

Report of the Vice President of Legislation, UC-AFT

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UC-AFT Statewide Council, 2023-06-24 (written 2023-06-14)

My Asks of UC-AFT Leaders:

- Please email me if:
 - You are part of a Northern California campus, especially Davis or Berkeley, and you or a UC-AFT member you know at your campus would like to get more involved in lobbying and/ or testifying in person in Sacramento for worker rights and funding for public education.
 - You or a leader you know are interested in meeting via zoom or at the district office of a state senator or assembly member to lobby on our issues
 - You or a leader you know would like to join the UC-AFT statewide Legislative Committee.
 - You are interested in working with union affiliates on 2024 electoral issues

UC-AFT Lobbying Efforts Since Last Council Meeting

UC-AFT members joined union allies in Sacramento three times in the past 2 months. The main takeaway for me from the experience is that our participation in joint lobbying efforts with other unions massively increases UC-AFT's power and influence, and ensures that UC labor and education issues are included in the lobbying agendas of our affiliates.

CFT Lobby Day

On April 26, five UC-AFT members (Mia McIver/ UCLA, John Rundin and Kendon Kurzer/ UCD, Joy Hagen/ UCSC, and I) joined dozens of CFT activists for CFT's Lobby Day. UC-AFT members personally participated in 20 different meetings with state legislators, and were instrumental in making sure that support for AB 504 was included in these conversations. UC-AFT members also joined about a dozen CFT members and a half dozen AFSCME members to attend an Assembly Labor Committee hearing and provide "me too" testimony in support of ACA 6.



*Trevor Griffey, John Rundin, Kendon Kurzer and Mia McIver
outside the Assembly Labor Committee hearing during CFT
Lobby Day, April 26, 2023*

CLF Lobby Day

On May 8-9, Anibel Ferus-Comelo (Bay Area) and I represented UC-AFT at the California Labor Federation (CLF) Legislative Conference and Lobby Day, joining hundreds of delegates from around the state. We each joined our local county federation delegations (Alameda County and Orange County) and ensured that legislators who met with us heard about AB 504 and ACA 6. Unlike CFT lobby day activity, the number of delegates from county federations was so large the politicians had to come to us rather than the other way around. The Orange County delegation hosted legislators at a table in a room at the state capitol building, and gave one representative from each union in the federation (including us) a seat at the table.



Trevor Griffey and Anibel Ferus-Comelo representing UC-AFT at the CLF Lobby Day



Orange County AFL-CIO delegation meeting with Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon

Joint Lobbying for ACA 6

On May 24, John Rundin and Kendon Kurzer (Davis) joined a joint lobbying effort with CNA, UC-AFT and AFSCME 3299 members in support of ACA 6. The day was organized by AFSCME 3299.



John Rundin and Kendon Kurzer join AFSCME and CNA members to lobby for ACA 6 on May 24

Statewide Issues Update

AB 504 and ACA 6 both passed the Assembly on May 31 and have been referred to the Senate Rules Committee.

The Governor's proposed budget for the UC still includes a 5% increase. But the Governor's office's May revision to his budget zeroed out about \$1 billion in funds set aside last year for UC capital projects— including campus expansion at Merced and Riverside, de-carbonization of UC Berkeley, and student housing. This funding was “delayed” in his January budget. Now he has admitted that the delay is actually a cut. The rationale for the cut— beyond predicted revenue shortfalls— is that the UC can secure low interest loans from the bond market to pay for its capital needs, and that the Governor is proposing to have the state pay UC's interest payments. This continues a now roughly 15-year old trend of the state pushing its higher education system into greater levels of debt in order to pay for building construction and maintenance. In the short term, this may seem like a pragmatic path. But this kind of indebtedness can raise significant problems during recessions, because low bond interest rates are tied to universities not drawing down their cash reserves, and because universities could be in big trouble if the state of California reneges on covering interest payments. During recessions or big enrollment drops, as the faculty union at Salem State has warned, high indebtedness can result in increasing student tuition and cutting jobs to pay off Wall Street lenders:

<https://labornotes.org/blogs/2020/08/our-faculty-union-exposed-universitys-debt-and-whos-paying-it>

Activity Report Since 2023/04/24 UC-AFT State Council Meeting

- Attended UC Regents Meeting on 5/17 to testify against executive salary increases (was not called on, but did also submit written testimony)
- Attended CLF and CFT Lobby Days
- Regularly participated in UCUC meetings
- Regularly attended UCAFT eboard meetings
- Regularly attended CLF Labor Lobbyist meetings
- Regularly attended AB 504 Co-Sponsor meetings
- Occasionally attended HELU meetings
- Co-authored parts of weekly emails to members that Katie Rodger sends out