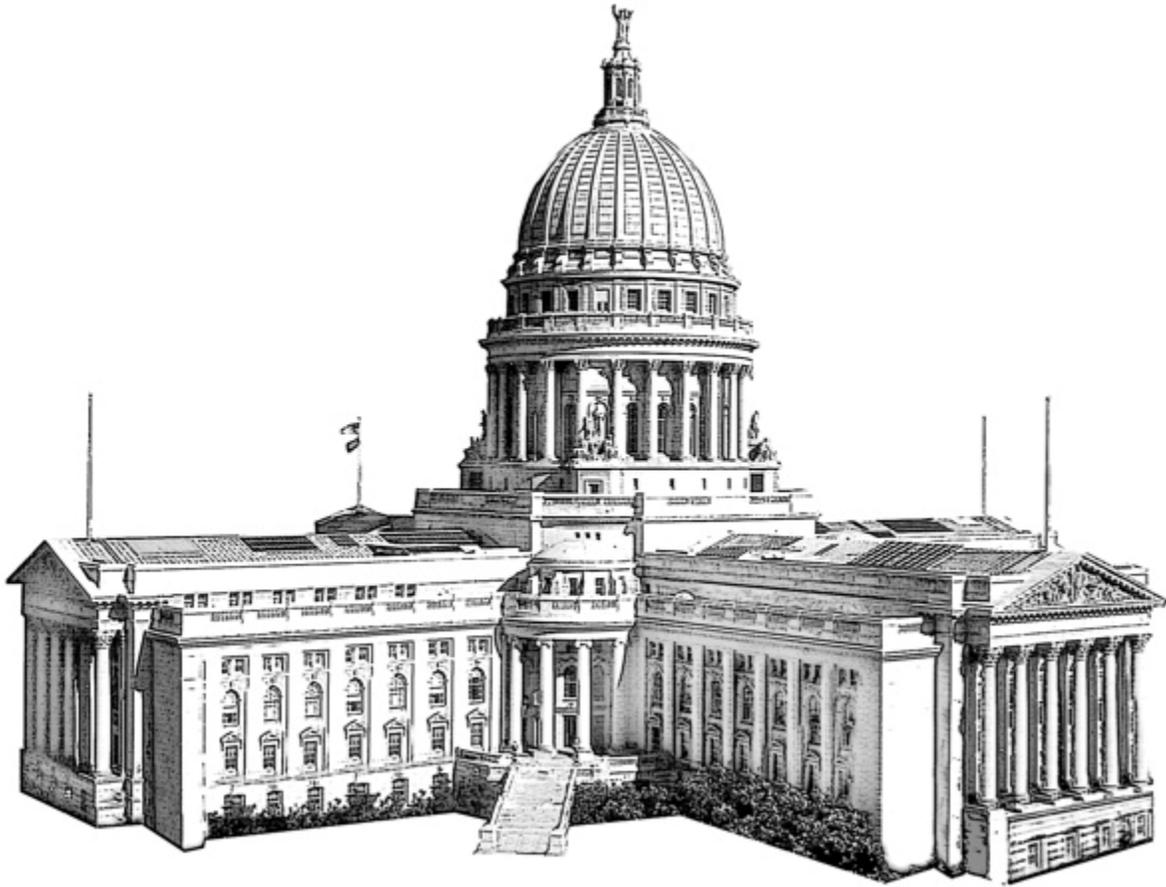


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ACE Newsletter

March 2021 - Second Edition

By Sally Drew

The ACE Board started the new year with meetings January 25 and February 22 to discuss goals and activities for 2021. ACE has continued to collaborate with the Coalition to Save Civil Service and the State Worker's Power Group to broaden our understanding of active employee experiences and union activities. ACE set goals for 2021 and reviewed Governor Evers' 2021-2023 budget proposal as it relates to state employee compensation, civil service, and union activities. The budget will be considered by the Joint Finance Committee, the Joint Committee on Employment Relations and the Legislature.

ACE Goals for 2021

ACE will continue to monitor government activities affecting civil service protections

and provide educational and promotional activities to increase awareness of its importance.

ACE will evaluate the state budget and state employee compensation plan and communicate with the Department of Personnel Management, the Joint Committee on Employment Relations and the Joint Finance Committee.

ACE will improve the website, publish newsletters and reports, and provide information through social media.

ACE will initiate activities to recruit more active state government employees, including conducting One-on-One interviews.

ACE will make public record requests to obtain data on employee overtime, employee discipline and termination, the number of job applicants for positions, and use of project, LTES, and outsourcing in lieu of hiring civil service employees with full benefits.

ACE will review application and hiring practices and the resulting quality of civil service recruitment and hiring.

ACE will review the It's Your Choice annual information and offer suggestions to Employee Trust Funds.

ACE will monitor COVID-19's impact on employee work locations and environment, including the ability to work at home.

State Worker's Power

The State Worker's Power Group is an off shoot of the Coalition of Civil Service and is made up of various union groups and other like-minded people. The group has been holding monthly meetings on various topics.

At the December ACE Meeting, the Board invited Dougal Walker, a member of the State Worker Power Group to meet with ACE to discuss state employee issues related to state employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SWP Group surveyed state employees to find out how many were working remotely and what the work-from-home experience was like

Some of the work-from-home needs described included:

- better tools and software
- better high-speed internet connections
- better desk, chair and ergonomic set up
- second or third monitor

- would like to see remote work become as common as being in the office
- tax consideration or other reimbursement for providing office space to the state for long term (heat, lights, etc.)
- more virtual meetings with colleagues

The following article from PwC outlines findings on a national level on work-from-home issues.

<https://www.pwc.com/us/en/library/covid-19/us-remote-work-survey.html>.

The State Worker Power Group also recently met with Representative Francesca Hong, Madison to talk about the Governor's Budget. Sally Drew from ACE attended the virtual meeting. Representative Hong expressed strong support for state employees and for unions.

2021-2023 Governor's State Budget Request State Employee Compensation Issues

The budget includes the following state employee compensation changes for the next biennium which the ACE Board supports and will advocate for.

- Provide \$87.5 million GPR over the biennium for a general wage adjustment for most state employees of 2% on January 1, 2022, and an additional 2% on January 1, 2023.
- Provide \$10 million GPR over the biennium for targeted market and parity wage adjustments for state employees within certain classifications to better align their wages to those paid by private and other public sector employers.
- Restore funding for the discretionary merit compensation appropriation to \$6 million GPR per year.
- Decrease the waiting period for new employees to receive the employer share of their health insurance from three months to one month.
- Institute a pay progression system for certified nursing assistances and residential care technicians within the Department of Health Services, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and the Department of Corrections.
- Increase the minimum hourly wage for state employees to \$15 per hour
- Create a new paid parental leave program for state employees for up to six

weeks.

- Fund paid sick leave for limited term employees that work for state agencies.

In addition, the budget includes a number of policies around work force organization and activities. A number of these budget bill provisions involve changing policies instituted under Act 10.

- Strengthen workers' voices in their workplace by repealing the prohibition on contracts between labor unions and employers that specify the employer may only hire unionized workers; and repeal the prohibitions on the following as a condition of obtaining or continuing employment: (a) refraining or resigning from membership or affiliation with a labor organization; (b) becoming or remaining a member of a labor organization; (c) paying dues or other amounts to a labor organization; or (d) paying a third party amounts in place of dues to a labor organization.
- Increase the state minimum wage for general workers to \$8.60 on or after the effective date of the budget bill and prior to January 1, 2023; to \$9.40 on or after January 1, 2023; to \$10.15 on or after January 1, 2024; and, finally, by the change in the consumer price index for each year thereafter. In addition, the Governor recommends the creation of a task force to study options for achieving a statewide minimum wage of \$15 per hour, which will consist of five gubernatorial appointees, and one appointee each by the Senate majority leader, Senate minority leader, speaker of the Assembly, and Assembly minority leader.
- Establish collective bargaining rights for state and local government front-line workers and their bargaining units to provide workers with the opportunity to negotiate together. Front-line workers are defined as employees with regular job duties that include interacting with members of the public or large populations, or directly involves the maintenance of public works. The Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission would settle definitional disputes.
- Eliminate the annual recertification requirement for state and local government bargaining units, as well as the provision that approval by a majority of bargaining unit members (instead of majority of the vote) is required to certify.
- Require employers to meet at least quarterly or upon change in policies affecting wages, hours, and working conditions of general employees, with certified representatives of collective bargaining units if applicable or with other representatives, in order to receive employee input.

- Reinstate domestic partnership benefits for all state and local government employee insurance programs administered by the Department of Employee Trust Funds.
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