



Q3 2012

FIGHTING THE ANTI-PUBLIC EMPLOYEE TSUNAMI

BY ACSS PRESIDENT ARLENE ESPINOZA

A FEW SPECIAL INTERESTS ARE TRYING TO TURN PUBLIC SENTIMENT AGAINST US. ARE **YOU** TOO TIRED TO FIGHT AGAIN?

I was talking with a colleague about ACSS' political action for the upcoming General Election, when she dropped this bomb on me:

"I just don't know if people have any strength left to fight."

Those words cut through me like a knife.

Is it true? Are California's excluded employees at the end of their ropes? Are we so exhausted from years of mistreatment by our employer—attacks on our modest, hard-earned benefits; unjustified pay cuts; unkept promises—that we are unwilling or unable to keep fighting for our careers?

Being too tired to fight is an understandable reaction. It's reasonable. It's like our "fight or flight" instinct kicking in.

It may be reasonable, but it's not *my* reaction.

And it's not the reaction of thousands of ACSS members who fight day after day against the tsunami of anti-public employee sentiment that's sweeping across our nation.

We can't just choose to resign, because we believe in the power of a nation founded on public works and we believe in modest compensation for a job well done.

However, we cannot expect to protect our basic career rights from erosion with individual action.

If we can't quit and we can't fight a tidal wave of misinformation and career attacks alone, there is only one option left:

We have to band together.

We need to join together in a grassroots political movement for state excluded employee rights. ACSS is leading that movement.

Inside this edition of ACSS Quarterly you will read an article by ACSS Board Member Reynold Roth on his recent experience as part of a group that met and interviewed candidates for the state legislature that are sympathetic to our cause. By working with a small group of other ACSS members, Reynold helped identify candidates that are most likely to fight for excluded employee rights once they take office.

Reynold's example is just one way to get involved, however.

If we're going to win this fight—and we **will** win it—we're all going to need to be involved politically.

(cont. on pg. 2)

(cont. from front cover)


Remember: Whether you can spare two minutes a week or two hours a day, you can make a difference.

Some easy things you can do to get involved politically:

- If you haven't done so already, sign up for our email alerts at www.ACSSonline.org/SUBSCRIBE
- Check the ACSS website regularly for more updates.
- Keep an eye out for email action alerts from our communications department and respond to them ASAP.
- Talk about excluded employee issues with your coworkers, friends, and family.
- Head to a regional dinner meeting to find out more about how you can get involved. Bring a cowork-

er who's never been or is considering joining ACSS. Check www.ACSSonline.org/EVENTS for upcoming meetings.

One thing is clear: We can ill afford to stand by and watch as another round of cuts decimates our livelihood.

The time to get politically involved—whether with ACSS or on your own—is now. 

ACSS President Arlene Espinoza has been an excluded employee at the DMV for more than two decades. She has led ACSS since 2009, implementing an organization-wide restructuring and driving an Excluded Employee Taskforce with Assemblymember Joan Buchanan and the Department of Personnel Administration in 2012.

MEET SACRAMENTO-AREA CHAPTER PRESIDENT AMBER SIEPMANN

BY ACSS MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR DIANE WOLFF

Over the next year, ACSS will be sitting down with the presidents of our 11 statewide chapters for some informal interviews. Look for new interviews to be added monthly on ACSSonline.org

Amber Siepmann is the president of Chapter 503, ACSS' largest chapter with over two thousand members throughout the greater Sacramento area. ACSS Membership Coordinator Diane Wolff sat down with Amber to talk about her vision for the chapter and moving to the public sector from the private.

DW: Why did you join ACSS?

AS: A friend asked me to join. I went to a chapter meeting and saw that ACSS was fighting for supervisors and managers. That they were talking about the problems that I faced on a daily basis. I kept going to meetings and got more involved and informed.

DW: You took on the role of Chapter President when [longtime ACSS leader] Fred Cherniack stepped down. Was it tough filling Fred's shoes?

AS: Fred did so much for the chapter, so I knew that it would be a challenge to maintain his programs and accomplish everything I wanted for the chapter. I had a lot of assurance and support from fellow chapter members.

DW: What are your goals for Chapter 503?

AS: Primarily, I want to expand membership and create a better forum and base for information at the chapter meetings. ACSS works because state supervisors [and managers] are calling the shots. I want to provide a forum for members to speak their mind and create solutions.



DW: What are your plans to accomplish those tasks?

AS: I have lined up a variety of speakers for upcoming chapter meetings to draw interest. For example, a speaker who specializes in legislation to help explain what is happening at the Capitol that could affect our pensions and daily work.

DW: And you recently changed from monthly membership meetings to every other month.

AS: Yes, monthly meetings seemed to be too frequent. We recognize the members are very busy and their time is limited. We're planning a survey that will help gauge what will work best for the most members. Obviously we really want good attendance but we want people to come for the right reasons, for the information and networking, and not for just a free meal. Though the meals are delicious, too!

(cont. on back cover)

IMPROVING OUR CAREERS FROM THE TOP DOWN



CHAPTER ELECTIONS 2012

Chapter presidents:

- CHAP. 502 W. Bruce Lee
- CHAP. 503 Amber Siepmann
- CHAP. 504 Linda Herrera
- CHAP. 505 Jonathan Tom
- CHAP. 507 Bill Homsany
- CHAP. 508 Evie McKenna
- CHAP. 509 Lou Flores
- CHAP. 511 Maria Suarez
- CHAP. 512 Monty Clouse
- CHAP. 513 Arlene Ryan
- CHAP. 514 Angela Appiah

VIEW THE FULL
ELECTION RESULTS @

acssonline.org

BY ACSS BOARD MEMBER REYNOLD ROTH

Prior to being involved with ACSS I was not what you would consider a politically active person. Of course, I would share my opinions with friends and family; however, I didn't feel that anything I could do would matter in the long run.


Shortly after joining the organization I attended a meeting and was invited to our annual ACSS Lobby Day. Attending a few brief meetings with state legislators along with experienced ACSS members changed my mind once and for all.

I found out that there are dedicated people in our government; people who want to do the right thing and are looking for input and partnerships. I really liked the opportunities to meet with the legislators and their staff to discuss the issues critical to our members such as pay inequity and furloughs.

So when ACSS Political Action Committee Chair Frank Ruffino approached me this year to sit in on a panel to identify state legislative candidates who would most likely work to solve excluded employee issues once they got in office, I didn't even hesitate.

The meetings with the candidates were brief and focused on a few key issues, but they allowed me to really get a feel for what motivated that person to run for office. You can learn a lot more about a candidate in person than you can from their website or from an ad.

I can't encourage you strongly enough to get involved with ACSS politically. Start by going to your regional meetings.

There is a real chance for us to improve our careers, but we all need to chip in and do our part to start that change at the top—by putting candidates who will support us in office. 

ACSSQUARTERLY





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AMBER
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ACSS MEMBERS SAVE **BIG**
ON APPLE PRODUCTS.

Log on, Start saving
calcsea.org/Benefits

(cont. from pg. 2)

DW: What sort of challenges do you think ACSS will face in the next few years?

AS: Loss of membership, I think will be a big one. Future state employees coming straight out of college who want to plan for their future won't find working for the state as a stable future. When you reach the supervisor/management level, with salary cuts and increased workloads, there isn't much incentive. Others may prefer to retire because of all of the changes in state service with not much security. That's why it's so important for current supervisors and managers to fight against unfair pension cuts and loss of employee rights and things that have plagued the private sector for years that are now headed to the public sector.

DW: You started in the private sector, right?

AS: That's right. I had worked my entire career in private industry until Congress killed the project I was working on with Aerojet in 1993. My first job with the

state was at Soledad State Prison, behind the wall, working in the medical department as a Health Care Cost and Utilization Analyst.

DW: Was transitioning to Corrections from the private sector a challenge?

AS: Walking the main line on my very first day working for the state... is a day I will never forget. I clearly and vividly remember that first day. I worked at Soledad for two years then I went to Mule Creek for two more years, then I went to CDCR headquarters for a bit, then to the Board of Prison Terms, then did some things with CDCR Business Services and now I'm a Staff Services Manager I here at the Division of the State Architect in DGS.

DW: What do you do for fun?

AS: I read, golf, and spend time with my two beautiful grandchildren. 