

## NYS LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES 2008/2009

**In 2008, DC 37 had the following bills signed into law:**

Governor Spitzer approved a measure that finally established air temperature standards and **cooling requirements in NYC's school cafeteria kitchens.**

Legislation was signed by Governor Spitzer that would provide for certain NYC public employers and NYC Department or municipal commission having jurisdiction over such employers to develop a plan to replace, or otherwise substantially reduce, the number of **provisional employees** who have been employed for periods at least 24 months in a job title.

Governor Paterson protected the OTB local by the immediate state takeover of the **New York City Off Track Betting Corporation** (NYC OTB) and created new revenues for two years to stabilize the financial position of NYC OTB.

After working in coalition with the NYS AFL-CIO, a bill was signed into law that created a task force on **group self-insurance**, which addresses problems resulting from recent group self-insurer defaults. The bill: (1) strengthens regulation of group self-insurers; (2) provides short term funding to pay the immediate costs resulting from the defaults; and (3) creates a Task Force to identify potential changes to the group self-insurance program.

Governor Paterson addressed the **mortgage foreclosure crisis** in New York State by providing additional protections and foreclosure prevention opportunities for homeowners at risk of losing their homes with Chapter 472.

**9/11 WTC legislation** expanded the definition for members for a "qualifying WTC condition" as comprising a spectrum of illnesses which, under certain criteria, is presumptive evidence that the illness arose out of the rescue, recovery or cleanup operations following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

After working with the NYS AFL-CIO Nurses Task Force, **Mandatory Overtime for Nurses** was approved by the governor. This bill restricted consecutive hours of required work by nurses except in emergencies; does not prohibit a nurse from voluntarily working overtime.

Finally after more than twenty years, Governor Paterson signed a bill that made **Agency Shop fee deduction** permanent. This is a victory for the labor movement as a whole. Prior to this bill, agency shop fee authorization needed to be extended every two years.

## **Legislative Victories in 2009:**

**EMT Employees:** Provided a performance of duty disability benefit for employees of the city of New York or the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation who were injured in the performance of their duties as emergency medical technicians or advanced emergency medical technicians. These individuals may be able to be gainfully employed despite the fact they are unable to perform emergency medical technician work as a result of their injury. This bill would clarify conflicting interpretations of the law to allow emergency medical technicians and advanced emergency medical technicians to work in non-emergency medical technician employment. (Program Bill)

**Bronx Zoo:** Extends the one-day free admission policy for another three years; the Zoo will be able to maintain a viable fiscal position and provide the necessary means required to operate this world class facility. In addition, the Zoo will be able to maintain its educational programs for school children and continue to provide its patrons with one free admission day. Zoo attendance over the last three years, while the one-day free admission was in effect, has increased overall. (Program Bill)

DC 37 assisted in the **Childcare Assistance** legislation, which reduced barriers to accessing child care for low-income families by removing the requirement that parents seeking child care subsidies to first obtain a court order for child support. Easing the process for these parents produces a benefit to the parent, child, provider and the community.

DC 37 supported **Timothy's Law** with other mental health organizations, which was enacted by Chapter 748 of the Laws of 2006 and would have sunsetted on December 31, 2009. It was amended to make the law permanent. The bill did the following: (1) requires group health insurance policies to provide a minimum of 30 inpatient days and 20 outpatient visits for the treatment of mental health conditions ("30/20 benefit"); (2) requires large group health insurance policies (more than 50 employees or members) to provide coverage for adults and children diagnosed with biologically based mental illness (BBMI) and children diagnosed with serious emotional disturbances (SED) on par with coverage provided for other health conditions; and (3) requires the Insurance Department, in consultation with the Office of Mental Health, to study the effectiveness of mental health parity and report these findings.

**Safe Patient Handling Demonstrations** extended for an additional two years the demonstration program to research the effect of safe patient handling programs in health care facilities across New York State with the AFL-CIO.

A **foreclosure protection bill** that would help DC 37 homeowners by expanding existing protections for subprime borrowers and cracking down on shady mortgage rescue scams was signed into law by Governor Paterson.