average, full-time unionized workers in the state make about 11% more in weekly wages than non-unionized workers. Hispanic workers as well as women reap some of the greatest economic benefits from having a union in their workplace.
- In New Jersey, there have been 26 total strikes since 2021, with at least 10 that involved 100 workers or more. The stoppage at Rutgers University in 2023 was the largest recent strike, involving 9,000 faculty, staff, and graduate workers, followed by the 2023 nurses strike at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital.

The Labor Education Center: Labor's Home in NJ

Unions, worker and community organizations hold conferences and meetings at the Labor Education Center.



The Labor Education Center has class rooms, conference rooms and a large auditorium, including hybrid capabilities. The LEC was officially open in 1962 and has been the home of NJ labor ever since. If you need space for a union meeting, vote, training, or conference, reach out to lauraann@smlr.rutgers.edu at the LEC or contact LEARN to request space.

FOR A COLLABORATIVE
EVENT HOSTED BY

**FAIR FOOD PROGRAM:
NEW APPROACH TO
AGRICULTURAL AND
LOW-WAGE LABOR**

Special Guest Speaker:
Susan L. Marquis, PhD
and Marie Robertson Visiting Professor and lecturer at
Cetron's School for Public and International Affairs

WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH
PM-8:00 PM 2024

LABOR EDUCATION CENTER
Crispelli Memorial Auditorium
50 LABOR CENTER WAY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901

LABOR EDUCATION CENTER
NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE
NEW JERSEY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
NEW JERSEY CITIZEN ACTION

**2024 NJ Grassroots
Organizing Conference**
Saturday, April 6 - 10am-4pm
@ Rutgers Labor Education Center
REGISTER HERE: njgoc2024.org

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institute25
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NEW JERSEY CITIZEN ACTION
NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CHOICE
CLEAN WATER ACTION
NJ11 for STUDENTS

el hormiguero

**PRESENTS A LABOR DOCUMENTARY:
FOR WHOM THE ALARM SOUNDS**

WHEN??
WHERE??

APRIL 25TH
AT 6:00 PM

50 LABOR CENTER WAY
LABOR EDUCATION CENTER
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

CO-SPONSORED BY:
RUTGERS AUP-AFT
Brandworkers
LABOR EDUCATION ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK (LEARN)



HELU, Higher Educ Labor United hybrid meeting 2024

NJ AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer, Laurel Brennan speaks at a Senate Labor Committee in support of state funding for LEARN, the labor education extension program for NJ's labor movement.



HPAE uses the the Rajoppi Pavilion at the LEC



IFPTE 194 meets in the LEC Auditorium



2024 LEARN graduates gather at the Labor Education Center to celebrate their accomplishments and meet their classmates in person.



Conference attendees in the spring of 2024.

What We Have Been Up To in 2024



LEARN has been partnering with the Labor Institute and Amazonians United to develop a unique training program for workers in the logistics industry that provides both big picture political economy education along with nuts and bolts union education, including labor and employment law, workplace organizing, labor history, and more. Check out the introductory Essay [HERE](#) to LEARN more and how you can support this important effort to confront the extreme inequality by becoming a paid subscriber to the Substack newsletter.

Watch the Webinar series covering the new rules and decisions.

organizing under the Biden Board



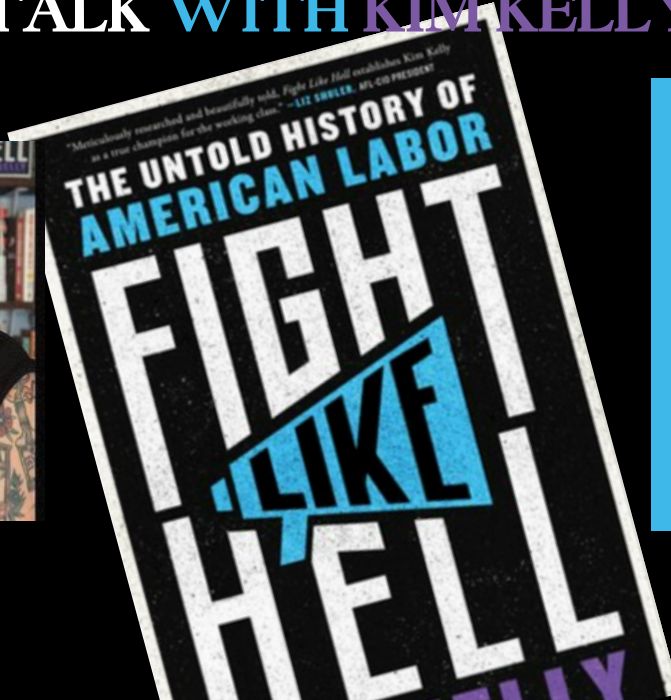
NLRB Attorneys, Senior Organizers, Labor Attorneys and Labor Studies Faculty discuss strategies, pitfalls and opportunities
Each Webinar covers one of the following areas.

- Representation Process
- Joint Employer Bargaining
- Cemex Decision



What We've Been Up To in 2024

BOOK TALK WITH KIM KELLY



Kim Kelly has written the perfect book for the era of the "Great Resignation." Filled with revolutionary spirit, *Fight Like Hell* highlights the contributions of labor leaders both known and obscure, deftly connecting the struggles of the past to the present while proving that every story is a labor story when workers matter." -- Elizabeth Catte



Mother Jones

by author and actor, Kaiulani Lee

We were never supposed to know her name. She was a poor Irish immigrant who survived famine and war, fire and plague. Unable to save her husband or their four small children, she dedicated her life to saving working families everywhere. The robber barons called her "the most dangerous woman in America," but workers called her "Mother Jones."



What We Have Been Up To: Winter 2024 Classes



Interest-Based Bargaining January 26, 2024

Instructor: William Dwyer

Strategic Grievance Handling and Contract Enforcement February 23, 2024

Instructor: William Dwyer

Grievance Arbitration I: Foundations March 21, 2024

Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D.

Grievance Arbitration II: Advanced April 11, 2024

Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D.



Bias, Harassment and Discrimination January 25, 2024

Instructor: Akhila Naik, Esq.

Workplace Investigations & Interviews: Overview February 22, 2024

Instructor: Carla Katz, Esq.

Workers Compensation March 22, 2024

Instructor: James Cooney, Esq.



Public Sector Grievance Handling & Discipline January 16, 2024

Instructor: Joyce Klein, J.D.

Scope of Public Sectors Negotiations March 1, 2024

Instructor: Christine Lucarelli-Carneiro, Esq.

Grievance Arbitration I March 21, 2024

Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D.

Grievance Arbitration II April 11, 2024

Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D.

Public Sector Contract Interpretation May 3, 2024

Instructor: Steven Weissman, Esq., J.D.



Health, Safety, and Power

January 25 - February 29

Instructors: Carmen Martino

Labor and Community Organizing: A-Z

March 14 - April 18

Instructor: Michael Reagan



Have friends or colleagues who may be interested in LEARN programs? Like and share our courses on Facebook and X!

What's on the menu for 2025?

Book Talk with Les Leopold

**Online Event
October 1, 2024
6:30p-8:30p EST**



**WALL
STREET'S
WAR
— ON —
WORKERS**
**HOW MASS LAYOFFS AND GREED
ARE DESTROYING THE WORKING CLASS
AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT**
LES LEOPOLD

**Register
Today**

“The book traces the root cause of mass layoffs to a pervasive corporate culture that prioritizes stock buybacks and enriching shareholders. Leopold clearly demonstrates that not only are mass layoffs devastating for working-class communities, but they are also destroying worker loyalty to the Democratic Party while opening up huge political opportunities for the far right”. - PAUL PRESCOD, Jacobin

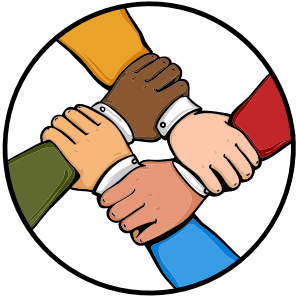
“Anyone conducting “inoculation” sessions for activists engaged in organizing, bargaining, or pro-labor lobbying today will benefit from consulting Wall Street’s War on Workers by Les Leopold”. -STEVE EARLY, Labor Notes

Les Leopold co-founded the Labor Institute (1976), a non-profit organization that designs research and educational programs on occupational safety and health, the environment and economics for unions, worker centers and community organizations. He is the author of numerous books including Runaway Inequality and Wall Street's War on Workers: How Mass Layoffs and Greed Are Destroying the Working Class and What to Do About It.



New Classes for Winter 2025

UNION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



Unions & Democracy

REGISTER TODAY
Online Course

Instructors:

Steve Lawton, The Labor Institute/Van Arsdale School of Labor Studies;
Tunisia Allah-Byrd, CWA D1



Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 PM, EST



9/10/24-10/15/24

Democracy is in constant flux. Generations of Americans fought to expand who can participate, from ending slavery to our right to act collectively to make our jobs more democratic. Labor unions are an extension of the democratic principles of our society.

In this workshop, we will

- Review the decline of democracy and economic and political disparities.
- Examine how authoritarianism creates scapegoats to gain power.
- Challenge workers to envision a more democratic society, to both expand democracy and revive the labor movement.

Labor & Employment Law Basics

REGISTER TODAY
Online Course

Instructor: *Ray Heineman*, JD, Partner at Kroll, Heineman, Carton

Labor and employment law sets the stage for everything from how we organize unions to how we negotiate and enforce contracts and resolve disputes. In this **six-week online** ULA class, students will learn the major federal and state laws that govern labor and employment, including their origins as well as the major agencies that are responsible for implementing the laws. Topics will include the National Labor Relations Act, the NJ Public Employee Relations Act, Title VII, and more.



11/5/24-12/10/24



Tuesdays, 5:30-8:30 PM, EST



Have friends or colleagues who may be interested in LEARN programs? Like and share our courses on Facebook and X!



Labor and Employment Law

Certificate Program 2024-2025

Labor and Employment Law: Overview - Instructor: Tamara Lee, Esq.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, September 20, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

An overview of major areas of Labor & Employment Law. What does the legal landscape look like? What are the major laws or rulings that set the rules for each of the major areas of LEL? What agencies are at play in enforcing or adjudicating disputes in each area? Are they state or federal level?

Employment Relationships Start to Finish - Instructor: Melanie Lipomanis, Esq.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, October 26, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

An overview of state and federal laws that intersect all phases of the employment relationship from pre-hire through termination. Learn the critical points in the employment process where litigation arises, and how to protect the rights of employees, supervisors and employers.

Constitutional Rights And The Workplace - Instructor: James Cooney, Esq., J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, November 15, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Covers the reach of Constitutional protections at the workplace, what is protected and what isn't including free speech, rights to privacy, whistle-blowing, testing and other issues. Also reviews the implications of the appeal to free speech protections in recent decisions, e.g., Janus v. AFSCME.

Leave And Absence Workshop - Instructor: Rosemarie Ciparullo, Esq., J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, December 12, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Explores types of protected leave available to workers; how to prosecute & defend discipline for absenteeism related charges; Excessive absenteeism; Granting leaves of absence; right to require proof of illness, confidentiality; Statutory leave; Fitness for duty and bargaining leave provisions.

Bias, Harassment and Discrimination - Instructor: Akhila Naik, Esq.

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, January 23, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This course will cover the federal and New Jersey state laws prohibiting disability, gender, and race discrimination, and harassment. Topics will include legal definitions of disability, legal requirements of reasonable accommodation, what constitutes disparate treatments on the basis of gender and race, and other issues of special concern.

Workplace Investigations & Interviews: Overview -Instructor: Carla Katz, Esq. J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, February 20, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Workplace investigations and interviews as a whole, including an overview of issues and the law related to the field from an experienced local union president and accomplished labor lawyer.

Workers' Compensation - Instructor: James Cooney, Esq.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, March 21, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Covers the New Jersey workers' compensation law; which provides cash and medical benefits to those disabled by work-related injuries and diseases. Includes employee coverage, compensable injuries and diseases, ensuring payment, and workers' abilities to sue employers for damages.

[Register for Labor and Employment Law Classes HERE](#)



Have friends or colleagues who may be interested in LEARN programs? Like and share our courses on Facebook, Instagram and X!

Public Sector Labor Relations

Certificate Program 2024-2025

Public Sector Law: An Overview - Instructor: Leonard Schiro, Esq. J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, September 27, 2024 Time: 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. (EST)

This course will explore fundamentals of public sector labor law, special focus on N.J. Employer--Employee Relations Act. Participants will receive an overview of key public sector legal concepts, practices, & procedures, topics including role of administrative agencies, scope of negotiations, representation cases, unfair practices, impasse procedures.

Public Sector Collective Bargaining - Instructor: Anthony Bagliore, Esq. J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, November 7, 2024 Time: 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. (EST)

The history of public sector unionism, an overview of the theory & practice of collective public sector representation and bargaining in the United States since the 1960s. Are public sector unions the same as or different from private sector unions? In what ways? With what consequences? Are they essential to our democracy or obstacles to it?

PERC Policies and Procedures- Instructor: Joseph Blaney, J.D. and Marisa Koz

[Click to register](#)

Thursday, December 5, 2024 Time: 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. (EST)

This course reviews the basic procedures for filing of petitions and charges with PERC. Topics include filing unfair practice charges; and filing petitions regarding representation issues, scope of negotiation issues, notices of impasse requesting mediation, as well as petitions requesting interest and grievance arbitration.

Public Sector Grievance Handling & Discipline - Instructor: Joyce Klein, Esq., J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, January 16, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This course will examine the grievance procedure, employee and employer rights and responsibilities, standards of just cause and their application to real life cases, and the burden of proof. Participants will discuss how to resolve grievances at the lowest level and will be given a brief overview of the arbitration hearing process.

Scope of Public Sector Negotiations - Instructor: Christine Lucarelli-Carneiro, Esq.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, March 7, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This course will address all aspects of the scope of negotiations in New Jersey's public sector. It will trace the legislative, judicial, and PERC developments that have affected the issues that can and must be the subjects of collective negotiations and grievance arbitration. Also, how PERC decides the scope in particular cases.

Grievance Arbitration I - Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, March 20, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This sequence of two courses is designed to increase the practitioner's skills in preparing and presenting grievance arbitration cases. Students must complete the first in order to take the second.

Grievance Arbitration II: Advanced - Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, April 10, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Major subjects discussed: preparing for arbitration, the hearing, presenting a case, standards for just cause, evidence, criteria for contract interpretation, remedies, the decision, and different systems.

Public Sector Contract Interpretation - Instructor: Steven Weissman, Esq.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, May 2, 2025, Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

How the meaning and enforceability of contract language negotiated under the N.J. Employer-Employee Relations Act has evolved over the last 40 years, and how court decisions, arbitrators' opinions, and PERC rulings have served to establish a set of principles and guidelines for negotiating binding contract language in the public sector.



Negotiation, Arbitration & Conflict Resolution

Certificate Program 2024-2025

Fundamentals and Collective Bargaining - Instructor: Rebecca Givan

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, September 26, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Successful negotiators are prepared and ready for anything. This course will describe what individuals and organizations need to do in order to get ready to bargain the best possible contracts.

Conflict Resolution At The Workplace - Instructor: Saul Rubinstein, Ph. D

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, October 17, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This course looks at different models of labor-management cooperation and surveys ways to reduce dysfunctional conflict at the workplace, and at the bargaining table.

Countering and Preventing Harassment - Instructor: James Cooney, Esq., J.D.

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, December 6, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This class will cover the various federal and state laws prohibiting workplace harassment based on sex, race, religion, LGBTQ+ status, and other protected categories. We will cover the implementation of employer policies aimed at preventing harassment, and in conducting effective investigations to remedy employee complaints. Finally, we will review the topic from the perspective of labor union, including compliance with the duty of fair representation.

Interest-Based Bargaining - Instructor: William Dwyer

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, January 24, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Mutual gains for all concerned in bargaining and grievance handling by identifying interests, exploring options and reaching win-win agreements through a tried and true joint problem-solving process.

Strategic Grievance Handling and Contract Enforcement - Instructor: William Dwyer

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, February 21, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This class explores valuable methods and techniques to help ensure that negotiated contracts are successfully enforced and the hard-won gains at the bargaining table are honored and sustained.

Grievance Arbitration I: Foundations - Instructor: Joan Parker

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, March 20, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

This sequence of two courses is designed to increase the practitioner's skills in preparing and presenting grievance arbitration cases. Students must complete the first class in order to take the second.

Grievance Arbitration II: Advanced - Instructor: Joan Parker

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, April 10, 2025 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Major subjects discussed include preparing for arbitration, the hearing, presenting a case, standards for just cause, evidence, criteria for contract interpretation, remedies, the decision, and different systems.

Pre-requisite: Grievance Arbitration I course must be completed

[Register for Negotiation, Arbitration and Conflict Resolution Classes HERE](#)

LEARN Lessons

"LEARN Lessons" is a collection of mini-lectures delivered by various experts on topics of importance to unions, labor relations professionals, health and safety advocates, and others working in the field of work and employment. Click on the image to see the video.

Legal Framework of Collective Bargaining

The Legal Framework of Collective Bargaining: Part 1

Overview of Union Membership in the U.S.

Presented by
Carla A. Katz, Esq.

June 7, 2023



The Legal Framework of Collective Bargaining: Part 2

What is Collective Bargaining?

Presented by
Carla A. Katz, Esq.

June 7, 2023



The Legal Framework of Collective Bargaining: Part 3

What Laws Impact Collective Bargaining?

Presented by
Carla A. Katz, Esq.

June 7, 2023



The Legal Framework of Collective Bargaining: Part 4

Public Sector versus Private Sector Law

Presented by
Carla A. Katz, Esq.

June 7, 2023



Carla A. Katz discusses the Legal Framework of Collective Bargaining in 4 brief lessons. These LEARN Lessons can be used individually or as a group to introduce your bargaining team or members to collective bargaining concepts.

Black History Month



A Democracy Cannot Exist Without Labor Unions: Paul Robeson and the Labor Movement - William Brucher, Rutgers University

National Association of Wage Earners (1921)

"We had had to paddle our own canoe because our women have had no standing with the American Federation of Labor or the National Women's Trade Union League."

Nannie Helen Burroughs, "Negro Women Unprotected," n.d., Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.



Nannie Helen Burroughs, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs

From Secret Trade Societies to Clubs: Early Black Women's Labor Organizing Outside of Labor Unions - Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, Rutgers University



LEARN White Paper #7505

Remembering Ernie: A Biography of Ernest DeMaio

by John Harry The Connecticut Council of Machinists (IAM)

Ernest DeMaio organized workers at General Electric, Westinghouse, Honeywell, Delco and other companies. After several years organizing workers in electrical manufacturing in New England, DeMaio helped found the United Electrical and Radio Workers Union (UE) in 1936. In 1942, he became General Vice President of the union, a post he held until he retired in 1974. To capture and preserve the life story and history of DeMaio, Brother John Harry of the International Association of Machinists, a friend of DeMaio, submitted a white paper for the LEARN “A Better Tomorrow” paper series.

Harry argues that DeMaio’s story was too frequently ignored and too soon forgotten. His battles on behalf of workers led him into heated conflicts with some of the largest corporations of his time, like General Electric and Westinghouse, as well as the US Chamber of Commerce, the National Manufacturers Association, and the most potent institutions of government, including the FBI and CIA. A fearless advocate, Ernie fought for workers regardless of whose sacred cow might be gored in the process, and so he also took on entrenched leadership at all levels within the labor movement, including his own union and the increasingly brittle and detached leadership of the Communist Party USA. You can read the whole essay on the LEARN website [HERE](#).

If you are interested in capturing some piece of your own local labor history, please reach out to LEARN as we are planning a workshop with historian Jeremy Brecher on how to do people’s history. All completed projects will be considered for publication as part of the LEARN paper series. If interested, please send an email to: learn@work.rutgers.edu

“A Better Tomorrow” Research and Reflections on the Past, Present, Future of Workers

Rutgers LEARN White Paper Series Call for Papers

To commemorate our 75th anniversary, LEARN launched a white paper series titled “*A Better Tomorrow: Research & Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of Workers*.” The contributions will include original research, reflections from scholars and practitioners, and chapters from forthcoming books by LEARN affiliated faculty, students, and friends. The papers can range from short essays of 2,000 words up to full length articles of 10,000 words. **If you have an idea or a piece you would like considered for this series, please contact LEARN Director, Todd Vachon at todd.vachon@rutgers.edu to submit a pitch or a fully written essay.** You can read the full call for papers as well as the first few white papers on the LEARN webpage, [here](#).

Overview of the White Paper Series and call for Submissions

Paper #7505 Remembering Ernie: A Biography of Ernest DeMaio - Labor Leader by John Harry The Connecticut Council of Machinists (IAM)

Learn in the News

January 25, 2024 Cultural Studies Podcast [Todd Vachon on the assault on democracy, the labor movement, climate change, financialization, and Clean Air and Good Jobs](#)

Feb 21, 2024 NJ Spotlight [Anheuser-Busch workers hold 'practice protest' at Newark brewery](#)

Feb 21, 2024 The Philadelphia Citizen [Beyond Starbucks](#)

Feb 21, 2024 Power at Work podcast Labor [Experts on Automation, Climate Change, and Attacks on the NLRB with Tia Koonse and Todd Vachon](#)

April 18, 2024 TAPinto New Brunswick [Rutgers Faculty Mark Anniversary of School's First Strike with Rally to Save Writing Classes](#)

April 21, 2024 NJ Spotlight [American Dream Rebuffed on Firing Cleaners for Union Organizing](#)

May 15, 2024 Non Profit Quarterly [Are Advertising and Marketing on the Brink of a Union Wave?](#)

May 30, 2024 NY Times [Biden Doesn't Want You Buying an E.V. From China. Here's Why.](#)

June 13. 2024 Jacobin [The Tough Task of Forging a Labor-Climate Alliance](#)

June 17, 2024 North Jersey.com Parsippany-Troy Hills Starbucks workers form bid to unionize.

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