

CREA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS

Greetings Bargaining Unit Employees (BUEs),

I hope you and your loved ones are well.

On October 31, 2019, I took the oath to lead CREA as the President. I had hoped to mark my anniversary with you in person at our annual meeting but alas, COVID-19 had other plans! For those of you who have personally experienced illness or loss in this past year, I extend my deepest sympathies. I thank each and every one of you for rolling with the punches and rising to the challenge of balancing caretaking, parenting and work. CREA has worked hard to ease this juggling act by successfully working with management to:

- Extend working hours and enable flexible work schedules;
- Increase the number of earnable credit hours; and
- Provide administrative leave for caretaking duties.



These supportive policies have enabled us to continue providing Congress outstanding service. What a year we've had! Most of CRS has been teleworking full-time for more than seven months and we are operating stronger than ever! We have increased the number of products we published and updated and deepened our engagement with Congress, as evidenced by greater numbers of attendees at our seminars.

CREA thanks management for their cooperation in creating supportive workplace policies for CRS staff during this time.

During my acceptance speech, I outlined the priorities for my term. One of my stated priorities was to deepen engagement with BUEs. The [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#), which governs engagement between CREA and the Library/CRS, permits CREA to maintain a newsletter. Although we have the right to do so, CREA has not published a newsletter in many years as it is very difficult to balance our congressional and union duties. Congressional requests on the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the workload for many CREA officers, while other union work has kept us busy. In addition to successfully advocating for flexible working conditions during this time, CREA has also:

- Averted proposals to erode worker protections, including one that would have authorized management to separate employees within 30 days;
- Worked to improve operations within the American Law Division (ALD); and
- Advocated for strengthening implementation of anti-harassment policies, including having worked with the Library to hold two trainings for all CRS staff on [LCD 9-120.1, Anti-Harassment and Retaliation Policy](#).

A hearty thanks to Governors Tilly Finnegan and Catherine Able-Thomas for continuously pushing CREA to communicate its work to its membership. Thanks to their persistence and a dedicated team of volunteers, I am thrilled to announce that CREA will relaunch its newsletter in November 2020! The newsletter will focus on

CREA's efforts to respond to the persistent and evolving issues raised by BUEs, as well as providing greater context to these concerns. So stay tuned.

While we aim to be as transparent as possible, we will not publish details about active grievances, in order to preserve the integrity of the negotiation process. We also prioritize confidentiality of our membership and will never publicly share information on personnel matters.

In my second year, my team and I will continue to work with management to address a number of issues you have raised to CREA, including:

- Unclear standards for earning a promotion, performance award, and other incentives;
- Insufficient work flexibility and staff development opportunities;
- Trainings that are incongruous with current or desired work; and
- Declining diversity.

Creating an environment wherein each and every one of you feels safe, heard, recognized and valued remains of utmost priority. CREA is aware that many of the above issues were raised at the most recent all-staff meeting and that many of you have expressed frustration about their persistence. CREA will continue to fight hard to resolve these matters, and will keep you abreast on our progress through the newsletters.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President. Union work really is team work. I want to take this time to offer my deepest gratitude to the officers, governors and stewards who work tirelessly behind the scenes with hardly any recognition. Thank you for your dedication and sacrifice. I am because we are. Please do not hesitate to let me or any other CREA officer, steward, or governor know how we can serve you. If you are uncertain of who to contact, send us an email at CREA@crs.loc.gov.

Be well,

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P.S. Don't forget to vote!

~Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced~ James Baldwin