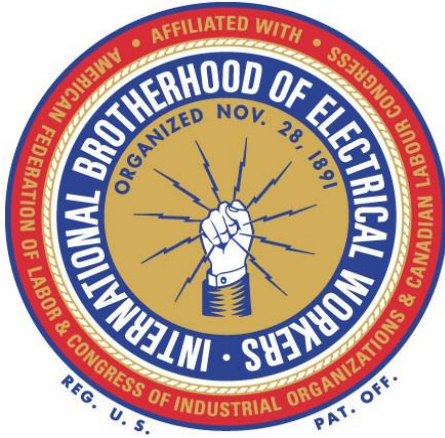


# TAILGATING

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**IBEW LOCAL 204**

## IBEW SPARQ

### Now Available

*By Dave George – Business Manager*

Everyone knows what the acronym IBEW represents, but not everyone may be familiar with what SPARQ stands for. SPARQ is also an acronym, which represents the core values of the IBEW Code of Excellence (COE). The first letter of each of the COE core values of **S**afety, **P**rofessionalism, **A**ccountability, **R**elationships, and **Q**uality spell out SPARQ, which is pronounced spark.

The Resolution – “Renewed Commitment to the Code of Excellence” was passed at the 39<sup>th</sup> IBEW International Convention in 2016. This resolution affirms a renewed commitment to the core values of the COE. As a part of this renewed commitment, the IBEW has recently made available to its members a quarterly Code of Excellence newsletter called *The IBEW SPARQ*.

This publication is available to all members and can be found at the IBEW website at [www.ibew.org](http://www.ibew.org). Once you are at the IBEW website, just click on “COE-SPARQ” at the top of the page, and then you can click on any of the various links that will take you to the newsletters for any branch of the IBEW, such as “Utility”, “Telecommunications”, etc. You can download any or all of these newsletters for your viewing, or just read them online.

This is a quarterly online publication, the first of which was the July 2017 edition, and is available now via the IBEW website. Each edition will focus on one of the core values of the Code of Excellence, which will be highlighted on the cover page. There will also be a section that is specific to each branch of the IBEW, and another section that will be for local unions to share their Code of Excellence success stories.

The IBEW Code of Excellence and its core values are what sets the IBEW and Local 204 apart from other organizations. Many years ago, the IBEW Local 204 Executive Board adopted the Code of Excellence, and expects and believes that our members live up to its core values by living them at all times as a testament as to who we are as IBEW Local 204 members.

Work safe with **Safety** as your number one priority and don't compromise it for anything; be **Professional** in the way you conduct yourself and perform your work; be **Accountable** for your work and actions by working efficiently, being prompt and on time; develop healthy and productive **Relationships** with your co-workers, customers and employers that set you apart from others; and produce **Quality** work that you can be proud of and that shows you are the best that there is in your line of work.

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# December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Union Meeting Council Bluffs 6:30 PM	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Union Meeting Washington 6:30 PM	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Union Meeting Oelwein 6:30 PM	21 First Day of Winter	22	23
24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28 Executive Board	29	30
31 New Year's Eve						

# January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i> <b>New Years Day</b>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> <b>Union Meeting Creston 6:30 PM</b>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> <b>Union Meeting Osceola 6:30 PM</b>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i>	<i>15</i> <b>Martin Luther King Day</b>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> <b>Union Meeting Cedar Rapids 6:30 PM</b>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i> <b>Executive Board</b>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>			

# The Republican Party's Out Right Attack on UNIONS

*By Matthew Fischer*

Let me start out by saying, I HATE POLITICS. With that said, politics is a determining factor in all of our lives. I would prefer that all politicians looked at the big picture and made decisions based on what's in the best interest of everyone involved. If like me, you have chosen to work for someone, then you are part of labor in this country. Labor Unions were formed to give those who work for someone else a voice, because we all know there are those who look at employees like a tool, if its broke throw it in the trash and get another one. The following information is what's on the political horizon nationally and what did happen in Iowa in 2017.

## National

HR-785 National Right-to-Work Act, is a bill sponsored by Representative Steve King of Iowa, "look it up". Unions are the only way for employees to have a legal binding voice in their work place, period. The Republican parties plan is to bankrupt Unions. If Unions have no money they will not be able to negotiate the mandatory subjects of bargaining or provide a voice in the workplace for the working men and women in this country. If this happens Unions will go away and the downward spiral of wages and benefits for working people will start. Many people are misled by the term "Right-to-Work" it does not guarantee you a job as many believe, it gives you the right to belong or not, to a Labor Union. Iowa has been a "Right-to-Work" state since 1947.

## Iowa

Anyone in the Labor Movement who woke up on November 9, 2016, and turned on the television, read a newspaper, or looked at a news outlet on the internet, probably realized that the outcome of the election in Iowa the day before was not good news. Gone was the Democrats' slim majority in the Iowa Senate that protected the Labor Movement from the potential of drastic changes to laws protecting workers in Iowa. Instead, the Labor Movement was left with Republican Governor for Life, Branstad, a Republican majority in the Iowa House, and a new Republican majority in the Iowa Senate. Those who work for someone else and voted for "change" had no idea what was in their future. Beginning in January and early February, the Republicans and Governor Branstad began dismantling the protections for Iowa's workers.

For the most part, the Republican majority left no stone unturned. The Republican majority gutted Chapter 20, it eliminated home rule, which had given many workers raises through local minimum wage increases, and it took aim at letting employers off the hook for workers' compensation injuries.

It is important to note the following. Chapter 20 was enacted in 1974. It was largely enacted on a bipartisan basis, and at the urging of members of organized labor. And, a Republican Governor, Robert Ray, signed it into law. Like most pieces of legislation, Chapter 20 represented a compromise. Chapter 20 did not go as far as granting rights as expansive as under the National Labor Relations Act. It exempted retirement systems from collective bargaining. And, it made other topics permissive subjects of bargaining. The impetus for the enactment of Chapter 20 was primarily due to two things. One was a 1970 Iowa Supreme Court decision that found that the Board of Regents could bargain with a union regarding terms and conditions of employment. Second, due to public employee strikes that were taking place, other states were enacting state public bargaining laws, which prohibited public employee strikes. Simply put, it was a bargained for exchange.

If we fast forward forty years, the 2017 Republican majority simply forgot, or more likely, simply did not care about the bargained for exchange it made when Chapter 20 was initially passed. The bill to gut Chapter 20 was introduced into the Iowa House on Tuesday, February 7, 2017. On Monday, February 13, 2017, a public hearing was held at the Capital. During the public hearing, the overwhelming majority of public comments opposed the proposed changes. Nonetheless, on Friday, February 17, 2017, after passage by both the Iowa House and Senate, "on a party line vote" Governor Branstad, who as a legislator in the early 1970s opposed the compromise bill, signed into law HF 291, which was effective upon enactment and gutted Chapter 20.

*(Continued on page 5)*

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In enacting HF 291, the Republican majority stripped the bargaining rights away from the vast majority of public sector employees in Iowa. The Republican majority was brazen enough to take such action despite the fact that there was NO BASIS in fact to do so. There were no studies conducted showing a need for change in the law. There were no scandals necessitating the change. There were no public employer bankruptcies as a result of the law. Put simply, there was and is no public policy reason for taking such action. Rather, the enactment of HF 291 was political retribution for labor's support of candidates, who are usually affiliated with the Democratic Party, who support working people's issues. Its goal was and is to silence the labor movement — to lie to rest the primary voice for public sector employees in Iowa.

The nightmare that was only a possibility on Tuesday, November 8, 2016 is now a reality. Absent takeover of Terrace Hill and the Iowa Legislature in November 2018, the original compromise may be gone for a significant period of time, if not forever. To remedy the situation, the Labor Movement must come together. It must support and work vigorously for candidates who do not only support repeal of HF 291, but also who will work to make the protections and rights afforded to public employees, and all other employees, prior to this past Legislative session stronger. It should not be enough to return to the status quo as it existed prior to the 2017 Legislative session. Put simply, we must come together and fight like hell not only to get back what has been lost but to move forward. The Labor Movement's survival and the survival of the middle class in Iowa depend upon it.

HF 291 made significant changes to Chapter 20 and outlawed several topics of bargaining that previously existed. It created two classes of public employees and curtailed mandatory bargaining rights for the vast majority of public employees. Payroll deductions for Union dues and political action committees were also outlawed. And, it contained a requirement that labor organizations undergo a recertification/retention election upon the expiration of a contract or at least every five years.

In an effort to limit public outcry from the sweeping changes contained in HF 291, the Legislature exempted certain changes from bargaining units containing thirty percent or more public safety employees. In doing so, HF 291 created two types of bargaining units: (1) a non-public safety bargaining unit and (2) a public safety bargaining unit. Public safety bargaining units are made up of bargaining units comprised of thirty percent or more public safety employees, such as law enforcement officers, firefighters, conservation officers, peace officers and others as defined by the Act.

Notably, the definition provided for in Section 20.3(10A) excludes many other public employees who perform public safety functions such as nurses, jailors, bailiffs and 911 dispatchers. Public safety employees, as defined under Section 20.3(10A), are entitled to a significant number of bargaining rights that are no longer afforded to non-public safety bargaining units, they include the following mandatory subjects;

Wages, hours, vacations, insurance, holidays, leaves of absence, shift differentials, overtime compensation, supplemental pay, seniority, transfer procedures, job classifications, health and safety matters, evaluation procedures, procedures for staff reduction, in-service training, grievance procedures for resolving any questions arising under the agreement, and other matters mutually agreed upon. Iowa Code Section 20.9(1).

Of all of the mandatory subjects of bargaining listed above for public safety bargaining units, only base wages are mandatory subjects of bargaining for non-public safety bargaining units.

Non-public safety bargaining units comprise everyone else and employers are only required to negotiate over base wages.

There are currently lawsuits in the court system of Iowa claiming the creation of two classes of people under HF 291 is a violation of existing Iowa law.

It would take another 20 pages to cover all of the changes and how they would affect each of the six bargaining units that IBEW Local 204 represents under Chapter 20 of the Iowa Code.

*(Continued on page 8)*

# RENEW and IBEW Local 204

A few weeks ago, I and three other young workers who are members of IBEW Local 204 were given the opportunity to attend the IBEW RENEW Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was thought that this conference would be beneficial for the four of us, as it stands for: **Reach out and Engage Next-gen Electrical Workers**. All of the attendees were the age of 35 years old or younger. This conference was based on the idea that young brothers and sisters need to become more involved so that the labor movement is still around for the next generation.

We started the conference out hearing from International President Stephenson giving encouraging words that the IBEW is strong and moving forward in today's day and age. After President Stephenson gave his remarks, we heard from many different brothers and sisters from around the United States and Canada about how their RENEW groups were becoming active in the community. We attended workshops on how to grow union membership, IBEW in green energy, union politics, and stewards training.

We were able to connect with many other locals from across North America and learn several different ideas about forming our own RENEW chapter. The majority of the brothers and sisters we talked to were involved in things like golf tournaments, clothing and food drives, and arranging their local's picnics. There are many different ideas out there, and we are excited to get things started. Local 204 has decided to look into forming a RENEW chapter. This is something that will require young and new union people to become more active, so if you are interested in participating, we are in search of willing people to help in all different locations across the state. Please contact Tyler Norgart, Jason Brown, Mitch Kreykes or Rodney Ostermeier if you are interested or have further ideas.

In closing, we thank you brothers and sisters for the opportunity to help better OUR union. It was a once in a lifetime experience, and we gained an ample amount of knowledge that will help us progress forward together.

In solidarity,  
Tyler Norgart



Westin Fink, a Substation Electrician Foreman with Alliant Energy in Mason City, is presented with a Local 204 25-year watch by Assistant Business Manager Matt Fischer.



Assistant Business Manager Matt Fischer awards Dale Maroo a gold watch for his 25 years as a Local 204 member. Dale is an Electric Meter Technician for Alliant Energy in Mason City.





At the Burlington Local 204 Union Meeting, members Cindy Brueck (upper left), Jeff Denz (upper right), Bryan Humphrey (lower left) and John Modrell (lower right) received their 25-year watches in recognition of 25 continuous years as Local 204 members. All of these members are employed by Alliant Energy in Burlington.



## Alta Aurelia Warriors Boosters Golf Outing

The Alta Aurelia Warriors Golf Tournament was held on Sunday, September 17, 2017, at the Alta Golf Course in Alta, Iowa.

This golf tournament was a fund raiser that was put on by the Alta Aurelia Boosters to raise money for Warrior Athletics. IBEW Local 204 was a proud sponsor of this event.

Standing next to the IBEW Local 204 Hole Sponsor sign are booster club members (from left to right) Shawna Hilsabeck, Chad Hilsabeck, Shannon Strand and Dave Strand.

Chad is a Local 204 member who is a Gas Mechanic Welder for Alliant Energy in Storm Lake, Iowa.



Scott Case, Gas Department Foreman at Alliant Energy in Marshalltown, receives his 25-Year watch at a recent Marshalltown Union Meeting from Business Manager Dave George.



Assistant Business Manager Matt Fischer presents Janet Gales with her IBEW Local 204 gold retirement watch. Janet was a Resource Coordinator at Alliant Energy's Distribution Dispatch Center.

# TAILGATING

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*(Continued from page 5)*

My point that I want to get across to everyone is, that if you work for someone else, they may own or manage the business, but you as an employee have rights under Federal law. Some employees still have most of the rights under Chapter 20 and some do not, because one political party decided to take those rights away.

How you vote is up to you, but if you want to continue to have a Union represented voice in your work place, then you may want to start looking at who you are voting for a bit closer before filling in the box on the ballot.

For Labor in the State of Iowa, November of 2018 will be a very important election. It will decide the Governor and several Iowa Senate and House of Representative seats.

The next item on the Republican controlled state government list is to modify or discontinue IPERS, the defined benefit pension plan for City, County and State employees. This will be a priority in the 2018 session of the Iowa State Legislature. It will be in Labor's best interest to let your elected officials know how you feel about this, as it will eventually affect everyone whether you are covered by IPERS or not.