

The Magazine of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO



Be Union. Get the Benefit!

Better pay, better benefits and...
happiness!

Remaking Our Union. Page 12

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Win a Prize.

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Why a Union Makes Us Happy

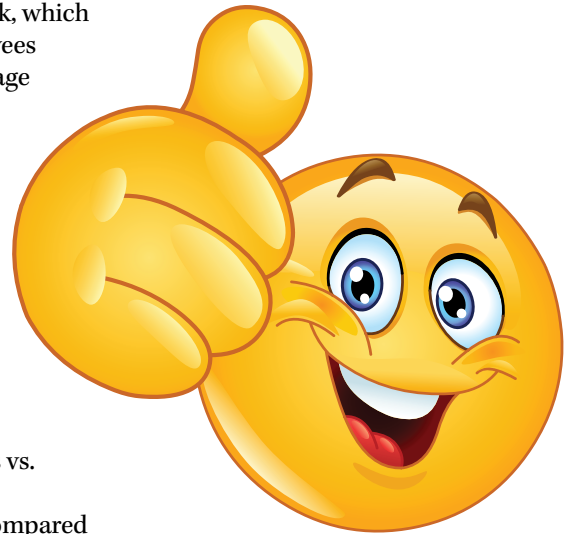
Because we are members of AFSCME, we have a voice at work, which translates into better pay and benefits than those of employees without a union. That makes us happier. This union advantage is well worth the cost of union dues, which explains why some 132,000 nonmembers and agency fee payers signed up to become full-fledged AFSCME members last year.

Union members earned an average of \$207 more per week than nonunion workers in 2014, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Other reasons to be happy we've got a union:

- Eighty-five percent of union members have health insurance, compared with only 54 percent of nonunion workers.
- Eighty-eight percent of union members have retirement plans, compared with only 48 percent of nonunion workers.
- When it comes to guaranteed, defined-benefit pensions, the numbers are even more stark — 77 percent of union members vs. 17 percent for nonunion.
- Eighty-four percent of union members have paid sick leave, compared with only 62 percent of nonunion workers.

Having a voice at work means your job is more secure, and AFSCME's got your back in grievances and arbitrations. Your workplace is safer because your union won't let employers cut corners or ignore safety regulations.

Faced with major political and legal challenges this year, AFSCME will be making the strongest case for unions and public service (see story, Page 12). But our best advocates are members like you, who can proudly attest to the advantages of being an AFSCME member. Let's stand up for ourselves!



On the cover: Don Hall, Washington Federation of State Employees Council 28, Local 1466, is a park ranger at Wenatchee Confluence State Park.

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We don't go into public service to become movie stars, but our Local 1624 sisters and brothers did just that — by turning their everyday trade into spectacular art.

In January, PBS aired *Trash Dance*, which followed members of the AFSCME local — sanitation workers in Austin, Texas. They worked with a choreographer to turn waste collection into a stunning public performance.

For more details and a copy of the award-winning movie, visit trashdancemovie.com



Win a *Free* T-shirt or Hoodie

One of the easiest things you can do today to make sure you're in touch with your union: Submit your personal email address and you'll be automatically entered to win one of AFSCME's most popular merchandise items.

Visit: AFSCME.org/email-prize



If You're Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands

A recent study published in *The New York Times* showed union workers

are happier than their nonunion counterparts.

Check out our video at: AFSCME.org/happy

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Email us at  works@afscme.org

Update your  info at my.afscme.org



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Raising Our Voices Together, Shaping Our Future



“Because we are public service workers we have a stake in what happens to our communities and our nation.”

The start of a new year always brings the possibility for change and renewal. As 2015 gets underway, there is a special urgency to our efforts to grow and reinvigorate our union.

Change is the only constant in life, and AFSCME has never shied away from adjusting and adapting to change. For the most part, throughout our history, we have led the charge for change. Now, with enormous challenges on the horizon, your union is getting ahead of events — changing so that you can win, in your workplace and in your community.

The truth is that 2015 will be a tough year for public service workers and our families. We are facing very serious threats because more legislators and employers than ever — and even some federal judges — want to steal our pensions, break our contracts, dismantle our union and take away our rights to negotiate our pay, benefits and conditions of work.

Tremendous Difficulty

All of that occurs at a time of hardship for many working people.

Although the economy is recovering, the gains have largely benefited those at the very top and not

those in the middle or at the bottom. Workers struggle to make ends meet with wages that haven't increased much in decades, our tax system gives billionaires breaks that the rest of us end up paying for, and cuts in public services hurt people who are already hurting.

Increasingly, people are recognizing the value of unions in creating an economy that works for everybody. “There is a direct link throughout American history between the strength of the middle class and the vitality of the labor movement,” Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez said in January. “When unions are strong, working families thrive, with wages and productivity rising in tandem. But when the percentage of people represented by unions is low, there is downward pressure on wages and the middle class takes it on the chin.”

As President Obama said in the State of the Union address, “We still need laws that strengthen rather than weaken unions and give American workers a voice.”

You Can Do a Lot

You may be thinking, “Sure, the President is right. But I'm just one person. What can I possibly do as one

person to make my union stronger?” You can do a lot if you speak up. An activist is simply someone who wants to make a positive change. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Because we are public service workers, we have a stake in what happens in our communities and our nation. And because we are union members, we have a power that many other workers don't have: the power to come together to fight for what we value.

Maybe legislators in your state want to put your retirement security in the hands of venture capitalists who will gamble with your hard-earned savings.

Maybe your contract is up soon and some of the hard-won benefits that were negotiated years ago may be taken away.

Maybe the governor is threatening more furlough days, but your family's finances haven't yet recovered from the last go-around.

Raise Our Voices

On these issues and many, many others, we have much to gain by raising our voices together. That's

what a union does. Since our union was born in 1932, we have existed not only to improve the lives of AFSCME members, but to uphold the principle of fairness for which our nation stands. We have made a difference because we have acted together.

Through bargaining at the negotiating table, we've won higher wages and better benefits. We've won retirement security that has ensured that we won't spend our golden years in poverty. We've gained opportunities for training and development that help us to advance on the job.

But what we achieved goes well beyond our union. We've kept Social Security safe and led the fight to enact the Family and Medical Leave Act. We've championed affordable health care. We've campaigned for candidates who support public services.

Unions Work

Unions work. *Our* union works to fight for the idea that all Americans should be able to pay their bills, send their children to college, and retire with dignity, not debt.

Let's resolve to stick together. It's critical that you connect with us. We intend to provide better and more

frequent information that is relevant to the concerns you have and useful for the challenges you're facing.

You can go to [AFSCME.org/](https://www.afscme.org/) **email-prize** and update your information so that we know how to reach you. Your email address is the most important link between you and your union sisters and brothers. You can also connect by phone (text) and social media.

A well-informed membership is an empowered membership — empowered to assert our interests effectively, to defend public services and to improve the financial security of our families. With your help, AFSCME is changing — not because we fear the future, but because we embrace it.



Lee Saunders
President

Get Involved and Change Your Life



“The future of this union does not just depend on President Saunders and me. It does not just depend on the presidents and other leaders of your local unions. It depends on you.”

There is no doubt that our union works for the betterment of AFSCME members and of workers who don't have the benefit of coming together through a union. When we speak out for basic fairness and decency in the workplace and at all levels of our society, we are giving voice to the frustrations and hopes of tens of millions of everyday people across our nation.

That's who our union is and what we do on a larger scale. But let me get personal: Being a full-fledged member of AFSCME can change your life. It changed mine.

A New World

I was a home care provider in San Diego, and that meant I also became a member of United Domestic Workers (UDW). For many years I was a member of the union, but I was not *involved* in our union.

Then one day, an AFSCME organizer knocked on my door. A new world opened to me. I'd never realized how many women and men were like me. And I'd never before understood the value of our union and solidarity.

I became a volunteer member organizer and activist with UDW. I knocked on more doors than I can count. I became politically active and met with lawmakers in our state about policies that affected home care clients and providers. The more involved I got, the more I understood that I had something important to give. And I

also realized that the more I gave and the more I encouraged others to get involved, the better my family's circumstances became — because together, we were able to improve our pay, benefits and other working conditions.

It Takes All of Us

Fast-forward to today. Unprecedented challenges confront us, from legislators who want to chip away at our bargaining rights, to groups that are funding court cases aimed at completely dismantling our union. It will take all of us together — all of us as fully engaged members — to fight back and win.

We have a plan, called the Power to Win 2015 plan, and a vision for meeting these challenges. But it will not succeed without all of our voices and ideas — and our power. The future of this union does not just depend on President Saunders and me. It does not just depend on the presidents and other leaders of your local unions. It depends on *you*.

Much as I had my first opportunity years ago, when that AFSCME organizer came knocking on my door to talk about the value of our union, this is your chance to get in where you fit in: AFSCME. I'm going to be knocking on doors; will you answer?

Laura Reyes
Secretary-Treasurer



We Make a Difference

Photography by Ron Trinka

Responding to our challenge to “Show us your 24/7,” AFSCME Local 1000 CSEA posted a sparkling showcase of its members at work — in every kind of job, in every corner of the state of New York. AFSCME members are everywhere, providing critical public services all across the country.

Show us your 24/7! Upload at AFSCME24-7.tumblr.com.

02:PM

Lisa Robinson-Parker

Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau. Secretary.

“People call up and they are very frustrated. We try to help them.”



03:PM

Reuben Simmons
City of Beacon. Highway Worker.

“It’s vital that people get to work because they have to support their families, and if we don’t do our jobs, they can’t do their jobs.”



10:AM

Alison Schoonover
Erie County Department of Social Services. Senior Case Worker.

“When I see a family that I’ve worked with doing well, in the workforce, it makes me feel proud of the work that I do.”



04:PM

Maria Johnson
Buffalo Psychiatric Center. Mental Health Aide.

“Caring about people is what I do. It’s in my blood. For several of our clients, family is rare, and if they need a little extra care, someone with compassion has to do it. Why not me?”



02:PM

Steve Bedetti
Town of New Windsor. Communications Specialist Dispatcher.

“I dispatch police, fire and ambulance, and there is the life-saving aspect of it. I’ve taken calls where people are in fires, and tell them how to get out and what to do.”



More Than One Way to Build a Union

By Clyde Weiss

When Sanford Health arrived in Bemidji, Minnesota, and began buying up the local medical facilities, Amy Owen was one of the workers who got left behind. But thanks to the persistence of AFSCME Local 1851 (Council 65), she's a satisfied union member.

"When our clinic was purchased by Sanford, I felt like I was just another number in a large organization," said Owen, a patient access scheduler at Sanford Bemidji Walk-In Clinic. "Without the benefits and protection of a union, my co-workers' and my hard work went unnoticed and was undercompensated. The process of becoming part of AFSCME has been an incredible experience."

Owen makes nearly \$4 more per hour than she was before, thanks to the AFSCME-negotiated pay scale. Owen and her fellow employees benefited from an organizing practice called "accretion," in which new workers or units join an existing bargaining unit, usually achieved in a tough fight with an employer.

There are other situations when accretion can make the difference between being represented by a union, and not. Some, like Illinois Council 31, are leaders in this type of organizing. As the following examples illustrate, accretion can be a valuable strategy for councils and locals to increase their strength at the bargaining table, helping to win better contracts.

Rubbing Elbows

When Sanford Health, the largest rural health care provider in the nation, purchased the Bemidji area medical system in 2012, the workers transitioned to the employer, but not into AFSCME's existing bargaining unit, which covered approximately 400 acute care and long-term care employees. Clinics like the one Amy Owen worked at were not covered. They became the focus of this effort. "Rubbing elbows" was the term applied to these workers — that is, they "rubbed elbows" with AFSCME members who

performed similar work, yet they didn't come under the bargaining agreement.

Threatening to take the issue to the federal labor board was enough to persuade management to work out an agreement. Since 2012, approximately 200 new members joined Local 1851, many through accretion. In 2014, AFSCME succeeded in getting 65 patient access employees from the surrounding clinics to become AFSCME members as well.

"I finally feel like our voices are being heard," said new member Owen. "Thanks to hard work and AFSCME's support throughout this process, my co-workers and I are no longer numbers — we have a strong voice and are compensated fairly."

Then there was the question of approximately 80 clinic LPNs and CMAs (certified medical assistants) who were brought into the health care system in the purchase. Council 65 said it would go to the labor board to conduct an election, and, again, the employer agreed to a card check recognition instead. Those workers were

recognized last June.

Most of the new members received a pay increase, with many receiving close to \$3 an hour more.

Who's a Supervisor?

Local 3022 (New Mexico Council 18) is the only union in the state that represents managers who do not have authority to hire, fire or discipline employees. As a result, it has unique issues. One of them is to determine exactly who is a manager who qualifies to become a member of the union, and who does not.

That question led Lee Whistle, president of Local 3022, and former president Steve Higgins (now retired) on a six-year quest to extend the union's contract to employees of the City of Albuquerque who performed tasks similar to those that union members performed.

Under a city ordinance, if a worker can hire or fire, or direct others to perform those tasks, then that worker is a supervisor and is automatically excluded from the bargaining unit. But some who were excluded did not actually have those supervisory powers.

And then there was intentional subterfuge.

"Since 2006, they've been pulling people out of the bargaining unit and turning them into exempt employees," Whistle said. He realized something was fishy.

"I represent all these people — I know their jobs," he said. "I finally said, 'Enough is enough,'" and filed a petition with the



Amy Owen, new member of Local 1851 (Minnesota Council 65)

city labor board demanding that they recognize all those who qualified to be included in the bargaining unit, but were not.

Whistle and Higgins determined who actually performed supervisory functions and who carried the title, but not the actual responsibility. Recently, Whistle and Council 18's legal counsel met with the city and reached an agreement that will allow more employees to become members of Local 3022.

Under the agreement, approximately half the 220 managers are immediately eligible to join the bargaining unit, and the remaining positions will automatically become eligible some time in the future. In January, Whistle was preparing to send out letters inviting the employees to join Local 3022.

He had a message for them: "We don't just fight for your grievances, we also fight for your rights."

Temps Deserve Respect Too

When the seasons change in Washington state, so does the work of state Department of Transportation employees. Road repair in the summer and snow removal in the winter swells the department's ranks of maintenance workers as non-permanent employees join the full-time staff to get the job done.

The full-timers, members of the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)/AFSCME Council 28, realized that the "perma-temps," as they are called, were getting a raw deal. While the AFSCME members enjoyed the rights and benefits of a good contract, some of their fellow workers who did equivalent work got none simply because of their non-permanent status.

Some of the perma-temps worked a decade at the same job, yet still got paid at the "step-one" rate while their union sisters and brothers advanced up the wage ladder under their contract. While union members also got overtime when they worked more than eight hours on a shift, the perma-temps got overtime only after working more than 40 hours in a week.

A few perma-temps even worked all year long but received their work assignments as if they were being hired all over again, every day or week. They even accumulated leave, but were often dismissed before they could receive their benefits. Then they were re-hired.

It just didn't seem right to the AFSCME members that these two groups could be working just as hard on the same work, but getting such different treatment. AFSCME Volunteer Member Organizers



Lee Whistle, president of Albuquerque Local 3022 (New Mexico Council 18), examines work flow charts. A six-year campaign helped bring new members into the union.

brought their concerns to the attention of their union, which decided to do something about it.

After AFSCME reached out to the perma-temps last summer, a majority signed up to be represented. That didn't automatically bring them into the union, however. The union had to make the case to the state labor board that the perma-temps were not casual laborers — prohibited in the contract — and therefore deserved to be admitted into the union through accretion.

Last November, the board agreed with AFSCME and the state relented. The workers are now certified members of WFSE/AFSCME.

Workers are also organizing with AFSCME in other states.

Here is a list of some recent victories:

MINNESOTA

One-hundred and seventy three employees of Stepping Stones for Living, a group of homes in Duluth and Hermantown that provide residential and support services for adults with traumatic brain injury or mental illness, voted overwhelmingly last fall to join Council 5. Before the election, management tried to reclassify 15 workers as supervisors.

NEW YORK

Twenty-six employees of Lutheran Social Service voted to join DC 1707. Also joining

the local: 17 employees of Help USA, a New York City nonprofit organization that provides housing and supportive services to the homeless and others to help them become and remain self-reliant; and 15 day care employees of B'Above Worldwide Institute in New York City.

ILLINOIS

One-hundred and seventy-five employees of Kankakee County Training Center voted overwhelmingly to join Council 31, overcoming management's anti-union campaign that included captive audience meetings.

EMS Professionals Find Voice With AFSCME

They are on a mission.

By Pablo Ros

Nathan Bunce had been a member of a labor union before, but never an organizer. Four years into his new career as an EMT, however, he decided he had to get more involved when it became clear to him that his employer was running the ambulance service in Independence, Missouri, like a sweatshop.

Bunce says his employer, American Medical Response, was so obsessed with cost-cutting that on many occasions there were only two ambulances available during the night — for a city of 120,000 people. To him, this meant that if more than two people were to need emergency care at exactly the same time, he and his colleagues could not provide it.

“I could have had a heart attack at night and there wouldn’t have been anyone to help me,” he says.

Standing Up for Their Profession

Throughout the country, AFSCME has been helping emergency medical personnel like Bunce and his colleagues form their own unions. In just the past few years, EMS professionals in Independence, Missouri, Lake Havasu City, Arizona, and across California, voted overwhelmingly to unionize. They share the same employer and many of the same issues. And they were motivated by the conviction that the service they provide is valuable to their communities.

“We’re here to do a job,” Bunce says. “Our job is to provide patient care. We provide a service to the community. But they [the employer] run it like a factory. They try to staff it as little as possible. The training is minimal. They pay as little as possible.”

By standing up for their profession, Bunce and his colleagues are helping raise EMS service standards nationwide. AMR is the largest private ambulance service in the nation, serving 2,100 communities in 40 states and employing more than 19,000 paramedics, EMTs, nurses, doctors and support staff.

Bunce, who is a father to a 3-year-old, lives in the city where he works, and being an EMT is more than just a job to him. It’s about making his community a better place by providing a service people can rely on. And not just any service, but a life-saving one.

Becoming an Organizer

Although he did not know what to expect when he volunteered to join the organizing campaign, he quickly became known as someone who was very vocal about the benefits of unionizing and who was fearless about speaking in favor of it.

“Some people didn’t want to talk about it at all,” he recalls. “Some were scared to even say the word ‘union’ because they were afraid to lose their jobs. But they knew that if they wanted to talk about it they could come to me. I was very vocal about it, I didn’t have that fear. And I felt like I was somewhat protected from retaliation by being so vocal.”

“For our families, for our community, for our profession,” became the slogan of the

EMS workers in Independence who sought to unionize.

In the end, they won the vote by an overwhelming majority and they now have a tentative agreement with their employer.

Bunce describes the experience as an “adventure.” And though it was at times stressful, he has no regrets.

“I’m glad I participated and would do it again in a heartbeat,” he says.



From left to right: Nathan Bunce, Andrew Kahananui and Laura Cain pose outside of AMR’s office.

Resources

AFSCME membership has many advantages



When Kimberly Hale lost her job, AFSCME Advantage was there to help.

In Hard Times, AFSCME Advantage Has Your Back

For nine years, AFSCME Local 3328 member Kimberly Hale dutifully served the County of DuPage, Illinois, in a number of roles, most recently as a probation officer for the Department of Probation and Court Services.

“I supervised high-risk adult offenders to ensure compliance with court orders,” explains Hale. “I reported any violations to the court and connected them with the services they needed.”

Kimberly was enjoying her work, building a rapport in her office — an effort that began when she was hired by the county nearly a decade earlier. But in November of 2013, Hale required a medical leave from her position to seek treatment for a health issue. After her recovery, Kimberly found she was not able to return to her job.

“I was totally devastated,” says Hale. “It’s not what I was expecting.”

Fortunately, union members like Hale who carried an AFSCME Advantage Credit Card for three or more consecutive months may apply for a one-time Job Loss Grant to ease the financial burden of unemployment. This \$300 grant is designed to provide help in the event of job loss

unrelated to a strike or lockout.

“After completing the application, I just had to collect and submit the proper documentation proving that I had been out of work for at least 90 straight days,” she says. “And that was it. I had no idea this was even available to me until I came across it online! The money was definitely helpful.”

The AFSCME Advantage Credit Card program is designed for union members and their families. Cardholders enjoy competitive interest rates, U.S.-based customer service and a number of unique hardship benefits, including Strike Grants (\$300), Disability Grants (\$1,600 to \$2,700), Hospital Grants (\$1,200), and, of course, \$300 Job Loss Grants.

For more information about the AFSCME Advantage Credit Card program, visit AFSCMEcard.com.

Special Mortgage Benefits for Veterans Through Union Plus

If you’re a union member looking to buy or refinance a home, the Union Plus Mortgage program just makes sense. With a broad range of financing options, special hardship assistance and other benefits, a Union Plus mortgage means peace of mind.

If you’re a veteran, the mortgage program just got even better. Active or retired union members who served in the armed forces are now eligible for a special \$1,000 grant. Visit unionplus.org/home-mortgage-programs/ to download an application.

Remaking Our Union

A FSCME is turning the unrelenting attacks on collective bargaining and the public services we provide into an opportunity to remake our union. We're fighting back not in a defensive crouch but in an aggressive proactive stance, taking advantage of our key strength — the 1.6 million members of AFSCME.

AFSCME Takes Action

As directed by the leaders of AFSCME's affiliates across the country, our union will confront these unprecedented challenges with a bold course of action, steered and implemented by you.

It begins with organizing. Building on the huge success of the 50,000 Stronger campaign, in which 132,000 women and men became full-fledged members in 2014, we are making a nationwide push to connect with everyone our union represents, and to add to our power by signing up new members.

At the heart of this are conversations between you and potential members. No one can better explain the value of being active in the union than you can, because you live out the struggles as public service workers every day.

In the months ahead, Volunteer Member Organizers will

**WITH A DISASTROUS
ELECTION BEHIND US AND
A SERIOUS THREAT FROM
THE SUPREME COURT
AHEAD, AFSCME IS MOVING
FORWARD WITH A BOLD
PLAN FOR ACTION**

By David Card

talk one-on-one with their sisters and brothers across the country, working to make local AFSCME members the messengers to each other and the public. That's how you can play a big role in our revitalized union, by becoming a VMO. You can educate others about the very real threats to our future, the power we have when we come together through our union, and the need for all of us to step up and be part of the solution.

VMOs are special people, but becoming one does not take

any inside knowledge or a particular set of skills; it only takes an interest in making life better for our families by strengthening our union, and the desire to talk with fellow workers about it.

Improving Lives

AFSCME will focus our political efforts on fighting for the issues that matter the most to you, and to all working families. The priority will be bread-and-butter concerns like improving wages and working conditions, retirement security, winning more family-friendly policies in the workplace and restoring balance to an economy that favors only the rich rather than America's working families. This is not a fight for

WHAT'S ABOOD ALL ABOUT?

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CASE THREATENING EVERY PUBLIC WORKER

The Supreme Court unanimously agreed in 1977 that public workers had the right to join together and form a union that would exclusively represent them

in collective bargaining negotiations. The court also ruled that union members could vote to collect a "fair share" fee from workers who receive union benefits.

In other words, the Supreme Court said that when employees of a local government democratically vote to form a union, they could also decide that all workers should share the cost of union representation since all workers benefit



only AFSCME leaders and activists; we all can play a role in taking this fight to the bargaining table, to state legislatures and to Congress.

A critical component of AFSCME's political strategy will continue to be PEOPLE, our political and legislative advocacy program. But to make this program as effective as it can be, more of us will need to increase our activism. Building the PEOPLE program at the local level will give us the strength we need to fight at the ballot box for the critical issues affecting the lives of public workers.

Educate the Public

Finally, all of us must remind Americans of the value of public services by speaking out about what we do and how important it is, and showcasing our good work. Too often politicians point to government workers when they need someone to blame or to distort the facts about their record. Through one-on-one conversations, social media, videos and advertising, our union will change the conversation about public workers by focusing on how our work improves our communities.

Your role in this regard is especially critical. You can blog. You can take to Twitter when you come across something that inaccurately describes public service workers, or to broadcast something that actually tells the truth about us. You can post on Facebook and share articles about the value of unions and public services to sustaining America's working families.

"We must rebuild faith in public services and the people who provide them," Pres. Lee Saunders told a group of AFSCME leaders. "Our words and actions must communicate the importance of government action and public services for the greater good."

As our economy and politics become increasingly stacked in favor of the wealthy and large corporations, unions are still the only way for workers to get a fair shake. With this New Year, we are committed to build upon that legacy, lift up all working families and fulfill the promise of American life.

from the higher union wages and benefits. That case was called *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*.

Now, a new case known as *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* is making its way to the Supreme Court. It is a direct threat to the rights established by *Abood* nearly 40 years ago. In *Friedrichs*, a group of teachers claim that paying fees to a union they do not wish to belong to is a viola-

tion of their First Amendment Constitutional rights.

If the Supreme Court decides to take the case (and experts expect they will) and the justices side with the anti-union forces, it could seriously weaken our efforts to negotiate good wages and benefits for workers. That's why AFSCME's internal organizing efforts are so important — to blunt any adverse impact of a decision overturning *Abood*.

STAY IN TOUCH



Go to AFSCME.org/email-prize Submit Your Email and Win a Prize

It's one of the quickest, easiest things you can do right now to make a difference for yourself and working families: Connect with AFSCME by entering your email address. That's the first step to staying in touch with our union and fighting for a fair wage and better working conditions.

When you do, you'll be automatically entered to win one of two popular AFSCME gifts — a pullover sweatshirt or a T-shirt.



AFSCME
We Make America Happen

No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited by law. Open only to current AFSCME members and retirees as of January 31, 2015.

Only one entry per person. For complete rules, visit:

AFSCME.org/ctc/email-prize-contest-rules

We've Got Friends

Despite how unions may be portrayed in popular media, we have important friends, and plenty of them. Aside from our partners in the labor movement and progressive organizations, our friends include artists, celebrities, politicians and religious leaders who believe that workers are better off because of unions.

Meet some of our friends on these pages.

Jay Leno

ENTERTAINER,
FORMER HOST OF "THE TONIGHT SHOW"

"I'm proud to say that this has been a union show ... and I have never worked with a more professional group of people in my life. They get paid good money and they do a good job. When the (staff) on this show would show me their new car or home, I felt I played a big role in their success, as they did mine. That was just a great feeling."



Bruce Springsteen

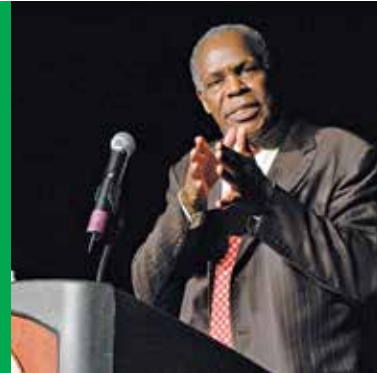
MUSICIAN

"Unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country."

Danny Glover

ACTOR, UNION MEMBER

"We need to show how the workers are supported as they fight for better working conditions, better pay and a living wage. Clearly, there's an issue with inequity in this country and in the world itself."



Elizabeth Warren

SENATOR, MASSACHUSETTS

"In every fight to build opportunity in this country, in every fight to level the playing field, in every fight for working families, unions have been on the front lines."

Pope Francis

"Trade unions have been an essential force for social change, without which a semblance of a decent and humane society is impossible under capitalism."



Tulsi Gabbard

TWO-TOUR COMBAT VETERAN,
REPRESENTATIVE, HAWAII

"I want to express my deep gratitude to our working men and women, past and present, who have been out there fighting, not just for union members, but for all Americans"



Natalie Portman

ACTRESS

"I've been working since I was 11 years old, and my union has taken care of me. I'm so grateful to my union protecting me every day."

Matt Damon

ACTOR, UNION TEACHER'S SON,
UNION MEMBER

"Despite what you hear, union teachers are underpaid. They're working in really tough conditions, oftentimes providing supplies for their own classrooms out of the little they're already paid."



Kevin Spacey

ACTOR, UNION MEMBER

"I'm a member of the Screen Actors Guild. I always support collective bargaining."

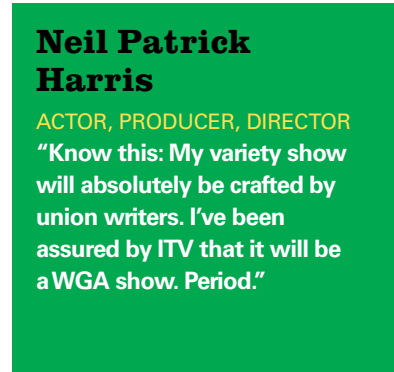


Tom Morello

MUSICIAN

"And if they come to strip our rights away We'll give 'em hell every time This is a union town, a union town All down the line."

— "Union Town"



Neil Patrick Harris

ACTOR, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

"Know this: My variety show will absolutely be crafted by union writers. I've been assured by ITV that it will be a WGA show. Period."



Rosanne Cash

GRAMMY-WINNING SINGER/
SONGWRITER

"For my entire adult life, I have been a proud member of three unions: AFTRA, SAG and the AFM. As a union member, I am part of the greatness of America and the beauty of democracy."



Thomas E. Perez

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
SECRETARY

"Giving people a voice at work — the ability to organize and negotiate for their fair share of the value they helped create — is absolutely essential to a growing, vibrant middle class."



Jimmy Smits

ACTOR, ADDRESSING THE 37TH
AFSCME INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION

"Because of who you are and what you all stand for, I'm proud to stand with you in your fight for working families across this great land of ours."

Communities Suffer for Corporate Welfare

Politicians giving away the public store for phantom jobs

By Clyde Weiss

Public service workers are paying a heavy price for the actions of governors and other elected officials who cut their pensions and benefits with one hand while handing out tax favors to corporations that deplete state coffers with the other.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie is a case in point. Since taking office in 2010, he approved corporate tax breaks and other subsidies worth more than \$2.1 billion, according to New Jersey Policy Perspective, a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy research organization. That includes more than \$900 million in state tax credits to just 15 companies, including Panasonic, Prudential and Campbell's Soup, *The New York Times* reported.

In exchange, the companies promised 2,364 new jobs over 10 years, which works out to \$387,537 in tax credits for each job, *The Times* said.

The Christie administration even handed the owners of Revel casino more than \$361 million to open

shop in Atlantic City. Last September, the casino closed its doors after going into bankruptcy.

Now he claims the state's budget is so bad he's reneged on a promise made in 2010 to ensure that the state's public pension plans are on a more solid financial footing. What's wrong with this picture?

Elected officials across America are playing a dangerous game with tax revenue, one that leaves our communities with fewer services, endangers the retirement security of millions of public employees, and gains little — if anything — in return.

What would motivate governors, mayors and other public officials of all political stripes to diminish the quality of life of their city or state by handing out tax breaks amounting

to more than \$80 billion each year to huge corporations like Boeing, the aerospace giant that earned nearly \$1.2

billion in profits in 2013?

They are intentionally depriving their states and communities of corporate tax revenue that otherwise could be used to fix aging roads and bridges, improve the wages and benefits of workers who make their communities safe and livable, or shore up underfunded pension plans that public employees depend on for a decent retirement.

Politicians claim that they provide incentives to create new jobs, but any jobs created are coming at a dear price — failing infrastructure, lost public services and, perhaps most alarmingly, cuts in public worker pensions.

"In states across the country, politicians are attempting to solve the budget woes caused by Wall Street and the Great Recession by cutting the pension benefits of public employees," said Philip Mattera, research director of Good Jobs First, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that promotes corporate and government accountability.

"It is often stated that budgets are a matter of priorities. And our research shows that corporate interests are generally prioritized over teachers, fire-



\$900
million
in state tax credits

**THE
CASE
IN NEW
JERSEY**

\$387,5
tax credits per job

fighters, police officers and thousands of other employees who dedicate their lives to public service,” Mattera stated.

Money to Burn

It’s not as if these corporations actually need these tax breaks to survive, or even prosper. Three quarters of all such corporate tax breaks awarded and disclosed by state and local governments went to just 965 large corporations, according to a study issued last February by Good Jobs First.

Fortune 500 companies alone accounted for more than 16,000 of those subsidies, worth a combined \$63 billion, according to the study, Subsidizing the Corporate One Percent.

“It looks like the corporate rich are getting richer at the expense of public goods that benefit all employers,” Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First, said last year on the release of its report. All of these subsidies rob the state and local governments involved of much-needed future revenue and the payoff in jobs is uncertain at best.

In fact, research into the economic returns of corporate subsidies and tax cuts suggests that they “cannot create jobs in a cost-effective manner,” concludes a study by the Economic Policy Institute and the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. “The costs per job created by tax cuts are high, ranging from \$40,000 to over \$100,000 in lost tax revenue per job, and outstrip the costs of creating most public sector jobs.”

Still, elected officials hand out these tax subsidies eagerly. For the companies involved, the question of motive is clear: profit. And governors eager to grab headlines tying their efforts to those jobs are more than willing to oblige.

Among the worst of these politicians is New Jersey Governor Christie.

Bad Bets in New Jersey

An improving economy is contributing to more robust state and local budgets as people spend more and businesses improve their bottom lines, helping to fill city coffers with needed tax revenue. At the same time, a rising stock market is helping public pension plans recover from years or even decades of neglect by elected officials who failed to make the contributions necessary to ensure the funds are on a solid footing.

Despite that good news, right-wing lawmakers like Governor Christie continue to slash away at public services while handing out tax breaks to corporations.

Christie’s decision to spend more than \$2.1 billion on business tax subsidies during the first three years of his tenure has much to do with the state’s current troubles, says Sherry Gordon, executive director of AFSCME New Jersey Council 1. “What is clear to New Jersey’s citizens, and public employees in particular, is that those business subsidies were supposed to spark economic growth or prosperity.” Yet the state ranks only 48 in private sector job growth since 2010, she noted.

In 2011, lawmakers approved legislation that cut retiree cost-of-living increases, required workers to pay more toward their pensions and raised the retirement age from 62 to 65.

Then, last May, Christie abandoned his promise to fund

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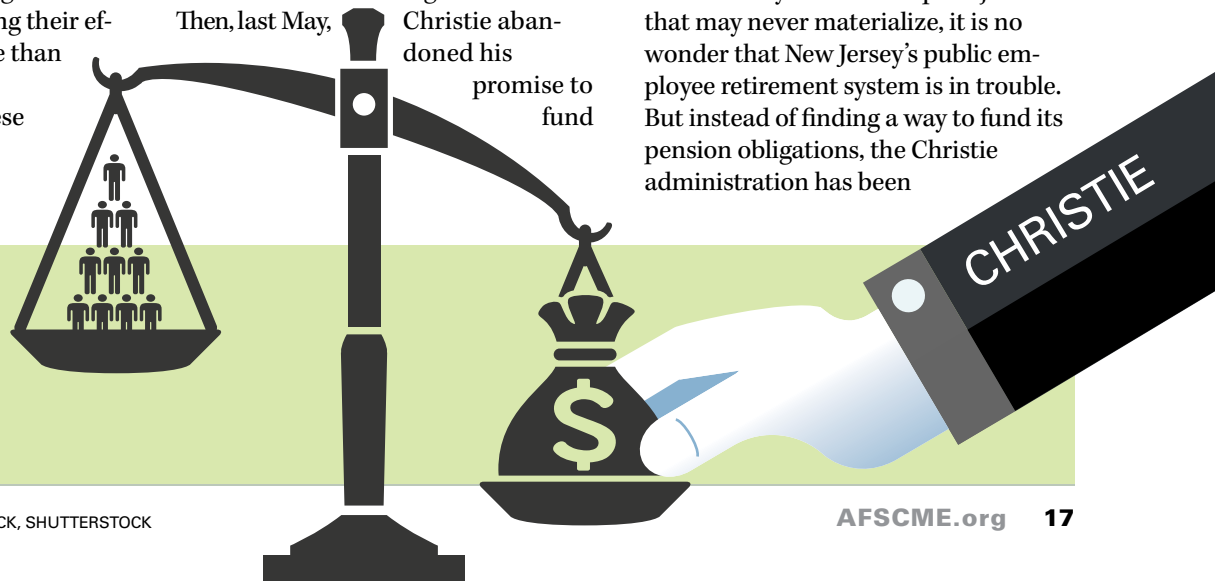
The Christie administration even handed the owners of Revel casino more than \$361 million to open shop in Atlantic City. Last September, the casino closed its doors after going into bankruptcy.

the state’s pension plans with \$2.4 billion, money needed to ensure the viability of plans that cover nearly 505,000 active and retired employees. “This is not something I want to do, but when revenues fall as far short as they have, you have little or no choice,” said Christie.

There is a choice, however, and AFSCME is part of a coalition of more than a dozen New Jersey unions that went to court to challenge the governor’s decision to underfund the pension programs yet again.

In December, the trustees of the state’s largest pension funds filed a lawsuit over the governor’s decision to slash the state’s pension contributions.

With so much revenue being thrown away on a thin hope of jobs that may never materialize, it is no wonder that New Jersey’s public employee retirement system is in trouble. But instead of finding a way to fund its pension obligations, the Christie administration has been



37

sticking it to the workers themselves.

“The reality is that Christie is trying to balance the state’s budget on the backs of public service workers while handing out massive tax subsidies to well-heeled corporations,” says Council 71 Exec. Dir. Mattie Harrell, also an AFSCME International vice president. “Those giveaways are not creating the jobs he’s promised. And his broken promise to fund the state retirement system shows his disrespect for the workers of his own state. It’s shameful.”

Corporate Welfare for Boeing

As for the motives of elected officials who are approving this corporate welfare, consider the political hand-outs many of these companies make to federal, state and local elected officials. Boeing, the largest recipient nationally of such subsidies received tax breaks worth more than \$13 billion, nearly all of it from Washington state.

The company’s political action committee contributed more than \$2 million to federal candidates for public office in the 2014 election cycle, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Of course, it wasn’t the political contributions that persuaded elected officials to offer up massive tax subsidies. It was something much more disturbing: dubious promises of jobs. Washington state lawmakers voluntarily reduced state revenue by \$239 million in 2009 through tax subsidies.

In 2003, Boeing, which was founded in Seattle in 1916, won a deal from Washington state lawmakers worth \$3.2 billion in tax subsidies for keeping in-state a production line for its 787 Dreamliner aircraft.

Then, in November 2013, Boeing threatened to take a new production line for the 777X airliner (and the good union jobs that went with it) to another state. California and Missouri entered the competition, but in November 2013, Washington’s governor signed the largest corporate tax subsidy that any state had ever offered to a single company.

The deal, meant to save jobs, was worth nearly \$9 billion through 2040. But the lawmakers’ job-saving victory dance was short-lived. Last April, Boeing said it would transfer 1,000 engineers from the state to Southern California. Then, last October — less than 11 months after Governor Inslee signed the Boeing deal — the company announced plans to move about 2,000 more engineering jobs to other, lower-cost states over the next three years, possibly Oklahoma City or St. Louis.

Yet, some elected officials who supported Boeing’s tax breaks are now targeting public pensions for the scrap heap through legislation that would push workers to abandon their pension plans for 401(k)-style investment accounts that puts all the risk of a secure retirement on the employee. They want to do this even though 95 percent of the plan’s liability is fully funded, *The Seattle Times* reported last year.

It’s a cruel irony that elected officials who freely give away revenue to make corporations happy are so willing to blame public employees and their

“The Boeing giveaway places tremendous additional strain on a state budget that has been underfunded since 2008. At a time when the state needs an additional \$2.5 billion to meet an impending state Supreme Court educational mandate, it seems ludicrous to offer Boeing tax breaks totaling more than \$13 billion.”

—Greg Devereux, executive director, WFSE Council 28, also an AFSCME International vice president



Boeing 787 Dreamliners.

pensions for putting state and local economies at risk.

“The Boeing giveaway places tremendous additional strain on a state budget that has been underfunded since 2008,”

said Greg Devereux, executive director, Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME Council 28 and an AFSCME International vice president. “At a time when the state needs an additional \$2.5 billion to meet an impending state Supreme Court educational mandate, it seems ludicrous to offer Boeing tax breaks totaling more than \$13 billion.”

It’s also ludicrous to give wealthy corporations like Boeing tax breaks when that corporate tax revenue could be used to ensure that public services are not cut, and that workers’ pensions



\$13 Billion

corporate tax breaks

THE CASE IN WASHINGTON

JOBS

are not left underfunded. Good Jobs First looked into this corporate phenomenon and concluded, “State lawmakers who are considering drastic cuts to the retirement benefits of state workers are simultaneously giving away billions of dollars in corporate tax subsidies and loopholes, often in amounts far exceeding the cost of pensions.”

This was true for the 10 states that Good Jobs First examined. One of those states was Michigan, which “accounted for more subsidy packages worth \$75 million or more (29) than any other state,” according to the organization’s 2012 report, *Megadeals*.

Giving Away the Store in Detroit

Detroit took decades to sink into an economic abyss. Its downward spiral was caused by many factors, especially the loss of its auto manufacturing through offshoring and relocation to other regions of the country, all of which robbed the city of a sustainable tax base.

But the sinking of Detroit was aided by a governor and other elected officials who intentionally starved the city of state revenue it was entitled to receive by law. In fact, from 2011, when Gov. Rick Snyder took office, to 2012, Detroit saw its share of state revenue slashed by \$66 million.

The governor also gave away the store. In 2011, for instance, Governor Snyder pushed through the Legislature a plan that cut business taxes by 80 percent, reducing state revenue by \$1.7 billion per year. Overall, reports Good Jobs First, Michigan ranks fourth among states for its corporate tax handouts and subsidies.

Even after Detroit’s bankruptcy filing in July 2013, the city’s Planning and Development

Department was still inviting businesses, investors and developers “to take advantage of the wide array of incentives” the city offers, referring to tax breaks and subsidies.

One of the state’s most notorious tax giveaways was touted by Governor Snyder just days after he called for Detroit’s bankruptcy. His proposal, which he said would “help revitalize Detroit,” was to hand over \$444 million through a bond issue to billionaire Red Wings ice hockey team owner and Little Caesars Pizza founder Mike Illitch to build a new downtown stadium. Taxpayers are now on the hook for \$283 million of that gift.

Illitch, whose family’s fortune is listed by *Forbes* at \$4.2 billion, was happy to receive the money. Meanwhile, the city’s residents had to deal with a loss of services that included longer wait times for police and fewer working street lights due to a lack of tax revenue.

Public workers also watched as the city’s bankruptcy led to cuts in their pensions.

Yet public pensions and workers’ benefits did not eviscerate Detroit. Rather, it was the decision of Michigan’s elected officials to give away at least \$1.8 billion in subsidies and tax breaks, “more than three times the cost of meeting the state’s commitment to retirees,” said a 2014 report by Good Jobs First.

“Corporate greed and poor government tax policies — not

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—Good Jobs First

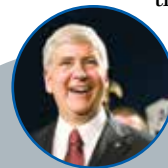


Corporate greed and poor government tax policies — not public pensions — helped to bankrupt the Motor City.

public pensions — helped to bankrupt the Motor City,” said Michigan Council 25 Pres. Al Garrett. “The problem, here in Detroit and in other cities, is that lawmakers are following a corporate agenda to underfund their pension obligations

in order to reduce taxes on the rich and Big Business. This agenda is threatening the retirement security of all public service workers and undermining the economic health of their communities.”

It’s a national shame that all across the country elected officials are giving away public funds to corporations on the one hand and taking away or cutting the pensions of state and local public employees on the other, saying they don’t have sufficient revenue to support those retirement plans. There is a better choice.



\$1.8 Billion
in subsidies and tax breaks

THE CASE IN MICHIGAN



New Resource for State Legislators

By Olivia Sandbothe

While Congress has been deadlocked in Washington, states have been dismantling workers' rights and giving handouts to the wealthy at breakneck speed. It's only getting worse — following November's election, 69 out of 99 state legislative chambers are firmly in the control of labor opponents.

But election results aren't the only problem. Anti-union state legislators have been collaborating with a secretive group called the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to spread bad ideas from state to state. Its methods are shady, but the basic concept of sharing legislation among like-minded lawmakers was wildly successful. That success is a major reason the far-right wing has such an unshakeable grip on many state capitols.

Union supporters long wondered why our allies can't achieve that level of organization and communication in state politics. Now, a group called the State Innovation Exchange, or SiX, hopes to do just that. "It's the biggest missing piece in the progressive infrastructure," said SiX's Exec. Dir. Nick Rathod, a former White House aide who worked at the state and local efforts to produce the President's policies.

But make no mistake — SiX isn't an ALEC. While ALEC is a way for big corporations to write legislation that lines their own pockets, SiX is an alliance of labor and community groups who want to promote the public good. The idea is to take just one page out of the ALEC playbook — information-sharing among lawmakers — and cut out the bad.

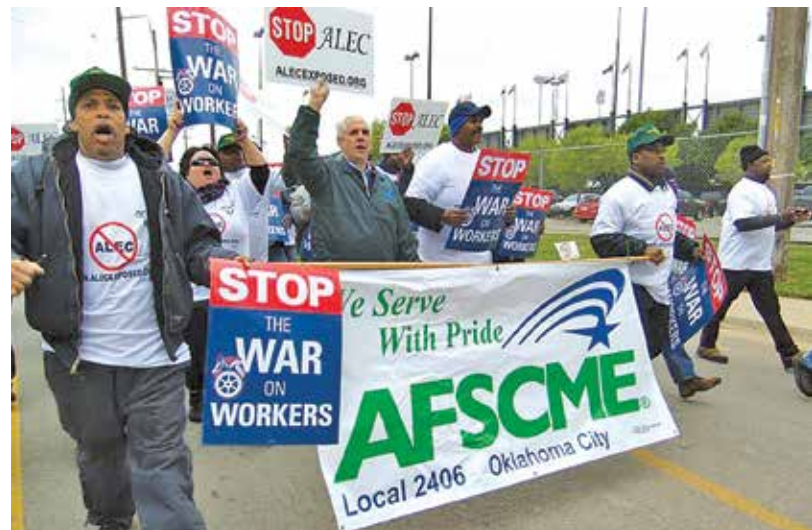
Where ALEC Gets It Wrong

Most of ALEC's methods are unworthy of imitation. ALEC produces legislation in secret and then distributes it to member legislators who try to hide their ties to the group. It doesn't disclose its donors, although we know from tax records that the Koch brothers give it hundreds of thousands of dollars a year out of their own pockets. Koch Industries and the interest groups they finance give even more.

ALEC pushes a policy agenda that only serves the interests of its corporate supporters to the detriment of working families. ALEC is behind recent initiatives to cut public worker pensions, and it's behind the radical tax cuts that bankrupt Kansas' schools.

So how do you get politicians to vote for laws that take money out of regular people's schools and retirement accounts and put them into the pockets of billionaires? According to leaked documents from ALEC's 2013 summit, legislators who join the organization are asked to take an oath that includes a promise they will "put the interests of the organization first." Ahead, that is, of their own constituents.

SiX is building a more transparent organization



Union members are speaking out against ALEC's influence in state government.

Ex-ALEC members:



that helps lawmakers to put their constituents first. There's no oath, just a shared interest in supporting policies that help the working class. They are building a "library of legislation" that allows any lawmaker or community group to upload their idea for a bill into a searchable database.

State and local lawmakers often don't have the resources or staff to research how other states have solved complex policy problems. But by using the SiX library, a lawmaker in Florida can instantly see how her counterparts in Minnesota or Washington have tackled the problem of paid sick leave.

AFSCME has joined dozens of other unions and nonprofit organizations in supporting the project. The experiment is just getting off the ground, but dozens of bills and briefs have already been added to the library. This next legislative session will be a tough one, but progressive lawmakers will face these challenging times armed with new ideas.

ALEC Supporters Jump Ship

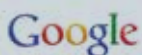
ALEC relies on the support of corporations that pay membership dues. As more and more people learn about how ALEC corrupts state governments, its network of support is starting to crumble. Organizations like AFSCME spread the word and mobilize members to put pressure on companies that belong to the group. That public outcry has real results.

In 2012, Lawmakers in 37 states introduced ALEC's "Voter ID" legislation that aims to keep people from exercising their rights at the polls. After outraged citizens threatened boycotts, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Kraft Foods and others cut ties with the group.

Google was a member until this past fall, when thousands of people took part in an online campaign that urged the tech giant to follow its own mantra: "Don't be evil." CEO Eric Schmidt heard them loudly and clearly, and even appeared on National Public Radio to say that supporting ALEC was a "mistake."

A wave of other tech companies are now following suit, including Facebook, Microsoft, Yahoo and eBay. And activists are still putting the pressure on remaining supporters.

Has ALEC's public image reached a tipping point? The organization may try to keep its shady practices secret, but it can't hide from the power of informed citizens.



STATE OF EMERGENCY

State legislatures will be tough terrain during the next two years. Here's what you need to know.

By Olivia Sandbothe

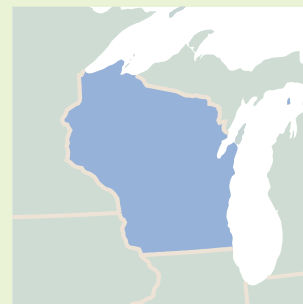
There's no way around it — November's election was bad news for working people. There's been a lot of press about the shift in power in the U.S. Senate, but the real threat for public workers may be happening at the state level. Following a low-turnout election, 66 of the nation's 99 state legislative chambers are now in anti-worker hands, which means that we're more vulnerable than ever to the right-wing economic agenda.

Union members around the country are preparing to defend our rights during the next two years. It will be a tough battle, but that doesn't mean we're doomed. By reaching out to legislators on both sides of the aisle, educating the public and organizing for power, we can make sure that government listens to our needs. The storm is brewing in many states — these are just a few examples.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin is about to show the nation what happens when union-busters are emboldened. Gov. Scott Walker is starting a new term and his party widened its majorities in both houses of the Legislature. Despite a close election with high union turnout, Wisconsin anti-union lawmakers have yet to face any consequences for years of anti-worker policy. In fact, they may just be getting started.

Wisconsin lawmakers already introduced a so-called right-to-work bill that would extend the public sector union-busting that they undertook in 2011



to workers in all sectors. There's also a major threat that the state will take on more austerity measures, cutting funding for programs and introducing a voucher system that would drain money from public schools. Those cuts would mean worse working conditions and job losses for AFSCME members. But in a state that's already struggling

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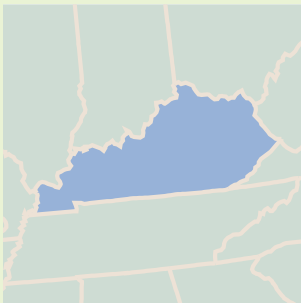
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economically, these cuts will have consequences that extend far beyond our union.

While it was AFSCME members and other public unions in the spotlight when Walker first attacked, the whole middle class is now in the crosshairs. It's going to take a lot of community-wide organizing to protect Wisconsin during the next two years.

KENTUCKY

Kentucky is the last state in the South where union rights have not been restricted. And despite the radical wave that swept



the nation in November, union allies are still holding on to the Kentucky House of Representatives. But that doesn't mean working people can breathe easily. Right-wing politicians are hoping to pass a so-called right-to-work bill this session that would decimate unions and bring down wages for all Kentuckians.

AFSCME members are building alliances with other groups to fend off the attack. Along with the state AFL-

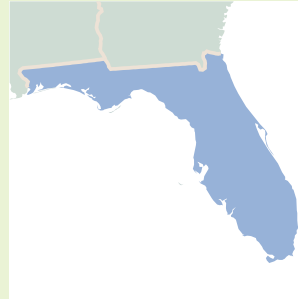
CIO and faith groups, they will reach out to legislators to educate them about this misleading bill. In a state with a strong coal mining heritage, the public is on the side of workers. But right-to-work is a confusing and misleading issue, so many people don't realize how harmful it is. By speaking up about the facts of the matter, Kentucky workers hope to expose how detrimental the anti-union measure would be to all working families.

FLORIDA

State employees will be on the chopping block when the Florida Legislature convenes in March. Gov. Rick Scott has already eliminated more than 11,000 public service positions since taking office in 2011, and his proposed budget would cut another 1,000 jobs. Critical state services like child protection and water quality monitoring are already suffering from understaffing.

"If we do not stand up to the systematic attacks by right-wing politicians on our state workforce, Floridians from all walks of life will continue to see the quality of life in our state diminish," says Council 79 Pres. Jeanette Wynn, an International vice president.

Pay and retirement benefits for state workers also are at risk. Last year's proposed budget included modest raises, but the Legislature cut them from the bill. This year no raises

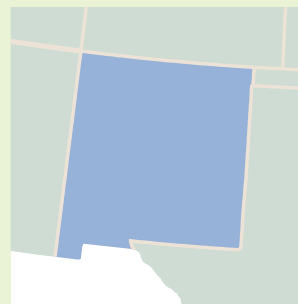


were proposed, and there is no sign that a 2011 cut to pensions will be restored.

NEW MEXICO

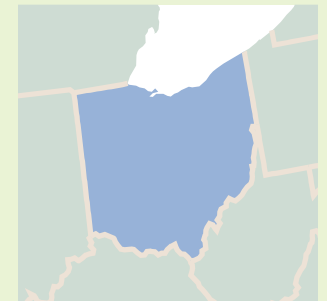
AFSCME members are gearing up for a fight on right-to-work this session. In her State of the State address, Gov. Susana Martinez named the anti-union legislation as one of her top priorities. Her wealthy donors are already at work on the cause. A series of leaked emails shows that the governor's office coordinated with Big Business groups to fund and create fake studies and publicity campaigns that would show the supposed benefits of busting unions.

The Legislature only has 60 days to pass bills each year, so workers are acting fast to hold off the attacks.



OHIO

The future of health care hangs in the balance during this year's budget process. More than 360,000 previously uninsured Ohioans signed up for health coverage through Medicaid since the program was expanded last year. But the Legislature never actually approved the expansion, so it occurred through the state's Controlling Board. Now, some lawmakers want to undo the process. AFSCME will advocate for solutions that ensure everyone has access to quality health care.



Other dangers lurk in the proposed budget, including a regressive tax policy that would hit working families the hardest. Gov. John Kasich wants to eliminate taxes on business while making up the money by raising the sales taxes that everyone pays.

Newtown CONNECTICUT

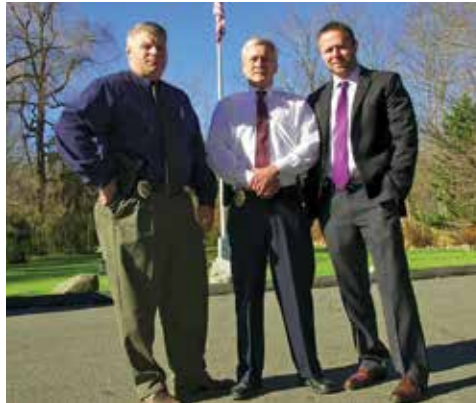
Newtown Officers and AFSCME Members Honored for Their Courage

Newtown Police Department officers, dispatched to Sandy Hook Elementary School on Dec. 14, 2012, were honored for their courageous response in December with the Courage of Connecticut Law Enforcement award.

The award ceremony was held just shy of the two-year anniversary of the murder of 20 school children, a horrific event that touched millions of Americans.

With more than 200 fellow police officers in attendance, 13 Newtown officers were honored for helping to prevent an even greater tragedy, as the gunman killed himself immediately after police arrived. He still had more than 180 rounds of ammunition remaining.

Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy presented the award. "Looking back on that tragic day," he said, "we can focus on what is important right now, which is the courage and steadfastness demonstrated by the members of the Newtown Police Department,



Detectives Jason Frank, Joseph Joudy and Daniel McAnaspie were among a group of Newtown Police Department officers recently honored for their response to the tragic shooting.

ment, whose aggressive response to the scene of the shooting undoubtedly saved lives that day."

The honorees are: Patrolmen Will Chapman, William Hull, Mike McGowan, Liam Seabrook and Scott Smith; School Resource Officers Lenny Pena and Jason Flynn; Detectives Jason Frank, Joe Joudy and Dan McAnaspie; Sergeants Aaron Bahamonde and Dave Kullgren; and Lieutenant Chris Vanghele.

Patrolman Scott Ruszczyk, president of Newtown Police Union Local 3153, AFSCME Council 15, praised the swift actions of the police department on the day of the shooting and credited the union for the role it assumed after the event.

"In the face of an unspeakable tragedy, these officers displayed tremendous courage and fortitude," he said. "Were it not for the quick response, the tragedy that was Newtown could have been far, far worse. The Newtown Police Department is proud to receive these honors. AFSCME Council 15 was a tremendous source of help and guidance in the days, weeks and months after the shooting."

Chicago ILLINOIS

Council OKs Major Taxi Reforms

Less than six months after Chicago taxi drivers first came together with AFSCME to form their own organization, the City Council in December passed a far-reaching reform package that will provide immediate economic relief to every cab driver in the city.

The Taxi Fairness Ordinance of 2014 will boost drivers' income by reducing lease rates, reducing fines and providing drivers with a share of taxi advertising revenue. In addition, the city committed to reducing credit card

fees and to revising rules and fines that have long denied drivers' due process. The average driver will see an annual savings of \$5,000-\$8,000 as a direct result.

"These reforms won't hurt the city or consumers," said driver Nnamdi Uwazi, "but they will help the 12,000 drivers in the City of Chicago to provide a better life for our families."

The measures enacted by the ordinance resulted from demands that drivers identified and proposed to the city in a letter signed last June by nearly 100 drivers who attended the first meeting of Cab Drivers United (CDU), AFSCME Council 31.

The drivers presented their demands at meetings with the taxi commissioner, spoke

out at a town hall meeting, met with dozens of aldermen and organized an action that brought hundreds of CDU activists to protest treatment at the hands of city authorities.

Thousands of AFSCME members supported their call for justice and dignity at a July rally during AFSCME's national convention.

"This ordinance is a testament to what drivers can achieve when they come together," said Council 31 Assoc. Dir. Tracey

Abman. "Cab Drivers United kicked off in June, signed up more than 3,500 drivers in just a few months, and today we've taken this important step forward. We're excited to keep building our union to help drivers solve problems, win respect and better provide their vital public service to all of Chicago."



Columbus OHIO

OCSEA Members Target Prison Staffing, Safety

Chanting “safe prisons now” and “no more cuts,” members of Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA)/AFSCME Local 11 took to the streets last fall to shed light on the dangers of understaffing and outsourcing, including security breaches, maggots found in food preparation areas operated by a contractor, and even prison escapes.

The employees of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DR&C), represented by OCSEA, picketed outside the department’s Columbus office to deliver a message: Inadequate staffing and outsourcing to a for-profit food vendor, Aramark, placed workers and the community at risk.

Despite a record number of inmates — more than 50,600 in a system built for 38,579 — the DR&C in recent years shed 400 corrections officer posts, ordered the closure of housing units, and contracted with food service vendor Aramark, whose practices led to maggot infestations, OCSEA officials said.

The state fined Aramark \$272,000 last April for failing to meet staffing requirements, among other violations.

“We know budgets are about choices, and the choices DR&C made and continues to make despite our warnings, put our security at risk and made our prisons more violent



Corrections officers and other members of Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA)/AFSCME Local 11 protest inadequate staffing at overcrowded state prisons, which threatens the safety of workers and the community.

and dangerous places to work,” said OCSEA Pres. Christopher Mabe, also an AFSCME International vice president. “We need more security staff, an end to the food service contract and an opportunity to be real partners with DR&C in keeping our prisons safe.”

“Taxpayers want to know where their money’s going,” added OCSEA Corrections Assembly Pres. Jim Adkins. “Well, here’s where it’s going: Instead of investing in front line security staff, they’ve given wardens an average 20 percent raise, added unit managers and lieutenants and created an entire new structure of ‘regional managers’ we’ve never had before.”

Bloomington INDIANA

City Workers Fight Back, Secure Contract

The hard-working members of Local 2487, which represents city workers in Bloomington, have a history of working cooperatively with city management for the benefit of both workers and city services. When they negotiated their last contract, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2014, they had no reason to believe things would be different.

But five months later, the city, without

negotiating with the local, revised its personnel policy, limiting compensatory time and mandating that members use 10 days of compensatory time before using their sick time or paid time off.

AFSCME members knew that if they did not fight back, the integrity of the contract would be seriously eroded. If the city didn’t think it had to bargain with members on this, then they could start to make other policies outside the contract.

Local 2487 Pres. Rick Albright filed a grievance and met with management. But more importantly, he worked with Dave Rob-



Rick Albright, president of Local 2487

ertson, his staff representative at AFSCME Indiana-Kentucky Organizing Committee 962, to organize his co-workers. Under the banner “Hands Off Our Contract,” more than 80 members signed up to take action during a City Council meeting on Aug. 21.

Having got wind of the members’ plan, the city called the local for a meeting and agreed to back off the

changes.

“They knew we had a lot of help coming, and they got scared,” Albright said. “Because we organized, we were able to move things forward.”

Shreveport LOUISIANA

Big Organizing Win in Louisiana

By an overwhelming margin, Sodexo dietary and environmental services staff at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport voted in December to organize with AFSCME.

The vote thrilled union supporters in the unit of 246 employees. “I’m excited to be a part of negotiating our first contract at the start of the year,” said Deerica Morris, a Sodexo housekeeper.

“Some of my co-workers were used to being disrespected on the job,” Morris said. “They had the attitude, ‘It is what it is.’ But once we started talking about the power of coming together with AFSCME, I saw them light up and it clicked that our jobs could be different. They saw that we could improve our livelihoods and make our future with Sodexo more secure.”

Janice Chalmers-Priest, a lab technician at the Health Sciences Center and president of Local 2649 (Council 17), helped organize the Sodexo workers in Shreveport. She said, “I’m seeing things change for the better in Louisiana and AFSCME is a big part of that. If we stay resolute and build our



Sodexo dietary and environmental services staff celebrate the victory after voting for AFSCME representation.

collective power, we’re going to be unstoppable.”

The Sodexo win is the latest in a series of victories for labor in Louisiana. New Orleans cab drivers organized with AFSCME to fight back against unfair city regulations. The organized drivers were able to help elect a friendlier City Council and remove an unjust Taxicab Bureau director from his position.

Hospitality workers at New Orleans’ Harrah’s Casino and Hotel also organized to improve working conditions and pay in November 2014. Earlier in December, members of Local 1325, who provide city services to Shreveport residents, won a \$1,000 lump-sum payment just in time for the holidays.

Los Angeles California

UC Doctors Strike Over Unfair Labor Practices

Doctors at all 10 student health centers at the University of California conducted a one-day strike in January to protest the university’s lack of good-faith bargaining on a first contract. The doctors, members of the Union of American Physicians and Dentists, filed unfair labor practice (ULP) charges with

the Public Employee Relations Board.

“A ULP strike is the only way to compel UC to follow the laws that govern bargaining,” explained UAPD Pres. Stuart A. Bussey, M.D. “Unfortunately, UC has a history of disrespecting workers during negotiations.”

UC’s behavior left student health doctors stalled without a contract. The unfair bargaining tactics prompted more than 90 percent of UAPD members to vote in favor of a ULP strike.

“We organized a union so that UC would respect doctors, and take seriously its obligation to provide health care, including adequate mental health services, to the students,” said Charles

McDaniel, M.D., a psychiatrist who works at UCLA. “UC’s ongoing unfair labor practices are standing in the way of that.”

The university has a pattern of stonewalling in negotiations, and UAPD is not the only AFSCME affiliate at UC to go on strike. AFSCME Local 3299, patient care and services employees, went on strike twice last year to expose UC for its serial law-breaking and unfair negotiating tactics at the bargaining table.

The doctors were joined on the picket line by UC students, community supporters and other UC employees. It was the first strike by licensed doctors in the past 25 years.

Jefferson City MISSOURI

Home Care Providers Win Contract

After six years of organizing and finding the courage to tell their stories in front of legislators, the community and the press, along with intense phone banking, home visiting, letter writing and frequent visits to the Capitol, members of the Missouri Home Care Union overwhelmingly voted in December to approve their first contract with the state.

“One thing we know for sure is there would be no rights, no contract, no voice, no quality home care council, nothing if we didn’t pull together and make it happen,” said home care attendant Elizabeth Travis. “We still have work to do to get our agreement put into effect, but we are on our way and if we keep stepping up we will get there.”

The contract empowers the 33,000 individuals who use Missouri Consumer Direct home care to set their attendants’ wages, rather than third-party vendors. Many of the state’s nearly 12,000 home care providers will receive a wage increase to the new hourly minimum of \$8.50 and consumers have the right to lift their attendants’ wages up to \$10.15 without vendor input. The contract also provides for holiday pay, grievance procedures and a stronger support system for care providers.



The Missouri Home Care Union, an AFSCME/SEIU partnership, reached an agreement with the state that will raise hourly wages, guarantee premium pay on holidays, and make the home health care system more transparent and responsive.

The victory results in part from an exciting new organizing model that focuses on collaboration between providers and consumers. It’s based on the belief that consumers understand better than anyone that improved working conditions for the people who care for them will lead to a more stable, reliable workforce. That’s something consumers need to maintain their independence.

“Without my attendant I can’t live the life I want to live,” said Kyle Auxier, a home care consumer from St. James. “We need to get our priorities straight, and this agreement gets us on the right track. I’ll definitely pay my attendants as much as I can, and I believe given the opportunity, my fellow consumers in the program feel the same way.”

Jersey City NEW JERSEY

Insourcing Proves Better, Faster — And Less Expensive

After a year-long campaign, members of Local 2262 (Council 52) were able to convince the Jersey City School District that insourcing services is not just cheaper but that AFSCME members do the work better.

Local 2262 partnered with Council 52 and the national union to put together an

aggressive anti-privatization campaign to bring work back in-house and, last summer, it paid off when the school district gave Local 2262 members the opportunity to do major renovation projects.

The school district’s superintendent and business administrator were so pleased with the work that they featured the work that Local 2262 members did during the superintendent’s “Tour of the Town” in November, highlighting improvements to the district’s facilities, including school libraries, cafeterias, science labs, classrooms and recreational facilities.

“Outsourcing our members’ work has been a problem for a long time,” said Local 2262 Pres. Bill Murawski. “We felt that we

could not take a wait-and-see approach. We decided to take the issue head-on and go on the offensive.”

Local 2262 was able to do this despite the fact that the new superintendent, Marcia Lyles, was a graduate of the Broad Academy, an organization known for promoting closures of public schools, expansion of charter schools, merit pay for teachers and weakening of school employee rights.

“We’ll do the work and we’ll do it well,” said Ted Jasiczek, one of the Local 2262 members who worked on the renovation projects during the summer. “We want to do these jobs and we know we can do them better, faster and at a lower cost than an outside contractor.”

Tompkins NEW YORK

Officers Honored for Saving an Inmate's Life

Four corrections officers who work at the Tompkins County Corrections Facility were honored last September as 'Officers of the Month' by the local Kiwanis Club for saving the life of an inmate who went into cardiac arrest while being processed into the facility.

Officers James Barrett, Robert Butcher, Mark Miller and John Talcott — all members of Local 2062 (Council 82) — each played a vital role in administering CPR and other emergency care to resuscitate the inmate. They also took him to the hospital.

"These guys did what they do every day — provide exemplary service to our community," said Matt Haney, president of Local 2062. "Their quick response, effective use of their training and commitment to doing a good job saved a man's life."

"We have corrections officers across the state who walk in jails and prisons never knowing if they will come out alive," added Council 82 Exec. Dir. James Lyman. "These dedicated women and men should be honored and



The Kiwanis Club of Ithaca-Cayuga presented the Frank G. Hammer Officer of the Month Award last September to (left to right) Officers Robert Butcher, Mark Miller, John Talcott and James Barrett.

recognized. These officers are prime examples of the high level of service our members provide to communities across the state."

Albuquerque New Mexico

City Workers Prevail After Five-Year Battle

After a five-year standoff, Albuquerque's public workers finally reached an agreement with the city on workers' contracts. This follows a court case

in which AFSCME won an injunction that prevented the mayor from imposing contracts that workers never agreed to. The agreements, which were reached through District Court-ordered mediation, were overwhelming ratified during day-long voting in January.

The new contracts include a long-overdue raise and protect workplace rights that were under threat during earlier stages of negotiations. The four agreements cover approximately 2,100 workers

in three locals, Local 624, blue collar and transit; Local 2962, clerical and technical; and Local 1888, city security.

"We refused to be bullied or bought off," says Tomas Romero, president of Local 1888. "We also give credit to several of our city councilors who stood by our side in this fight for workers' rights."

The city's labor-management relations ordinance does not require that negotiations be settled by independent arbitration during an impasse. But that does not mean the mayor has authority to impose

his own contract without reaching an agreement. Workers hope their case sends a clear message to other cities that don't have contract impasse arbitration clauses.

"This has been a long battle. It goes to show that members can hold the line," said Casey Padilla, president of Local 624. "Mayors cannot operate above the law. This is America, of the people, by the people. When we stand in solidarity, we can fight and stop anti-worker administrations."

Madison WISCONSIN

In Memoriam: Darold “Dode” Lowe, AFSCME Activist and Leader

Darold “Dode” Lowe, a longtime labor activist and Wisconsin AFSCME leader, passed away in November after battling an illness. He will be missed by many, including those to whom he was a mentor and a friend.

Always a union man first and a Democrat second, Lowe fought on behalf of working families until the very end. A stern critic of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, he made phone calls to urge voters to turn out for the 2014 midterm elections. After his passing, fellow Wisconsin political activists adopted the slogan, “Do It for Dode.”

In 2012, he and his wife Gretchen received Council 40’s Political Action Lifetime Achievement Award.

During a long and distinguished career, Lowe served as Council 40 staff representative, vice president of AFSCME



Darold “Dode” Lowe

Local 284 and president of AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 52. He was also a member of the Dane County Board of Supervisors, served on the Executive Board of the local Democratic Party and was a four-time delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

“He was passionate about politics and working-class issues more than anything,” said his friend and fellow union organizer Jason Sidener, director of Organizing and Political Action at AFSCME Wisconsin Council 40. “He was a true blue progressive. He did not have

patience for stupid people, and he had a crotchety streak that everybody loved him for. He could play the cranky old man to a ‘T’. He never rested; he volunteered so much of his time to not just unions and politics but to community service.”

Portland OREGON

Historic \$15 Minimum Wage Agreement Reached in Oregon

In a major improvement for Multnomah County’s lowest-paid public service workers, members of Local 88 (Council 75) ratified a contract this winter that increases the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for county employees through 2017.

The increase is scheduled to be phased in during three years, with the minimum salary being raised immediately to \$13 an hour (retroactive

to last July). It will increase to \$14 next July, then to \$15 in July 2016.

“Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 is a step toward continuing the work of bringing economic security to hardworking families in Oregon,” said Deirdre Mahoney-Clark, president of Multnomah County Employee’s Union-AFSCME Local 88. “When workers make a decent, living wage they don’t need to rely on government assistance programs to help them and their families survive.”

Despite nationwide support for a higher minimum wage for all workers, the federal government has thus far failed to act on it. Yet local and state governments are taking matters into their own hands. Last June, Seattle City Council members voted to increase the minimum wage. Last November, voters in Alaska, Arkansas,

Nebraska and South Dakota (and in San Francisco) did so as well.

In addition to the minimum wage increase, Local 88 members will receive a 2.7 percent cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increase, retroactive to last July. Their health care plans and cost sharing remain the same for the time being, but there will be a re-opener available starting in January 2016 that would allow employees to maintain the best level of benefits possible as the Affordable Care Act is implemented.

Just days before the victory in Multnomah County, a similar agreement came at Home Forward, Portland’s housing authority agency, and was an add-on clause to Local 3135’s existing contract. Thirty-three Home Forward employees are covered by the agreement, increasing their hourly rate to \$15 immediately.

New York City **NEW YORK**

Lillian Roberts Retires as DC 37's Executive Director, Stays On as IVP

District Council 37 Exec. Dir. Lillian Roberts retired Dec. 31 from the post she held for 13 years, but continues her storied 60-year-career fighting for workers' rights as an AFSCME International vice president.

In a letter to AFSCME's Executive Board, Roberts recommended the appointment of DC 37 Assoc. Dir. Henry Garrido as executive director of DC 37. DC 37's Executive Board elected Garrido, without opposition, to lead the city's largest public worker union.

In her letter to the board, Roberts wrote, "It has been a great pleasure to serve the members of DC 37 and to have had the opportunity to lead this Council through some of



Lillian Roberts

our most turbulent times in history. Although I am leaving the office of Executive Director, I will hold all of you and the members in my heart. I will always treasure those moments I spent working directly with members. I will always be passionate about this Council, the Executive Board, our members, and, of course, our International Union, AFSCME."

Last summer, at AFSCME's International Convention in Chicago, Pres. Lee Saunders praised Roberts' career as he presented the legendary labor leader with the AFSCME Lifetime Achievement Award.

In her comments to AFSCME Convention delegates upon receiving the award, Roberts observed that, after joining DC 37, "All I cared about was the dignity of work, and I knew that I needed a union so I wouldn't have to kiss somebody's behind." That, she added, "is why we have a union. It's the only force that you have that gives you dignity. This union is the greatest in the world. It's your mouthpiece for justice."

Baxter **MINNESOTA**

AFSCME Retiree Wins City Council Seat

As public service workers and union members, we take our civic duties seriously. We vote, we call our elected representatives, and we talk to our neighbors about the issues that affect us. Steve Barrows took that commitment to public service even further last year when he decided to run for office in his hometown of Baxter. And he won!

Barrows, a member of Minnesota Retiree Chapter 5, retired several years ago after decades in state social services. But he wasn't done working to make Baxter a better place. The

town of 7,600 people is growing and evolving. "There's an opportunity for forward-thinking and planning to make sure we are a healthy, viable, attractive community," he says.

The new City Council member says his experiences with Local 1574 gave him the skills needed to run for office.

"My background as a union member gave me confidence over the years as I attended conventions and took on leadership roles in the local," Barrows says. "I got to see how things get organized and look at the bigger picture when considering issues. The relationships you build with your brothers and sisters are the same kinds



Steve Barrows

of relationships you want to build with constituents."

Barrows is looking forward to bringing his union values to the City Council. He believes that positive labor relations will pay off for everyone in the community.

"We know that our city employees work hard and they're quality people," he says. "I want to continue that

relationship so that the city gets the most bang for its buck."

He believes the labor movement succeeds when union members are willing to serve in government.

"The first thing is to vote, but it's also important for people who are so inclined to get out there and run for office," he says.

AFSCME Executive Board Summary Report

This report summarizes the meeting of the International Executive Board held on Dec. 2, 2014, in Leesburg, Virginia.

At the Dec. 2 meeting, President Saunders announced the national 50,000 Stronger internal organizing campaign continued to exceed its goal, with the tally to date at 131,111 new members.

The Board also reviewed specific organizing successes and received updates on current organizing campaigns with Chicago taxi drivers, Council 28 Medicaid Interpreters, L.A. Medical Center Mission, Sodexo LSU Medical Center, Jersey City Schools, Erie County Schools and Kankakee County Training Center.

During briefings on the November midterm elections results, it was noted there is a decreased turnout of the electorate at the same time that there is a growing disconnect between middle-class voters and politicians running for elected office. The Board concluded there is a need to connect with these voters around key economic issues.

At the state level, the Board heard a presentation on upcoming lame-duck and 2015 legislative sessions. The Board also discussed AFSCME's legislative priorities in Congress, including the need to increase funding for worker training, emergency Ebola funding and the Child Care Development Block Grant program.

The Board was given a presentation on pending lawsuits brought by the National Right to Work Foundation and its allies, and a decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, which is likely headed to the U.S. Supreme Court on appeal, concerning the constitutionality of the collection of fair share fees.

Efforts to impose local right-to-work laws in Washington state and Louisville, and model bills designed to limit AFSCME's representational rights, also were reviewed by the Board.

President Saunders noted the retirement of Lillian Roberts as executive director of District Council 37, effective Dec. 31, 2014. Assoc. Dir. Henry Garrido was appointed the new executive director by District Council 37's Executive Board.

Also, the Board adopted President Saunders' recommendation to reappoint to the Judicial Panel the following members: Richard Gollin, executive director of New Jersey Council 52; Kahim Boles of Pennsylvania Local 2187 and Michael Hanna of Oregon Local 88. All appointments will run from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2017.

POLITICAL REBATE

Article IX, Section 14, of the AFSCME International Constitution includes a rebate procedure for members who object to the expenditure of union funds for partisan political or ideological purposes. The rebate is not available to those who are members under a union shop or similar provision — or to non-members who pay agency shop or similar fees to the union.

The timing of the rebate procedure is tied to the International's recent fiscal year, which ended December 31, 2014. The procedures, including the requirements for submitting a proper rebate request, were adopted by delegates to the International Convention and are spelled out in Article IX, Section 14, of the International Constitution and summarized below. THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE

STRICTLY ENFORCED.

Eligible members who object to the expenditure of a portion of their dues for partisan political or ideological purposes and want to request a rebate must do so individually in writing. Written requests must be postmarked between April 1 and April 16, 2015, and must be sent via registered or certified mail to BOTH the International Secretary-Treasurer AND the council with which the member's local is affiliated (or if no council affiliation, to the member's local union).

The request must contain the following information: the member's name, Social Security number or member number, home address, e-mail address, if available, and the AFSCME local and council number to which dues were paid during the preceding year. This information must be typed or legibly printed. The individual request must be signed by the member and

sent by the individual member to: Laura Reyes, International Secretary-Treasurer, AFSCME, 1625 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-5687, AND to the council with which the member's local is affiliated (or if no council affiliation, to the member's local union). Requests from more than one person may not be sent in the same envelope. Each request must be sent individually. Requests must be submitted in writing each year.

Upon receipt of a valid rebate request, an application for partisan political or ideological rebate will be sent to the objecting member. The objecting member will be required to complete and return the application within 30 days of its issuance. The application will require the objecting member to identify those partisan political or ideological activities to which objection is being made. In determining the amount of the rebate to be paid to any member,

the International Union and each subordinate body shall have the option of limiting the rebate to the member's pro-rata share of the expenses for those activities specifically identified in the application.

Any member who is dissatisfied with the amount of the rebate paid by the International Union or any subordinate body may object by filing a written appeal with the AFSCME Judicial Panel within 15 days after the rebate check has been received. Appeals should be sent to the Judicial Panel Chairperson at the AFSCME International Headquarters at the address listed above. The Judicial Panel will conduct a hearing and issue a written decision on such appeals, subject to an appeal to the full Judicial Panel. If dissatisfied with the Judicial Panel's ruling, a member can appeal to the next International Convention.

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An Inmate's Best Friend Dog Partnership Programs Prove Their Value

By Pablo Ros

Nobody should be willing to compromise public safety to save money. And yet many local and state governments do just that, outsourcing corrections jobs to private companies that end up charging taxpayers more and providing a lower quality service.

That's why the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) deserves kudos for an innovative approach to improving public safety while also saving money: bringing dogs into prisons.

Steve Curran, a corrections officer who is a member of Local 1565 and an executive board member of Council 4, is Dog Program Coordinator for the Department of Correction. He is in charge of three innovative programs that partner dogs with inmates to improve conditions inside the corrections facilities. By helping reduce the inmates' levels of stress and anxiety, the dogs contribute to their rehabilitation, improve safety conditions inside prisons, and create a safer environment for officers. Because these programs are operated with contributions, they are essentially free to taxpayers.

"I've seen it time and again," Curran says. "The level of anxiety in the housing units diminished quite a bit."

Helping Veterans, Saving Dogs

The benefits of these programs go beyond the walls of the facilities. At Enfield Correctional Institution, the DOC partnered with America's VetDogs, a nonprofit that provides guide dogs



Steve Curran, Local 1565 (Council 4), is dog program coordinator for the Connecticut Department of Correction.

to military veterans with disabilities. Before they are assigned to the veterans, the puppies are socialized and trained by the inmates.

At York Correctional Institution, the animals are provided by Dog Days Adoption Events, Inc., a nonprofit that supports the adoption of dogs that would otherwise be euthanized. The dogs are brought into the prison "freaked out and nervous," as Curran puts it, and then settle down as inmates handle them and help socialize them. In due time, many of the dogs are ready for adoption.

A similar goal is achieved at the Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center, which partnered with We Adopt Greyhounds, Inc., a

nonprofit that places retired racing greyhounds in homes throughout Connecticut.

Curran says even inmates with life sentences appreciate the incentive of interacting with dogs.

"It allows them a couple of hours a week to socialize with the dogs and kick back," he says.

Through these programs, the Connecticut Department of Correction and AFSCME members are proving that by thinking outside the box, it's possible to save money and improve public safety while keeping corrections jobs under public control.