

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

OF PROTEC17

Fall
2024
Vol 29
No. 4





On the Cover:

On Sept. 10, hundreds of PROTEC17 State members – including our Department of Licensing members in Bellingham (pictured) – walked off the job on their lunchbreak to stand against the meager wages that were being proposed by the State during contract negotiations. Read about how their actions helped reach a tentative agreement on page 5. ■

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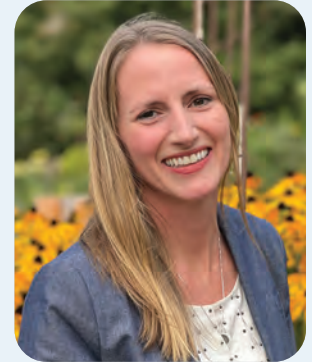
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Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

Leadership

Moments of immense challenge shine a light on who we are as individuals. Times of change can often bring out the worst in people – or the best. Over the last several months, PROTEC17 members have met challenging times with thoughtfulness, courage, and commitment – *leadership* – and it has made all the difference.

This issue of *Insight* showcases just a few examples of that leadership. The article featured on our cover tells the story of the first ever walk-out by PROTEC17 Washington State members, standing up for a strong contract (p. 5). Within a few weeks of their action, an agreement was reached that saw significant movement on a general wage increase. Through action and solidarity by PROTEC17 members, the bargaining team also secured additional market adjustments for hundreds of positions. With conviction, and by working together, we demonstrated that we have what it takes to make our voices heard.

PROTEC17 leaders working in the opioid treatment program at Spokane Regional Health District have been in a six-month battle to fight off the privatization of their work (p. 7). Through planning meetings, testifying in front of the Board of Health, speaking to the press, and engaging with community, they forced the Board to take more time to consider the message they were able to amplify together: *Treatment services save lives and makes the community a better place.*

With new mandates to return to the office at several large employers, PROTEC17 leaders have come together to share ideas, to strategize, and to make sure that the future of work includes the voices of those doing the work (p. 4)! Members from the City of Seattle, King County, Sound Transit, and more, have joined forces to map out a plan to ensure the gains of remote work don't disappear, while organizing to ensure everyone can win improvements, whether in the workplace or at home.


Leadership can be uncomfortable at times. Instead of viewing a conflict as “bad,” leaders stay in it – often with hope – and are considering *‘how can we navigate this to learn, improve, and grow along the way?’* Leaders keep their vision alive and bring others in, even when others may not yet share in that vision, like the newly organized City of Seattle Budget Office leaders who led their colleagues to win their union (p. 6) with attention and fortitude.

Leadership requires courage, energy, care, and dedication, and the members highlighted in these pages are a testament to the incredible power within our union. Thank you to all of the leaders within these pages, and to the countless others leaders, Stewards, and members, advocating for your co-workers and our union. Together we can bring out the best in each other.

In compassion and solidarity,

Karen

City of Seattle announces layoffs for 2025

 In the same day in late September that City of Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell announced his 2025 budget, PROTEC17 and other Coalition of City Unions members received a notification from the City Budget Office that several dozen union members were slated to be laid off at the beginning of 2025. PROTEC17 takes any announcement of layoffs extraordinarily seriously. Staff have already engaged with both impacted members and the City to mitigate and address the impacts of the announced layoffs.

As of early October, we have already submitted information requests to the City to determine if there are any non-represented positions that could be eliminated instead of union positions. We have also requested specific budget information about the alleged cost savings of the proposed layoffs. In addition, we have submitted a demand-to-bargain to try and find other positions within the City for impacted members, and to extend our recall list, among other things to benefit our members.


Because of recent revenue-generating measures passed by the Seattle City Council over the past couple of years, the number of layoffs was reduced from hundreds to dozens. Still, as we have conversations with the Mayor's office and City Council, we will continue to push for additional revenue sources to save critical City services, as well as alternatives to proposed layoffs to balance the City budget.

Under the PROTEC17 collective bargaining agreement, layoffs are seniority based, with length of seniority determined by amount of time in a classification in each department. Seattle members should check their personal email for the latest updates. If you have any questions, please reach out to your Union Representatives, found at: protec17.org/member/seattle. ■

PROTEC17 members meet to envision the 'Future of Work'



The first meeting of the PROTEC17 Future of Work Committee was held on Sept. 5.

 This summer, several of our employers announced return-to-office policies for PROTEC17 members at the City of Seattle, King County, the Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA), and our newly organized workers at Sound Transit. While the policies are widely varied, and we are working with each employer separately to bargain the impacts, PROTEC17 members from across Chapters are coming together to talk about the bigger picture of what work will look like in the future, and how workers themselves can help shape that future.

In late summer, we sent out a survey to members at these four employers asking them to think about the factors related to in-office work that affect their quality of life. In an overwhelming response, we received over 1,700 surveys back. In their responses, members named commuting, dependent care availability and costs, health concerns, and environmental impacts as a few of the top impacts of employers requiring more time in the office.

Shortly after the survey was launched, the first 'Future of Work' committee meeting was held virtually on Sept. 5 with over 50 members in attendance. The committee is now developing branding and strategy for the campaign, and creating subcommittees to focus on key areas of the work - like research, planning, outreach, actions, and community organizing and engagement. They are thinking creatively, with an eye on the big picture of what worker- and family-friendly employment would look like five or ten years from now. No idea is out of the realm of possibility - from incentives for in-office work, to better accommodations for health issues, to the 32-hour workweek, and more.

To accommodate varying schedules, the committee meets twice monthly - on the first Thursday of the month at noon, and the third Thursday of the month at 5 p.m. If you would like to join the committee, please reach out to Membership Organizing Coordinator Brenna Stroup at brenna@protec17.org. ■

Find more news on our website: www.protec17.org/news

State member actions helped move the needle to reach agreement on the 2025-2027 contract

On Sept. 19, the PROTEC17 State bargaining team reached a Tentative Agreement (TA) on the 2025-2027 contract after many months of challenging negotiations with State of Washington management. The agreement, which was ratified by members on Sept. 30, secures a three percent General Wage Increase (GWI) for 2025 and a two percent GWI for 2026, along with several other wins.

While there are many gains in this contract, they were hard-fought through the persistence of the team, as well as two significant actions that members took to show their solidarity. After receiving a disrespectful first proposal in July of a one percent GWI total over the two years of the contract, PROTEC17 members from the Department of Licensing (DOL), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the Washington State Patrol (WSP) mobilized along with fellow State workers from WFSE and WPEA to communicate to the State that such a meager raise was intolerable.

On Aug. 20, State employees held rallies on highway overpasses across Washington during rush hour to gather public support for a strong contract. Then, on Sept. 10, hundreds of State employees – from Bellingham to Kelso, from Union Gap to Lynnwood, and beyond – walked off the job on their lunchbreak, bringing State services to a standstill for 30 minutes. Both of these actions helped to move the dial when the team returned to the bargaining table in mid-September.

In addition to the five percent GWI for all State members over the two year contract, the bargaining team was able to win additional market adjustments for WSP members and for certain classifications at WSDOT (TE1s, TE2s, TE3s, TT1s, and TT3s) due to severe recruitment and retention issues. For all other classifications, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) refused to acknowledge objective data demonstrating significant market concerns.

Despite the pushback from the State on economic issues, the PROTEC17 team secured many significant non-economic

wins, including one of the best and most flexible telework agreements amongst any employers, both public and private, for our WSDOT members. Other wins for all State members include: an increase in the maximum compensatory time accrual from 160 to 240 with the ability to carry it over the fiscal year; a maximum vacation accrual increase from 240 to 280 hours; and two additional days to bereavement leave. For a complete list of changes to the contract, visit our website: protec17.org/members.

A big thank you to the team – Paul Austin (WSP), Brian Brannies (WSDOT), Brendan Byron (WSDOT), Jason Clutter (DOL), Annette Dinkel (WSDOT), Bill Hicks (DOL), Daniel Jones (WSDOT), Bennett Olsson (WSP), and Faith Shuler (WSDOT), and PROTEC17 Union Representatives Sarah Lorenzini (Lead Negotiator), Suzie Saunders, Brent Wagar, and Alexis Young – for their months of hard work. We will continue our efforts during the next legislative session and beyond to address the wage data issue that continues to legally hamstring our efforts each bargaining cycle. ■



PROTEC17 State members take action (clockwise from left): DOL members in Lynnwood during the walkout on Sept. 10; DOL Everett members take to the streets; WSDOT members, including bargaining team member Faith Shuler, at the Olympia highway overpass rally; and Shoreline DOL member Nikolas MacDonald shares why they need a strong contract.



2024 Organizing Report

Our union and member-leader power continue to grow!

On the last year alone, we have seen PROTEC17 members take on challenges at work in big ways – shutting down 5th Avenue in downtown Seattle for better wages and respect; mobilizing to save King County Public Health clinics from closure; pushing back against privatization efforts in Spokane; taking the fight for a fair contract to Snohomish County Council; walking off the job and rallying in solidarity for fair wages in State employment; and working across employers to fight return-to-office mandates, to name just a few.

Because of the visibility of these actions and wins, we have seen a huge increase in the number of unrepresented workers reaching out to join PROTEC17. *Non-union workers are seeing the difference that having a union in the workplace makes.*

In addition to the actions across our union, nearly *450 members have engaged in union trainings* to learn how to support and organize their colleagues in their workplaces, and more than *65 new Stewards* have joined the ranks of front-line leaders and advocates on the job for their co-workers. Thanks to these members who have

stepped up to take on leadership roles, we are *excited to welcome more than 260 new members* to our union over the last year.

At King County, *Business Systems Analysts* in KCIT, Executive Services, DCHS, Judicial, and Elections have joined PROTEC17 within the last year, as have *Project/Program Managers, Grant Analysts, and Functional Analysts* in the Department of Natural Resource and Parks and Transit Finance and Administrative Services.

The City of Seattle – our union’s largest Chapter – continues to grow as well. This year, we’ve welcomed members from 10 departments and many different classifications. These include: *Strategic Advisors* in the Office of Economic Development; *P&D Supervisors* in SPU; *911 Dispatcher Managers* in CARE; *Strategic Advisors* and *Administrative staff* in the Budget Office; *Strategic Advisors* and *Communications staff* in the Legislative Department; *Training and Education Coordinators* and *Seniors* in the Human Services Department; *Management Systems Analysts* in City Light; *Probation Supervisors* at Municipal Court; *Information Specialists,*

Administrative staff, and *Supervisors* in the City Clerk’s Office; and all staff in the Office of Arts and Culture.

At Sound Transit – one of our newest employers – we’ve organized *Security Operations Center Superintendents, Field Activity Specialists, and Public Information Coordinators.*

“It’s empowering to have a voice in the decisions that affect my working conditions and livelihood, and to do it in community with my fellow workers,” said Sarah Burtner who is a new member organizing in the Seattle Budget Office. “I feel more confident about my work and more connected to my colleagues than I ever have, and I am looking forward to our shared efforts to keep supporting each other and improving our workplace.”

The mission of our Organizing department is to maintain, grow, and strengthen the power of our union through strategic campaigns to increase our density internally, and externally in our industries. If you have unrepresented colleagues who are interested in joining our union, please reach out to Organizing Director Jessica Olivas at jessica@protec17.org. ■

“I feel more confident about my work and more connected to my colleagues than I ever have, and I am looking forward to our shared efforts to keep supporting each other and improving our workplace.”

Sarah Burtner
Newly organized PROTEC17 member
Seattle Budget Office



Welcome to some of our newly organized PROTEC17 members from the City of Seattle’s Budget Office!

PROTEC17 members take action to save opioid treatment program at Spokane Regional Health District

For the last six months, PROTEC17 members working in Treatment Services at Spokane Regional Health District have been fighting an attempt to privatize their highly successful opioid treatment program.

As the largest opioid treatment program in Washington state, Treatment Services helps nearly 1,000 patients a year access the services and care that they need to battle their substance use disorder. The self-sustaining, publicly-supported program, which provides an accountable, transparent support system for some of the most vulnerable in the Spokane-area community, also connects patients to wraparound services like WIC, the Nurse-Family Partnership, mental health treatment, and more. And with low-or-no payment options, SRHD patients can sustain their treatment in a way that they can't with private programs who have higher treatment costs and shorter timelines to get to recovery.

While Treatment Services members – who enjoy strong wages, benefits, and union protections – stand to lose their livelihoods should this effort to privatize move forward, their biggest concern is their patients.

“I chose to work at SRHD because we serve a population that no other sector can reach,” said an anonymous Treatment Services member in our spring survey about what was at stake if SRHD were to privatize the program. “We meet people where they are at in their recovery and allow them to make decisions based on their needs.”

Since PROTEC17 members first learned of the feasibility study to privatize treatment, they have jumped into action. Members attended Town Hall meetings in June to share their concerns; they visited farmer’s markets and other events to collect signatures on our petition; they held a community event with free shaved



PROTEC17 members and SRHD Substance Use Disorder Counselors Crystal Thueringer, Isabella Bianchi, and Emily Vallies after speaking at a community meeting to advocate for the opioid treatment program.

ice to raise awareness about the potential cuts; and they wrote letters to the Board of Health ahead of their September meeting where they were set to decide whether to take the next step towards privatization.

In her public statement to the Board, PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin said: “PROTEC17 strongly supports Treatment Services to maintain the incredible work combating the opioid crisis in our community through Spokane Regional Health District, and opposes any privatization or separation of these vital services. We have heard from an overwhelming number of staff who choose to work at SRHD because of the human-centered approach and wraparound support services that have shown to be effective and successful. The system is working and it is saving lives. We urge the Board of Health to end to the feasibility study now and instead invest time, resources, and energy into making an already effective program even better.”

Thanks to the advocacy of PROTEC17 members, the SRHD Board voted to delay

their decision to their October 31 meeting. While the fight is not over, by standing together, gathering the support of the community, and using their collective voices, the team is making a huge impact. ■

“PROTEC17 strongly supports Treatment Services to maintain the incredible work of combating the opioid crisis in our community through Spokane Regional Health District, and opposes any privatization or separation of these vital services.”

Karen Estevenin, PROTEC17 Executive Director in her public statement to the SRHD Board of Health

Meet our 2024 PROTEC17 scholarship winners!

The PROTEC17 scholarship program has awarded over \$70,000 in scholarships in the last 13 year to members' dependents to help in their pursuit of a higher education. We are proud to announce that our 2024 scholarship winners are Camille James and Lakelle Bridges.

Each year, the PROTEC17 scholarship is open to the children, grandchildren or dependents of members as they enter or continue their studies in college or technical school. There are two \$3,000 awards – one for an incoming freshman, and one for a continuing college student. Scholarship applications were accepted through July 31. In the application, students are asked to demonstrate their academic achievements, educational goals, and extracurricular activities. In addition, applicants submit letters of recommendation and a labor-related essay.

This year, student essays were evaluated – anonymously to reduce bias – by the PROTEC17 Executive Board as a new part of the process. The Board found reading all of the essays very inspiring and rewarding, but a couple of students rose to the top.

Camille James is the child of Spokane Regional Health District member Jeff James, and is our graduating high school student winner. She started this fall in the biology program at Gonzaga University, with dreams to be a wildlife biologist specializing in snakes. She is also taking a course on magic and is participating in wind ensemble this semester.

In her scholarship essay, James reflected on the benefits of having a father in a union job, after seeing the difference when her dad worked for a large, private-sector company that was not very family-friendly.

“Joining the union was one of the best things that has happened for this family,” James said in her application. “It has helped us financially and mentally.”

Lakelle Bridges, child of King County member Kelvin Bridges, is entering her



“This scholarship will have a huge impact on my studies. My education is vital to my career as a wildlife biologist. Without the experiences and knowledge I’ll learn in college, I would never have the opportunity to accomplish my dreams.”

Camille James, child of Spokane Regional Health District member Jeff James, *Gonzaga University*

sophomore year at Howard University this fall, where she’s been accepted into the Honors biology program. Her plan is to become a veterinarian. She believes her education will give her the tools she needs to reach her goals.

“Being at a school like Howard has given me a new perspective on the role that I want to take on as a veterinarian in my community,” said Bridges. “I want to open a small animal and exotic private veterinary practice hospital that focuses on accessibil-



“Becoming a veterinarian has been my goal since I was very young, and that can’t be accomplished without this continued education and then veterinary school. This scholarship support will significantly impact my academic journey.”

Lakelle Bridges, child of King County member Kelvin Bridges, *Howard University*

ity – something that I see is lacking in the veterinary medicine industry.”

Both students expressed their extreme gratitude to PROTEC17 for supporting this award and for helping them and their families to ease the financial burden of a college education. Many thanks to the Board for their continued support of, and participation in, this program. To all of our applicants and our two winners – best of luck this school year and beyond! ■

PROTEC17 EVENT CALENDAR

| October | | | | | | |
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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

| November | | | | | | |
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| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

| December | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

- Oct. 1 - Portland Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 2 - Steward Training - Part 1
- Oct. 8 - PROTEC17 Presents: Union 101!
- Oct. 8 - King County Non-Coalition Contract Action Team Meeting
- Oct. 9 - Steward Training - Part 2
- Oct. 9 - WSDOT Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 9 - Tacoma Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 10 - Seattle Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 15 - Benton-Franklin Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 16 - Steward Training: Deep Dive on Weingarten Rights
- Oct. 16 - Portland Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 17 - King County Coalition Contract Action Team Meeting
- Oct. 23 - King County Chapter Meeting
- Oct. 24 - Seattle Steward Meeting
- Nov. 5 - Portland Chapter Meeting
- Nov. 6 - Steward Training - Part 1
- Nov. 12 - King County Non-Coalition Contract Action Team Meeting
- Nov. 13 - Steward Training - Part 2
- Nov. 13 - WSDOT Chapter Meeting
- Nov. 13 - Tacoma Chapter Meeting
- Nov. 14 - Seattle Chapter Meeting
- Nov. 19 - Benton-Franklin Chapter Meeting
- Nov. 20 - Portland Chapter Meeting
- Nov. 21 - Leader Training: How to Protect Your Coworkers from Freedom Foundation Propaganda
- Nov. 21 - King County Coalition Contract Action Team Meeting
- Nov. 21 - Seattle Steward Meeting
- Dec. 3 - Portland Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 4 - DOL Revenue Auditors Meeting
- Dec. 10 - King County Non-Coalition Contract Action Team Meeting
- Dec. 11 - WSDOT Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 11 - Tacoma Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 12 - Seattle Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 17 - Benton-Franklin Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 18 - Portland Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 19 - King County Coalition Contract Action Team Meeting

SEE YOU
*Soon!

This is not an exhaustive list of events, as things get added all the time! Please visit protec17.org/events for current listings and logistics.

2024 City of Portland Election Endorsements

It has been an exciting year for Portland politics, and we've had so many PROTEC17 members volunteer their time over the last several months to interview political candidates for the new City government structure. The core committee of 15 members have interviewed 40 candidates for City Council and the Mayor's office, asking them the tough questions on their record of showing up for us as City employees. On this page are the results of the committee's work, and our list of endorsed candidates.

In addition to the committee, Portland members stepped up in big ways throughout the season by volunteering and attending door knocking events for our endorsed candidates. PROTEC17 members also answered the call by donating to the City's small donor election program which matches funds from Portland residents in an effort to keep big money from influencing elections.

Mayor

As our final endorsement of this election cycle, the Committee believes that Commissioner Mingus Mapps is the best choice between the candidates. Throughout his term, he has shown consistency in showing up for PROTEC17 members, often as the only City Council member to do so. He has worked to reduce the contracting out of union work in the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), safeguard utility rate payer dollars, and fight for Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) funding, saving a hundred employees from layoffs.

Commissioner Mapps has hired first-rate staff who make themselves available to us and work with us as partners to solve problems in the workforce and the City at large, which is an absolutely vital skill for a mayor, especially in our new form of government. His office was the only one that sought out a Deputy City Administrator



with practical experience for Public Works, rather than a political appointment.

The Committee also recognized that Commissioner Mapps has not been without his faults - such as his disappointing public missteps with PBOT and the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) - but the Committee feels that he would be the candidate who is most likely to collaborate with Labor and seek equitable and long-term solutions to help Portland grow. Commissioner Mapps and his office have been receptive to feedback from union members about workplace safety concerns and followed up with tangible support.

City Council

With multiple candidates running for Council, there are many that support our union values, so we've made several endorsements as voters are able to vote for more than one candidate in each district. All of our recommended candidates have made a commitment to support our members in critical public services. Please see the full list our committee's endorsements on the right.

If you would like more information, or have any questions about the committee's process, please feel free to contact PROTEC17 Research Director and Oregon Legislative Advocate, Elliot Levin, at elliott@protec17.org. ■

MAYOR:

Mingus Mapps

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1:

Candace Avalos
Steph Routh
Timur Ender

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2:

Elana Pirtle-Guiney
Mariah Hudson
Jonathan Tasini
Sameer Kanal

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 3:

Chris Flanary
Tiffany Koyama Lane
Angelita Morillo

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 4:

Sarah Silkie
Mitch Green
Chad Lykins
Lisa Freeman

Learn more about our endorsements at: protec17.org/political-action

Your VOTE is your VOICE! VOTE by Nov. 5!

2024 WA State Endorsements



GOVERNOR



Bob Ferguson

ATTORNEY GENERAL



Nick Brown

STATE LEGISLATURE



House District 5
Victoria Hunt



Senate District 8
Maria Beltran



House District 36
Julia Reed



House District 43
Shaun Scott

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS



Dave Upthegrove

INSURANCE COMMISSIONER



Patty Kuderer

BALLOT INITIATIVES



Vote NO on initiative 2109, which will cut funding for childcare and schools.



Vote NO on initiative 2117 which will directly harm our members in transportation.

2024 WA City and County Endorsements

CITY OF SEATTLE



City Council Position 8
Alexis Mercedes Rinck



VOTE YES on Seattle Prop 1, which directly impacts the jobs of our SDOT members

PIERCE



County Executive
Ryan Mello

SNOHOMISH



VOTE YES on Snohomish County Prop 1, which is a sales tax supporting public services.

SPOKANE



County Commissioner
Molly Marshall

Professional and
Technical Employees
Local 17

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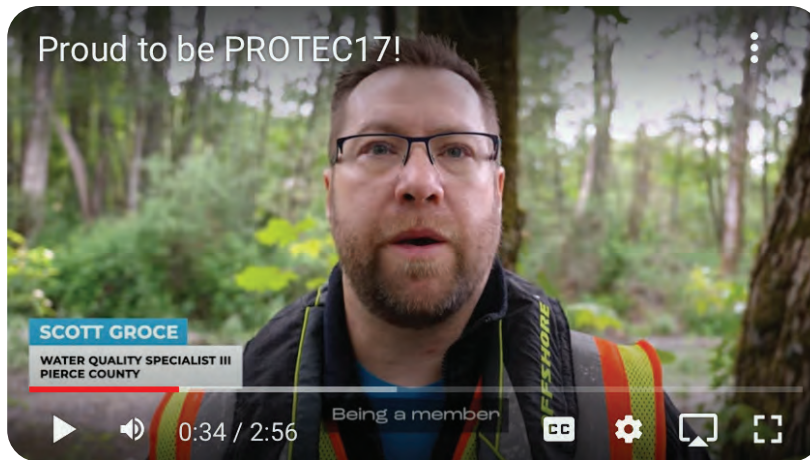
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Proud to be PROTEC17



*Have you seen our
newest video yet???*

*Thank you to the 17
members who shared
their thoughts on
public service, union
leadership, and what
they're proud of in
work and life! ♥*

Watch all of our videos from the series at:
protec17.org/proud2be