



Day of Action bands members together

With the state budget deadline looming, union activists used the time leading up to the budget deadline to their advantage.

On OCSEA's Day of Action, June 23, members all around the state phoned, emailed and wrote their state legislators asking them to help protect valuable state services provided by OCSEA members. They asked them to consider the importance of the services they provide when voting on the state budget.

Members also sent postcards to legislators sharing facts and personal stories about the essential state services they provide each and every day.

In downtown Columbus, four worksites went above and beyond during the Day of Action. Leaders rallied the troops at the Lazarus and William Green buildings, the Riffe Center and the State Office Tower to distribute literature about the importance of public work and to encourage members to call, email or write their legislators about the issue.

"We got out there and per-

suaded people to do something," said BWC Chap. 2535 activist Bev Trent, who manned a table in the William Green building during the Day of Action. "We can tell them all we want, but they have to do it. We got it done today."

Jerry Washington of Cleveland Chap. 1801, alongside other union brothers from the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, took time out during a union meeting to speak to a representative at his state senator's office. He told them OCRC has already been devastated by budget cuts that have resulted in a massive workforce reduction from layoffs and attrition, nearly reducing his agency's staff by half.

Some chapters got a head start on taking action the week before by setting up tables at their work places.

On June 23, OCSEA activists worked hard to make their voices heard regarding the importance of maintaining state services.

"We've had a lot of people stop by, wanting to know what's going on and what the Day of Action is all about," said Chap. 2545 President Elbert Ferguson on June 17. He answered questions about the budget and told members how to get involved by referring them to the OCSEA website.

"There are thousands of stories just like these about activists who really went to bat for public services during OCSEA's Day of Action," said OCSEA President Eddie L. Parks.

"Legislators' voicemail and emails boxes were inundated with calls from our members," said Parks. "We really did make an impact. We truly are a force to be reckoned with." □

What happened on June 23?

OCSEA members...

- ..sent over 1,000 emails**
- ..wrote over 2,000 postcards**
- ..and made 100s of phone calls**
- ..urging legislators to listen.**

Frieda Smith (DOD) calls her legislators from her cell phone in between spurts of talking to members on their lunch break in the Riffe Center.



(Below) OCSEA Vice Pres. Chris Mabe (upper right) joins members in Asbland making Day of Action calls to legislators.



(Above) Members working in state agency offices in the Lazarus building in downtown Columbus had access to information about proposed budget cuts outside their door.



Union secures veto on Statehouse collective bargaining attack

Thanks to member mobilization efforts led by DAS Chap. 2570 and mounting public pressure, OCSEA last month blocked the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board's (CSRAB) plan to displace laid-off state employee union members with prison labor.

Now the union has won another victory. At OCSEA's strong urging, Gov. Ted Strickland vetoed the Senate Republicans' budget provision that would have eliminated collective bargaining rights for about 40 OCSEA members at CSRAB.

The union's message to decision makers was simple and successful: Times are tough, but replacing laid-off workers with inmates is crossing the line, violates the contract between the union and the state and jeopardizes the safety of all who work at or visit the Statehouse building, grounds and garage.

However, the Senate decided to "reward" those employees who stood up for their rights by including language in the state budget to eliminate CSRAB workers' collective bargaining rights altogether. Despite hundreds of letters, emails, phone calls and petition signatures gathered by OCSEA, the anti-union



OCSEA Sec.-Treas. Kathy Stewart (center) gets petition signatures and talks to Columbus downtowners about the need to keep union jobs at the Statehouse.

provision remained in the conference committee's amended budget that was sent to the governor's desk where he vetoed it before signing the final budget into law on Fri., July 17.

PEOPLE, the union's political action arm, makes it possible for OCSEA to lobby legislators on issues such as budget cuts and collective bargaining rights. For more info about PEOPLE and budget updates, go to www.ocsea.org/budget. □

Billy Ross (Mansfield Correctional) makes calls to legislators during OCSEA's Day of Action in Ashland.



(Above) Jerry Washington, an Ohio Civil Rights Commission employee from the Cleveland area, speaks to a representative at his state senator's office about how OCRC has already been reduced by more than half thanks to layoffs and attrition.



OCSEA activists circle around the Statehouse to protest the use of inmate labor at the Statehouse.



Jim Atkins (right), president of the Ohio Reformatory for Women chapter, collects signatures against using inmate labor at the Statehouse.