



# Local 1277

# News

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## *“Recreational” Marijuana use Legalized*

### **Proposition 64, Going into Effect on January 1, 2018, Does Not Change Bans on Drugs and Alcohol at Work!**

*By Adolfo Soto, Financial-Recording Secretary*

Beginning **January 1, 2018**, Californians over the age of 21 may legally purchase marijuana for “recreational use”. This is the result of the passage of State Proposition 64 on November 8, 2016.

***But, brothers and sisters, I am here to specifically tell and warn you in the strongest possible terms that enactment of Proposition 64 does not mean that you can—or ever should—use marijuana, or have it in your system, while on the job at any of our properties!***

***I cannot stress this enough: Marijuana will continue to be regarded as a Schedule-1 substance, like alcohol! If you are detected with it while on the job—or even on the way to work—you may be severely disciplined and most likely lose your career!***

***I kid you not here. There’s a damn good chance that you will be terminated, and lose your job and seriously jeopardize your future and that of your families.***

***And, be crystal clear on this, brothers and sisters: It is more than likely that even your Union would have difficulty in saving your job! No matter what your seniority is, no matter how well you perform your work, no matter what your classification, management absolutely has the upper hand here!***

### **You are “Public Safety Professionals”**

Federal Department of Transportation regulations remain in force, regardless of the passage of Proposition 64. ***Marijuana (and all other drugs) and alcohol are completely illegal while you are at work. ATU Local 1277 members are rightly and honorably designated as public-safety personnel, responsible for the lives and well-being of hundreds of thousands of mass-transit-dependent riders every day throughout the greater Los Angeles Metropolitan Area.***

Never forget: The fact that marijuana will be readily available is ***no excuse against severe discipline or termination.*** “Well, it’s everywhere. I’m just using it like everyone else”. **Forget it, folks!** That won’t wash. It will not save your career or family’s future!

Nor will “ignorance”. “I didn’t even know I was using it”. No way, brothers and sisters. That will not be a defense. Yes, marijuana can be rolled or cooked into a whole variety of things, ***but that will be no excuse! If you consume marijuana—much like drinking alcohol—before you report to work, you may be busted!***

**Any positive test concerning marijuana or alcohol, and you are toast, brothers and sisters! Management will be watching closely and the feds will also be watching closely!**

If you want to use marijuana recreationally at home, on your own time, that’s your business. But, please remember this: ***You could test positive for the substance for weeks after a single use! And, if you abuse marijuana or alcohol on the job that becomes everyone’s business: Management’s, your Union’s, maybe law enforcement, and certainly the people who rely on us for safe and efficient public transit.***

The legalization of recreational marijuana use is ***not*** a go-ahead for its ***misuse*** at work! And it is ***not*** a get-out-of-jail-free card if you are caught at work or on the way to your job!

***Never, never forget, brothers and sisters, that abuse of marijuana and alcohol, along with the misuse of personal cellphones on the job are most probably termination offenses, and your Union may not be able to save your careers and families’ future!***



## Organized Labor as a Piñata

### **What Do These Numbers Have in Common? 226, 75, 32...and 9**

By Doug Kurowski, Executive Board Member-at-Large

No, brothers and sisters, I am not offering up some lucky lottery numbers or ways to fill out your Keno card in Nevada. These numbers symbolize the attacks against organized labor and the unions that represent working people and families like yours. They remind us of a depressing series of previous efforts to gut union influence and deny your right to make your political voice heard, **and** a future confrontation that could really cripple organized labor.

Let's look at these anti-union numbers.

**226.** In 1998, a cabal of big business, anti-union and far-right interests put Proposition 226 on the state ballot. You may remember it. Proposition 226 (the so-called "paycheck reform") aimed at curtailing union political activity and influence by trying to let organized workers tell their union that they did not want a portion of their dues to go to political/campaign efforts.

Imagine what that would have done to labor's political clout! *It would have effectively silenced the voice of working men, women and families in California, the biggest and most influential state in the union.* Unions—that's you and me—would have had little or no say in the electing or defeating of candidates. We would have had little or no say in crafting or defeating legislation that affected us every day, at home and on the job.

Fortunately, organized labor and its political and social allies rallied, flexed their muscles and defeated that mean-spirited Proposition 226! Score one for the good guys!

**75.** In 2006, that same unholy alliance decided to spend millions of dollars to try and do the same thing again. Why not? They had unlimited funding and forced unions to spend heavily to protect their rights of free speech and political activity. It was the same bitter campaign, with the same important issues, and the same threat to organized labor as the voice of working people.

Once again, fortunately, organized labor and its allies rallied to knock down this state-wide threat! Score another one for the good guys!

**32.** They just don't give up, do they? In 2012, that same crowd crawled out from under their rocks and tried yet again to *silence* your voice! Same issues, same lies aimed at unions and working people....and the same result: We beat them again in California. Three for three, to keep your voice heard.

But now there's **9**. Wait, you ask, is that another proposition aimed at silencing working people? No, brothers and sisters, it is not—it is, in fact, something *worse*.

## **The Nine "Supremes"**

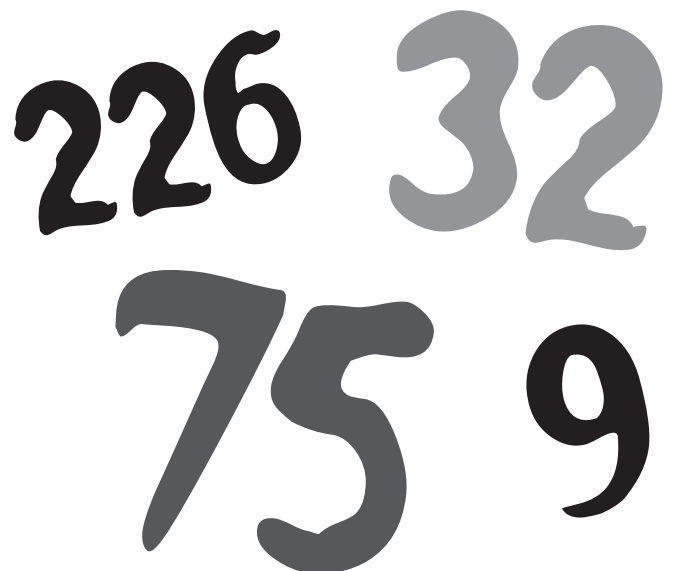
I very much hope you all read President Aguilar's revealing article in last month's paper. In it, he explained in detail why the fact that there are now *nine* justices on the U.S. Supreme Court may do to unions what those three state propositions failed to do: *Silence the voice of working people.*

Briefly, there's a case before the Supreme Court (*Janus v. AFSCME*) that would, in effect, make "right to work" laws the national standard. *It would allow public-employee union members to stop paying dues even though they would continue to benefit from union representation and collective bargaining. It would allow "free riders" to enjoy the hard work of their union Shop Stewards and officers without paying their fair share towards maintaining the union itself! It would drive a wedge into the ranks of employees at jobsites and vastly reduce the political influence and bargaining power of their unions.*

Why is the number **9** important? Because a similar case a couple of years ago was thrown out by Supreme Court on a 4-4 tie. The Court was missing a justice and therefore could not come up with a verdict. But now, that anti-union, anti-working people and families President we have has appointed a new, very conservative justice to the Court, and it is likely that the vote will be 5-4 *against* union rights, and their ability to help their members and be their political voice.

***I strongly urge every Local 1277 member—active or retired—to read Brother Aguilar's article in the October paper. It spells out in no uncertain terms what the stakes are here.***

**226. 75. 32. 9.** These numbers represent the continuing assault on the rights and dignity of working people and families, not only in California, but across our country. They represent the ill-informed, downright evil attempt by anti-union forces to make organized labor their personal piñata, something to be hit again, again and again. They've done it before, they're doing it again, and who knows how often they'll try to do it in the future?



226 32  
75 9

## **Priority #1: Your Health Life Choices that Tell the Tale**

By Errol Frazier, Vice President, Local 1277

A couple of months ago, ATU Local 1277 Executive Board members and all MTA Shop Stewards held our annual healthcare-issues meeting with our Union's medical and insurance professionals. As always, we came away with valuable information concerning a good number of health-related matters—arising from issues during the past year *and*, by crunching the figures, projected costs for the upcoming year.

Our discussions focused on our MTA-Unit members—active and retired—and their health issues, along with estimated expenses. During this *very* informative and eye-opening session, I came away with two overwhelmingly vital insights:

**1) As an individual, I must make some crucial life and health choices that will benefit both my own future and that of my family, and**

**2) As a concerned officer of our Union, I must emphasize something I write about quite often: *Good health is a blessing, a lifetime blessing, that you must never overlook!***

The presentation by our insurance/health professionals gave me important and potentially life-saving information that I am pleased to pass on, not only to our MTA-Unit members, but also to every *Local 1277 member and family*.

### **Did You Know?**

*Smokers: You are 40% more likely to suffer a worksite injury.*

**Diabetics: You have five times higher worker comp medical costs when injured.**

*Obese workers: You are two times more likely to suffer a worksite injury, with seven times higher worker comp costs, and thirteen times more days away from your job.*

There's more!

*More than two-thirds (68.3%) adults 20 and over are overweight or obese.*

**More than a third (34%) of children under 18 are overweight.**

Some 40% of the overall population are considered sedentary (they sit, they do not exercise, they do not get out enough).

**About a third (32%) of the overall population has high blood pressure.**

I give you all of the above statistical data in order to urge every Local 1277 brother, sister and family—active or retired—to **make better health-related choices!**

Here's why: During the course of a confidential conversation with one of our Union's insurance representatives, I was told—and shocked to learn!—**that all of those statistics for the country's overall population are lower than those of our membership!**

*Are you kidding?* I thought. No, he wasn't: The membership of ATU Local 1277, that's all of us, brothers and sisters, on the whole **has higher negative health markers (numbers) than the overall population of our country! Think about that!**

## **Lifestyle Choices and Lifestyle Quality**

Simply put, your health/lifestyle choices overwhelmingly determine both the *quality* and *length* of your life and that of your family.

For example: Poor healthcare/lifestyle choices are shown to result in very significant—actually alarming—risks in **deaths from cancer, stroke, heart disease and diabetes.**

There are more negative statistics I can throw around, but you get the point: We, as a society, *as a Union*, simply are *not* in good physical shape. We *talk* a lot about better health and choices, but we, too often, *do* nothing about it. Good news is, that with just a little bit of effort, we *can* right our "health ship". We can do better for ourselves, our friends and our families.

*The lifetime benefits for better fitness and a program aimed at better health choices are:*

- Decreasing depression
- **Possibly decreasing the risk of some cancers, like colon and breast cancer**
- Preventing diabetes
- **Decreasing blood pressure**
- Decreasing the onset of Alzheimer's disease and/or dementia
- **Increasing your day-to-day energy levels**
- Controlling your weight
- **Improving the quality of your sleep**
- Promoting bone-mass growth and maintenance
- **Increasing and maintaining muscular strength and endurance**
- Relieving stress

This is just a short list of the benefits of exercise, good diet and sound healthcare decisions. I would add that the benefits of physical activity (exercise) are there regardless of your weight. *Better to be overweight and fit than skinny and unfit.*

The easiest and cheapest way of getting and staying fit is walking. That's right—something you do every day, at home, on the job. Visit [kp.org/healthyliving](http://kp.org/healthyliving) and you will learn a lot. For example, *1000 steps a day* is a good program, a good start. Even better:

- 2000 steps equal a mile
- **10,000 steps, roughly five miles, and**
- 10,000 steps equal some 500 calories burned (so they do not become fat)

Federal health guidelines recommend a daily intake of 2700 calories for adult men and 2200 for adult women. You want to burn a lot of them off so that they do not become extra weight on you. What's the *easiest* to burn them off? **Walking.** It's an easy, cheap and usually enjoyable way to help get yourself fit and improve both your health and longevity.

I believe good health isn't just a priority—it is the **only priority.** I urge every Local 1277 active member, retiree and family to make good health and quality lifestyle decisions *your* #1 priority. We will all be better for it!

## The spirit of caring and giving

# Remember Less Fortunate People and Families Throughout California in their Time of Need!

By Art Aguilar - President, Local 1277

We begin this holiday season by giving thanks for what we have. We treasure our spouses, children, siblings, parents and grandparents. *Please always remember to be thankful for what you have, and never take anyone or anything for granted.*

Many of our brothers and sisters, along with their families, are beginning, or already in the middle of shopping for family and friends. You will be attending parties at the homes of family and friends, and hosting similar festivities at your house. All this is well and good, and a central part of the holiday season we enjoy so much.

**But—and this is terribly important—please pause in the midst of your celebrations and shopping and think about this:**

*We must take the time to remember those who have been hit hard—and continue to be hit hard—by our still-recovering economy and the scourge of “income inequality”, where the very rich at the top are getting richer while tens of millions of Americans in the economic middle and bottom are in dire financial straits.*

Yes, the overall economic picture—across the nation and here in California—has been improving. Unemployment is down—thanks largely to former President Obama’s sound and fair economic policies. But never forget: *When someone is out of work, his or her unemployment rate is 100%!*

And, as I write this, there are two new, negative factors that cloud the economic future for millions of people: **1) The immense, almost biblical destruction and death cause by the recent hurricanes, Harvey, Irma and Maria, and 2) The horribly regressive and anti-working people and families policies of Trump and his gang of business cronies and anti-union policy makers in Washington, D.C.**

Mother Nature is paying us back for ignoring global warming and climate change, and the clueless, out-of-control federal government is paying us back for not doing enough to elect a better candidate last November.

## Our Brothers and Sisters

Many of the unemployed continue to be fellow union brothers and sisters, or family members and friends. Too many families still are afflicted, and we all need to step up and help out those people who are economically challenged; those brothers and sisters who maybe can’t help themselves and may be too proud to ask for assistance.

*I ask every ATU Local 1277 brother, sister and family to make an effort to reach out and help others in need during the upcoming holiday season. Let’s all give generously to our favorite local charities. Many churches, community centers and local charities are collecting foods, toys and clothing. We must open our hearts and do whatever we can to help fill someone else’s holiday season with some happiness.*

**And, if you wish to look beyond California, you know that there are millions of people in Houston, Florida and throughout the Caribbean Islands who need all the help they can get! There are plenty of ways you can help these particular victims of nature.**

I call on every Local 1277 Shop Steward to please start a food/toy/clothing drive this coming holiday season. You might want work in groups in order to minimize costs, and divide your members into small teams, with some participants buying new, or donating your own, food, some toys and some clothing. *It is all about teamwork, as it is so much on the job and in life.*

If you are not sure what to buy—then purchase grocery or other-store—gift cards and donate then. Check with your tax preparer; such contributions may well be tax deductible.

## Simply Doing the Right Thing

When those families who receive gifts and assistance show their joy and gratitude, then we all know that it was simply so right that we took the time to care and help. And, brothers and sisters, even if we donate and help others, but never actually see people’s reactions or hear “thank you”, *we still know in our hearts that we did the right thing. That we got into the real spirit of the holiday season and cared about others less fortunate than we are.*

It is never too late to get involved, to care. *Doing nothing is simply not an option.* Giving and sharing make the holiday season mean all that much more to you and your families. And it teaches your children a fundamental life lesson: We are all together and we must always help each other.

*To our brothers and sisters who have lost loved ones this year; our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families during this special time. Your loved ones will live in your hearts and memories forever:*

***And—please—always remember: Do not drink and drive! Protect your families, jobs and lives! Do not become a statistic! Remember and help those less fortunate than we are!***

Together, we can—again—make a difference during this holiday season!

**Here are the upcoming Local 1277 membership meetings for November and December. Please make every attempt to attend the meeting for your unit. It’s your Union, and we need your participation at our meetings!**

<b>Tuesday, Nov 7:</b>	Los Angeles area members:
<b>Tuesday, Dec 5:</b>	L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Evening Session 5:00 p.m.
<b>Wednesday, Nov 8:</b>	Riverside area members:
<b>Wednesday, Dec 6:</b>	1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 2:00 p.m. Evening Session 6:00 p.m.
<b>Thursday, Nov 9:</b>	Palm Springs/SunLine members:
<b>Thursday, Dec 7:</b>	Cathedral City Branch Library, 33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 4:00 p.m.
<b>Thursday, Nov 9:</b>	Long Beach:
<b>Thursday, Dec 7:</b>	Machinist Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.