

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 101

Everything You Wanted to Know About Union Negotiations

February 23, 2026

UNITED WE BARGAIN
DIVIDED WE BEG



What is Collective Bargaining?

“Collective bargaining is the process in which working people, through their unions, negotiate contracts with their employers to determine their terms of employment, including pay, benefits, hours, leave, job health and safety policies, ways to balance work and family, and more. Collective bargaining is a way to solve workplace problems. It is also the best means for raising wages in America. Indeed, through collective bargaining, working people in unions have higher wages, better benefits and safer workplaces.’ (AFL-CIO)



Together, we win more than we would separately!

Its Only Fair We Get A Raise & Safe Staffing. Why Doesn't Management Just Do It?

If Phoenix wanted to give you a raise, they would have already.

Possible Medicare/Medicaid Cuts.

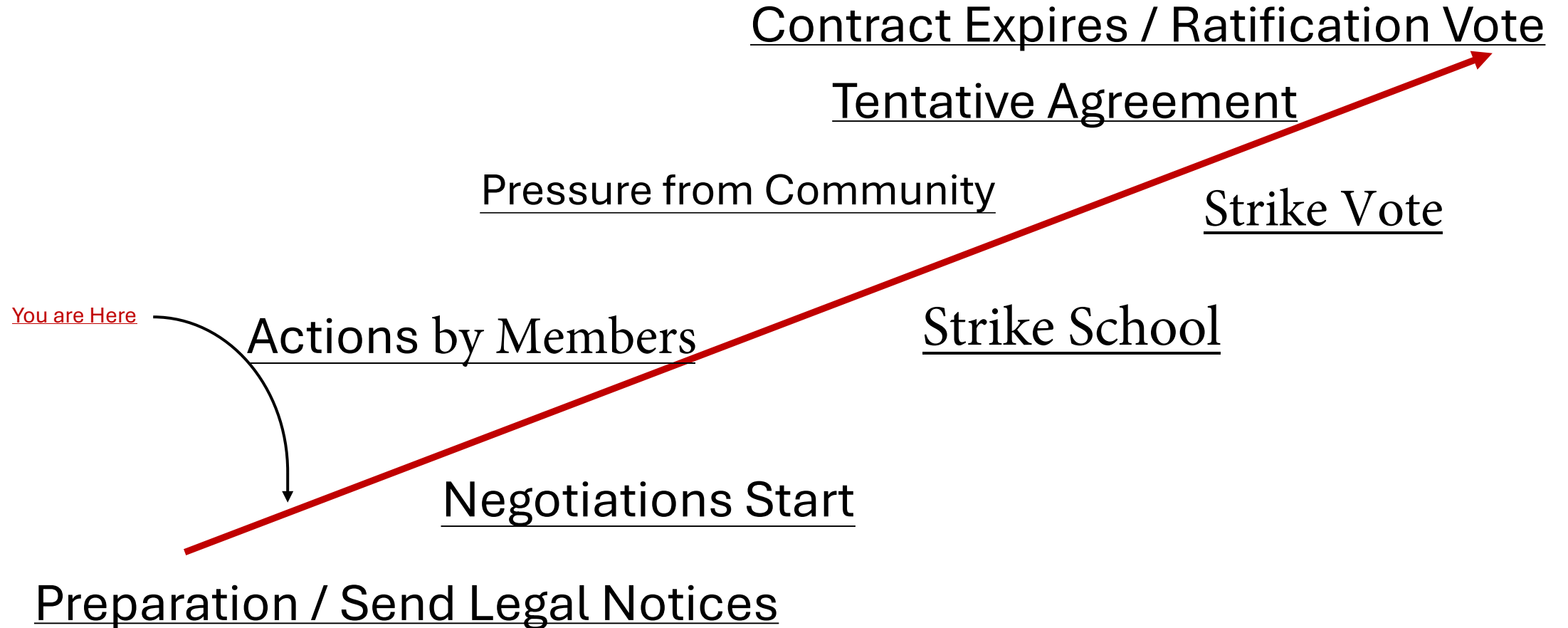
We have to fight for what we deserve!

Know Your Rights:

- Forming, or attempting to form, a union in your workplace;
- Joining a union;
- Assisting a union in organizing your fellow employees;
- Refusing to do any or all of these things;
- To be fairly represented by your union;
- A few examples of protected concerted activities are:
 - Two or more employees addressing their employer about improving their pay.
 - Two or more employees discussing work-related issues beyond pay, such as safety concerns, with each other.
 - An employee speaking to an employer on behalf of one or more co-workers about improving workplace conditions
 - Wearing union insignia (buttons, stickers, etc), t-shirts, badge holders, etc.
 - Signing petitions, leafletting, and speaking out about your working conditions.
 - Talking about union issues on work time - if you're allowed to talk about other non-work things (if you can talk about the game, you can talk about your Union).

<https://www.nlr.gov/about-nlr/rights-we-protect/your-rights/employee-rights>

What is the Process?



What to Expect:

- **Controversy:** Conflict is always an aspect of Bargaining, even in the most peaceful, cordial negotiations. We need to stay focused, disciplined, and not listen to rumors.
- **“Boss Tactics”** - Talking points and strategies that will be used against you:
 - **Third-partying:** Attempts to make you believe ‘The Union’ is an unaccountable organization that doesn’t have your best interests at heart. **Remember: YOU are the Union - as a member; YOU have a say and a vote.**
 - **Cynicism:** Attempts to make you believe nothing can ever change – so why bother doing anything. **Know: YOU have the power.**
 - **Excuses:** “A raise isn’t in the budget, etc.” **If Phoenix wants to recruit and retain quality Nurses, the budget will need to change (Also, your Unit Manager/DON probably isn’t in negotiations – they have no idea what they’re talking about).**
 - **Attempts at Side Deals:** Managers promising better (or special) treatment if ‘the Union’ Settles for less. **Stand Strong: United We Stand, Divided we Fall (Also, side deals are unlawful).**

“The Union is being unreasonable – there’s no money in the budget for raises this year and nothing can change that. Tell your president to settle and I’ll see if I can get you a bonus”

- **Progress:** There is no perfect contract – but every year and every campaign, we make forward progress – so long as we’re strong and united.

Do I Get a Say?

YES!

- **Open Bargaining**
- **Ratification Votes**
- **Union Meetings**
- **Surveys**
- **Actions**
- **Talking to your coworkers**



What Can I Do?

- 1) **Fill out the survey** – It's important for your union leaders to know your priorities! ✓
- 2) **Take Action!** Over the next several months, you'll be asked to take part in various Union activities (petitions, button days, meetings, leafletting, etc). This is to put pressure on management and show we're STRONG and UNITED!
- 3) **Show Up!** This is important to show Management they're negotiating with everyone – not just 'the Union.'
- 4) **Talk to Your Coworkers!**

What Is Code Red?



CODE RED
Understaffing = Patient Care Crisis 

Code Red is our union's national campaign for Safe Staffing – it uses collective bargaining, political lobbying, and community action to win staffing improvements. Safe staffing is a priority for healthcare workers across the country!

Union members across the Country have won enforceable staffing commitments through their union contracts – in 2025, all 9 contracts HPAE members negotiated have included major staffing improvements! Our first contract negotiation in 2026 - at United Methodist Communities - Nurses won 4.5% minimum raises this year and important staffing and safety improvements.

<https://www.aft.org/CodeRed>