Checklist for Choosing Issues

Strong unions are built when leaders mobilize members to take collective action to solve workplace problems.

But, not all workplace problems are ideal for mobilizing members. To be a good workplace problem to involve and energize members, the problem should:

* Be widely felt – affects a large number of people.
* Be deeply felt – people have strong feelings about the problem.
* Be easy to understand.
* Be non-divisive – avoid issues that divide the membership, and those that might divide us from the clients or public we serve.
* Have a clear, easily understood solution – otherwise known as an “ask.”
* Be winnable – members should believe there is a good chance of winning – ideally, in a short period of time – or that there is a good strategy to win.
* Build leadership and ownership – there should be many roles for members to play and many ways to be involved.
* Give members a sense of their power – developing and carrying out a successful strategy builds confidence and belief in the union.
* Be worthwhile and result in real improvement in members’ lives – it is important to believe in the fight and see positive change as a result.
* Alter the power relationship – having active members changes the “balance of power” in the workplace.