



**ON THE**

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# **MOVE**

**Illinois Council 31—American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—AFL-CIO**



## **Celebrating labor**

**AFSCME members joined community events to honor Illinois workers on Labor Day  
Pages 8-9**

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

# A man of his word? Not likely

### Rauner still seems to be looking for a fight



BY  
ROBERTA LYNCH

**PUBLIC SERVANTS  
MAKE  
OUR STATE  
A BETTER PLACE.**

Illinois state employees care for veterans, prevent child abuse, protect public safety, respond in emergencies and help those in need. They are also parents, grandparents and community volunteers. Far from the villains that billionaire governor Bruce Rauner makes them out to be, these vital public servants make our state a better place.

RAUNER HAS MISREPRESENTED THE IMPACT OF UNIONS ON THE STATE'S ECONOMY, DISTORTED the data on public employee wages and benefits, and attempted to blame state workers for the state's multi-billion dollar budget shortfall.

But nowhere was Rauner's propensity for fabrication more in evidence than the recent high-stakes, high-profile battle over Senate Bill 1229, legislation providing an alternative to the potential disruption of a strike or lockout in the current round of state contract negotiations.

It was clear from the outset of those negotiations that the governor was seeking to provoke conflict, not reach resolution. While the union's proposals were limited and modest in recognition of Illinois' budgetary woes, Rauner not only demanded steep economic concessions, but brought in dozens of proposals that would strip away workplace rights and undermine workplace safety.

For months, the governor's bargaining team barely budged on any of its extreme demands that would have effectively decimated the union contract. At the same time, the Administration began quietly recruiting retired state employees as strikebreakers, and is reported to have even begun discussions with the Illinois National Guard to take over the work of state employees. It seemed all too likely to union members that there was a game plan in place to force employees out on strike—and keep them out—as the governor during his campaign had repeatedly

pledged to do.

That's why AFSCME decided to support legislation that provided an alternative path to a fair contract by extending to all state employees the option of "interest arbitration," a process by which outstanding issues in a contract dispute are submitted to a panel of independent arbitrators for resolution.

It's the same process that has been in place for more than three decades for police officers, firefighters and other public safety personnel.

Rauner called this reasonable legislation the "worst bill in the history of Illinois" and vetoed it in July. He began spreading the accusation far and wide that arbitrators have a pro-union bias and would almost inevitably rule for the union. In fact, a review of all 656 rulings issued in public safety contract disputes since 2012 found that they pretty much split down the middle—44 percent for the union, 43 percent for the employer.

The Senate overrode Rauner's veto in August and as the House considered the same action, Rauner told legislators that his team had taken proposals off the bargaining table that had never been withdrawn. And he said that the union was making demands that had never been put on the bargaining table.

Meanwhile, super-PACs allied with the governor—including Turnaround Illinois and the Koch Brothers-funded Americans for Prosperity—flooded legislative districts with paid robocalls and attack ads, intimidating lawmakers and

confusing voters by echoing Rauner's false claims. In the end, the House failed to override Rauner's veto by just three votes.

The battle to enact SB 1229 gave voice to the hopes and concerns of thousands of Illinois state employees. They are strongly committed to the vital services they provide, and want to do everything possible to avoid the disruption and hardship that a work stoppage would bring. The bill came within a whisper of becoming law and helped to shine a bright light on Rauner's confrontational bargaining strategy. It impelled the governor to publicly commit not to lock out state employees and to bargain in good faith to reach a contract settlement.

Unfortunately, it's hard to believe that this particular zebra has actually changed his stripes. Rauner's hostility toward working people and labor unions appears to be hard-wired.

What has changed as a result of the battle over SB 1229, though, is awareness among the wider public about what is at stake in state employees' contract negotiations. Despite the unrelenting barrage of misinformation emanating from Rauner's public relations apparatus, support for state employees continues to bloom—with those brightly-colored 'We Support State Workers' signs popping up in yards, windows and local businesses across the state. The many state employees who joined in Labor Day parades and festivities—often wearing their AFSCME green—were heartened by the applause and cheers that greeted them.

It's increasingly clear that our fellow citizens do not want to see the kind of conflict that a labor dispute would cause. The governor claimed he could reach a contract settlement without such conflict. The AFSCME bargaining committee will do everything possible to ensure that's one pledge he keeps.



#### On the Move

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Larry Brown

# Union bill shines light on Rauner's bargaining tactics

SB 1229 override vote fails by slim margin in the House of Representatives



**A** bill challenging Republican Governor Bruce Rauner's scheme to break off negotiations and impose harsh contract terms on state employees made it all the way to the legislative goal line, but was ultimately defeated by the governor's campaign of lies and intimidation.

SENATE BILL 1229, KNOWN AS THE 'FAIR ARBITRATION BILL,' WAS DEVELOPED IN RESPONSE TO Rauner's refusal to move off of his extreme demands at the bargaining table, which were "like nothing we'd ever seen before," according to Steve Howerter, president of Local 3585 at Illinois River Correctional Center and a member of the AFSCME bargaining committee.

SB 1229 would have provided interest arbitration as an alternative to a lockout or strike if no agreement is reached at the bargaining table between unions representing state employees and the Rauner Administration. The bill passed by large majorities in both houses during the spring legislative session, but was vetoed by Governor Rauner in July. On August 19, the Illinois Senate

voted to override the governor's veto. But on September 3 the override motion in the House fell just three votes short of the three-fifths approval needed to make the bill law.

Thousands of state employees—as well as friends, families and neighbors—rang legislators' phones off the hook, sending more than 15,000 messages of support for this common-sense legislation that would have prevented the potential hardship and disruption of a strike or lockout if state contract negotiations break down.

"The governor says he wants to negotiate, but in my opinion, he wants to force us out on strike and make us look like bad people," said Joe Lewis, a member of the AFSCME bargaining committee and president of Local 494 at Pontiac Correctional Center.

Although the bill did nothing more than extend to child protection workers, nurses, caregivers, emergency responders and other state employees the same independent arbitration process provided to police, fire and other public safety personnel in Illinois for more than 30 years, the governor waged a ferocious counterattack of deception and intimidation to defeat it.

Using discredited "data," Rauner attacked state employees as "overpaid" with "excessively generous" pensions and health care benefits. Organizations allied with the billionaire governor—including Turnaround Illinois, the Illinois Policy Institute and Americans for Prosperity—poured massive amounts of money into paid robocalls and full-page newspaper ads. Republican legislators who considered supporting the bill were threatened with the loss of financial support and possible expulsion from their party caucus.

As a result, not a single Republican state representative voted for the override motion—despite the deluge of calls, emails and letters they received from their constituents in support of the bill. Nine Republi-

can legislators voted "present," including three legislators in the Springfield area with a significant number of union constituents.

**"What Rauner wants would be harmful to us, to the public, to the entire state."  
—Steve Howerter, AFSCME Local 3585**

can legislators voted "present," including three legislators in the Springfield area with a significant number of union constituents.

Just about every Democratic House member voted to override Rauner's veto—with Rep. Esther Golar making the trip down to Springfield to help reach the 71 votes needed despite being very ill. But Rep. Ken Dunkin, another Chicago Democrat, failed to show up in Springfield and subsequently made clear that he sided with Governor Rauner in attacking state employees and their unions. And suburban Democrat Scott Drury offered up the bizarre theory that he voted "No" because he knew better

than state employees what was good for them. While Rauner claimed victory when the final vote was taken, the battle to enact SB 1229 was in fact a big plus for union members. It helped to shine a bright light on Rauner's extreme demands at the bargaining table and his strategy to try to provoke a strike that would shut down state government.

"As more legislators have learned about the governor's extreme demands, a growing number have pledged to help in our fight in any way they can," said Council 31 Legislative Director Joanna Webb-Gauvin.

Speaking on behalf of the labor movement after the vote came down, Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan said: "The governor's ferocious and false attacks on this moderate and responsible bill clearly show he wants conflict, not compromise. His assault poisoned the well for legislators of both parties who want to work together responsibly to solve problems and serve the people of Illinois. It is clear that Governor Rauner will stop at nothing to carry out his scorched-earth agenda against working people, their rights and well-being."

Nearly every other union representing state workers—SEIU, IFT, FOP, PBPA, INA, LIUNA, and the Trades Coalition—stood together with AFSCME in support of the veto override.

"We're all committed to standing together against Rauner's confrontational tactics," said Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch. "State employees don't want to be forced out on strike, but we're determined not to let Governor Rauner undercut workers' rights, jeopardize workplace safety or threaten the economic security of working families."

Lynch said that if the governor continues to hold to the extreme demands he's making, then AFSCME members will make the determination as to whether a strike is the necessary response.

"What Rauner wants would be harmful to us, to the public, to the entire state," Steve Howerter said.

Joe Lewis urged that state employees keep up the grassroots actions that propelled SB 1229 to center stage in Illinois politics: "Stay strong. We all have to be united because it's going to take everyone's help to win."

# Cook County employees win raises, protect health care

After more than two years of battling, AFSCME members prevail with a fair contract



Preckwinkle's office to demand a fair contract. Cook County AFSCME members pledged at the outset that they would stand firm to protect health care coverage and ensure economic progress for every AFSCME member. They succeeded and won a five-year contract.

One frustration felt by the entire committee was over the county's refusal to fully address the concerns of the four AFSCME Sheriff's Office locals. The members of those locals are not party to the settlement reached but instead are now going through the interest arbitration process.

"The Sheriff's Office locals hung in there and supported the rest of the committee right through to the end of the last late night of bargaining," Cook County Investigators Local 1767 President Steve Ramsey said. "The rest of the committee was disappointed that the county refused to budge on those locals' issues, but we won't forget their steadfast solidarity with us. We are a united front."

Highlights of the new contract include pay increases totaling 10.75 percent over five years, preserving good health insurance, paid parental leave for up to six weeks, protection against unpaid "shutdown days," an extension of recall rights, upgrades for the lowest-paid employees, and improvement in the AFSCME pay plan resulting in higher salaries for long-term employees.

**T**housands of AFSCME members and their families will benefit from wage increases, strengthened health care benefits and other improvements throughout the life of a new five-year contract with Cook County.

Management was unwilling to budge for so long," Cisneros said. "But when we were in negotiating sessions, I would get voicemails from members saying, 'We're all wearing green in the office!' and it felt really good to know we had that support. Working together,

we were able to win a good contract."

In addition to Green Days, members packed County Board meetings, held informational pickets, and the entire 90-member bargaining committee marched into Cook County President Toni

The contract was ratified on July 14 and covers all AFSCME-represented Cook County employees except those under the jurisdiction of the sheriff.

The AFSCME bargaining committee stayed united and worked together over the last two-and-a-half years—the time it took to successfully negotiate a fair contract with the county. Weighing many different viewpoints and multiple priorities, the committee deftly handled negotiations that involved some 15 AFSCME local unions.

"I take my role very seriously," said Phillip Cisneros, vice president of Local 3939, a member of the AFSCME bar-

gaining committee and an accountant in the Cook County Public Guardian's Office. "This contract impacts some 4,000 AFSCME members and their families. We won because we stood united and spoke with one voice."

The county came to the bargaining table with a large package of concessionary demands while offering meager pay increases with no retroactive pay for the years of bargaining. In fact, by demanding steep new premium contributions and large increases in co-pays, management was in effect demanding a massive pay cut for every county employee.

"It was very frustrating.



# New AFSCME members are changing lives at Indian Oaks Academy

Looking for fair treatment, respect and support, more than 200 workers formed a union for good jobs and improved care of vulnerable youth



Indian Oaks Academy workers joined AFSCME in July.

Indian Oaks Academy has a national reputation as an outstanding residential treatment facility for at-risk youth, ages 12 to 21. That reputation is a result of the dedicated team who serves these young people every day.

CARING FOR YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CAN BE VERY CHALLENGING. EVERY STAFF MEMBER, FROM counselors, vocational coaches and teachers' aides to maintenance, food service and house-keeping staff is responsible for playing a role in the students' health and safety.

When new employees come on board, most of them are told to look to Fred Turner for advice. After 21 years as a counselor at Indian Oaks Academy, he has a lot of knowledge and passion to share.

"I could have gone to other jobs but I saw there was a great need," Turner said, when asked what has kept him at Indian Oaks Academy for more than two decades. "There are so many kids coming to Indian Oaks who were abused by their family and by people in places where they turned for help. I can't help them all, but the ones I can help, that's what makes me stay."

Rodney Watts, a counselor at Indian Oaks for more than five years, feels that he has found his calling. "Out of all the jobs I've had, this is the job I was meant to do," he said. "I truly enjoy interacting with the kids. Teaching them to play the drums and sharing my love of poetry, I feel I am helping

them get a better life."

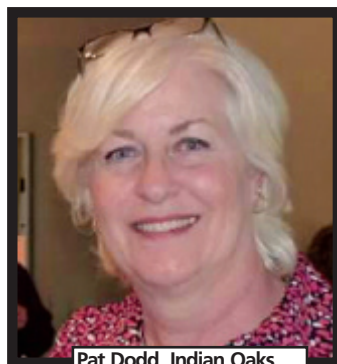
But working with troubled youth is not easy, especially when you don't feel supported by your employer. "We want people to respect us and realize that this is not an easy job. We are under a lot of stress. Dealing with a crisis every day can become overwhelming," Watts said. "There are a lot of staff who haven't felt safe or cared about for a long time. But now that we are united in a union, the energy on campus is better; we know we have each other's backs."

## Quality jobs, quality care

DESPITE PUTTING EVERYTHING they have into their jobs, most frontline staff are paid less than \$15 an hour and have worked for years without rights or representation on the job. "This is my ninth year at Indian Oaks Academy and I have just made it to \$13 an hour," said Patricia "Pat" Dodd, a grandmother of three who is a teacher's aide at the 12-month school on campus.

Dodd works in a special classroom for developmentally delayed students, ages 13 to 18, who are studying at various grade levels. Because the

teacher in her classroom left, Pat is expected to do the work of two people for no additional compensation. "When a co-worker approached me last spring and asked if I would be interested in a union, I said yes."



Pat Dodd, Indian Oaks Academy Teacher's Aide

Unfair, difficult working conditions contribute to the low morale and high turnover among support staff. Consistency is key to the students' well-being and these disruptions are detrimental to their treatment. While they are seeking wage increases and better benefits, staff are highly concerned about ensuring quality of care through safe staffing ratios and retention of trained, invested employees. "It's about us all coming together to get the best treatment for every kid," Watts said.

"With the union, we will be able to say, hey, listen to us, we have ideas that will make Indian Oaks Academy the best place it can be—for the staff and for the kids," Turner said. One of those ideas is to provide fair compensation. Many of the workers come to Indian Oaks

Academy with masters' degrees but leave when they see they can't build a career at the academy.

Turner believes that high turnover can be prevented if the organization values its workers. "We are trying to create a stable environment. If the kids don't have stability, they can't trust anyone and they can't heal. We need to help staff choose to stay and make a career out of helping these kids," he said. "Instead of continuing to be a revolving door, why not pay our people what they're worth?"



Fred Turner, Indian Oaks Academy Counselor

## The road to a brighter future

WHEN A MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS came forward wanting to form a union, their employer put up a fight. Nexus, a large national non-profit, ran an anti-union campaign attempting to stop them. Management held "captive audience" meetings with the workers—mandated anti-union meetings—and distributed materials disparaging the union.

"The meetings were insulting," Watts said. "There were also letters sent out to keep fear and uncertainty alive – to keep people on the fence."

But assertions like, "We're a family. We don't need an outside third party coming between us," are not convincing when most workers are paid less than \$13 an hour after years of service. Indian Oaks Academy employees stood strong while they were inundated with doomsday messages from management. "You find that people's minds quickly change when you explain what we can do together if we have a union," Watts said.

New federal rules governing how workers petition and vote for union representation ensured a more streamlined election process for Indian Oaks Academy workers. In the past, workers have had to wait more than a month to vote to unionize. After the Obama administration's reforms, elections can happen in as little as two weeks. At Indian Oaks Academy, a majority of workers voted to join AFSCME on July 14 and 15.

The Indian Oaks Academy bargaining committee was elected on September 3. Now workers are completing contract surveys to set their priorities for negotiations. This is the first time staff have been asked questions like, "What changes do you want to see at work? What tools would make you more effective at your job?" With a union, staff will be part of solving problems and creating fair policies. By organizing together, they will help ensure better care for the students of Indian Oaks Academy.

Fred Turner loves when kids who graduated from Indian Oaks call to tell their former counselor how they are doing. "That's when I know we're doing something special at Indian Oaks Academy. Instead of winding up in prison or harming themselves because they didn't get the treatment they needed, these young men and women are living on their own, getting their first apartment, finding jobs, getting married and taking care of themselves. They're doing great."

"That's what keeps me coming back every day – knowing I'm helping kids who felt they had no chance," Turner said. "I tell them all the time, 'I'm never going to give up on you. No matter what.'"

# Budget held hostage to Rauner's anti-worker agenda

Since taking office in January, Governor Rauner has been on a mission to decimate the rights of working people

The summer months have come and gone and the State of Illinois is still without an operating budget. Governor Rauner remains obstinate that he will not sign a spending plan or support the revenue increase needed to fund a responsible budget until the General Assembly passes a series of proposals aimed at lowering the standard of living for working families. Up to this point, Democrats in both the House and the Senate have stood strong against Rauner's anti-worker agenda—and so the budget impasse continues.

## Fiscal Year 2016 budget impasse

THE FY 2016 BUDGET PROPOSED by Governor Rauner was out of balance by more than \$3 billion and would have slashed programs and services, including a 31 percent cut to state universities, a 50 percent cut to state support for local governments, and a 12 percent rate cut for community agencies for individuals with developmental disabilities and nursing homes.

With Governor Rauner refusing to work toward a budget solution, Democrats in the House and Senate developed an alternative budget that contained smaller—but

broader and still painful—cuts in an effort to break the impasse.

While the Democratic budget also lacked adequate revenue, it gave the governor an opportunity to use his line-item and reduction veto power to demonstrate his budgeting priorities and enact a budget. However, in late June, Rauner issued a total veto of the General Assembly's spending plan, with the exception of the education budget.

The resulting stalemate has left a cloud of uncertainty over vital public services and those who provide them.

## Facility closures

DESPITE A RESOUNDING rejection by the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA), the Rauner Administration continues to move forward with the governor's plan to close the Hardin County Work Camp within the Department of Corrections and the Illinois State Museum along with all branch sites (Lockport Gallery, Dickson Mounds Museum, Rend Lake Arts Center, Thompson Center Gallery) and the Research



and Collections Center within the Department of Natural Resources.

Unnecessary and foolhardy, the proposed closures will eliminate important rehabilitative services and jeopardize the state's cultural legacy.

At the request of AFSCME Council 31, Senator Andy Manar introduced Senate Bill 317 to require the State of Illinois to operate and maintain an Illinois State

Museum and branch sites that remain open to the public. SB 317 passed the Illinois Senate on August 4 and a vote is expected in the House in September. Representative Emily McAsey is the House sponsor.

## Rauner's anti-working family agenda

INSTEAD OF FOCUSING HIS efforts on solving the real problems facing the State of Illinois, Governor Rauner has doubled down on trying to pass a lengthy wish-list of proposals largely aimed at annihilating unions and lowering the standard of living for all working people.

His "Turnaround Agenda" includes items like establishing local "right-to-work" zones; removing health care, wages and work rules (such as overtime and protections against subcontracting) as mandatory subjects of bargaining under the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act; cutting workers' compensation and unemployment insurance benefits; banning public employees from making political contributions and more.

As evident in neighboring states like Wisconsin and Indiana, such proposals, if enacted, would devastate middle-class families in Illinois.

# Men in jeans built America, men in suits destroying it

By NICHOLAS CONKLIN  
September 11, 2015

## An open letter to State Rep. Mike Unes:

I'm severely disappointed with your vote, as well as every other Republican vote concerning the Senate Bill 1229 override.

I work for the Department of Corrections. My family depends on my career to support them, so I make a persistent effort to give my all every shift of duty. Unfortunately, hard work is repeated-

ly attacked and undermined by politicians in this state.

How many phone calls did you receive voicing opposition to the override (other than those from the governor or other GOP members)? I'm aware of the threats from Gov. Rauner concerning reelections. I'm also aware of the threats of expulsion from the GOP if "yes" votes were cast. Coincidentally, every Republican voted in opposition. Did those threats close your once "open mind"? No? Are those simply malicious rumors? Well, welcome to being the target of misguided and malicious rumors, Mr. Representative. Similar malicious rumors have been cast on the dedicated public

employees of this state.

Public employees have been rumored to be union thugs, lazy, entitled, corrupt and overpaid. I'll set the record straight right now: I'm a proud, third generation union member, I work tirelessly in my duties. I refuse handouts. I leave corruption to the politicians. I earn every dollar of my pay.

I earn my pay and benefits when I leave my son on Christmas morning to go to work, not knowing if I'll be home that night to say, "Merry Christmas, son." I earn it every weekend when I'm working while my family is enjoying each other's company, cooking out. I earn it when I go to work to see an

**Hard work is repeatedly attacked and undermined by politicians in this state.**

inmate hanging dead, then make a conscience effort to not bring it home. I earn it when I can't walk in the Labor Day Parade that celebrates the working man, because I'll be working. I earn it when I walk into the cell of an inmate who is eating his own excrement because he's severely mentally ill. I earn it every day.

Employee loyalty and dedication gets you nothing work-

ing for this state. Instead you just get anxiety — over your pay and benefits getting cut. SB 1229 would have relieved some of those anxieties on working class families. Your no vote created them.

As the saying goes: "Men in jeans built this country. Men in suits are destroying it."

Nice suit, Mr. Unes.

Nicholas Conklin is a sergeant at the Illinois River Correctional Center in Canton and a member of AFSCME Local 3585. He lives in the 91st District.

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# Communities fight to save state museum

**G**overnor Bruce Rauner is threatening to close the Illinois State Museum in Springfield and all branch sites. These closures would seriously damage a key component of our state's cultural and historic heritage, while doing nothing to address the state's serious fiscal woes.

MUSEUM STAFFERS REPRESENTED BY AFSCME HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED LAYOFF NOTICES. THESE STATE workers curate exhibits, design educational programs, and maintain the collection of more than 12.5 million artifacts in six facilities across the state. Last year alone they welcomed nearly 400,000 families, teachers and students. Closing the museums would not only be a detriment to museum workers and the visitors they serve, but a loss of



some \$33 million to the Illinois economy each year as well.

Closing the museums'

doors would also cut off researchers' access to important collections in fields like botany, geology, paleontology, anthro-

pology and zoology, which are used to study critical issues such as human impact on the environment. The preservation of

Illinois' unique archive of Native American artifacts would be at risk, threatening skeletal remains and other sacred objects that are governed by written agreements with a number of tribes.

The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability voted 7-2 in favor of keeping the Illinois State Museum open on August 5. AFSCME members testified at the hearing, pushing to keep state museum sites open to the public. While the bipartisan commission's recommendations are not binding, the vote of support is a boon for the museum and the people of Illinois.

The threat to close the state museums is just another of Rauner's budget games. The few dollars saved by closing the six museums would be trivial compared to the state's loss in educational opportunities, tourist dollars and important research capacity.

The Illinois House of Representatives is currently considering Senate Bill 317, legislation to require a state museum, which was already passed by the Senate.

# Hardin County Work Camp plays vital role

Gives inmates tools to re-enter their communities, chance to perform work that ben-

**Y**et again, Governor Rauner is playing politics with people's lives, threatening to close the Hardin County Work Camp even though it is fully funded in his proposed spending bill for the Illinois Department of Corrections.

LOCATED IN FAR SOUTHERN ILLINOIS, THE MINIMUM-SECURITY FACILITY EMPLOYS 66 STAFF AND provides 6,500 community service hours to neighboring counties annually.

Inmates want to serve out their sentences at Hardin because it allows them to fill their time productively and earn money. The unfenced facility offers adult basic education and GED classes as well as a vocational program that trains inmates in hard-to-get construction skills by building homes for charities like Habitat for Humanity and Luther-

an Social Services.

Hardin County Work Camp inmates recently cleaned more than 116 miles of roadway and collected 1,810 bags of trash as part of Operation Pride. They've installed numerous bike racks along the Ohio River Scenic Byway and filled more than 1,400 sandbags for flood preparation. They operate a Garden Project that grows more than 6,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables that feed inmates at Hardin and Shawnee and benefit local food pantries, senior groups

and schools.

AFSCME members testified in support of the Hardin County work camp before the

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. The bipartisan commission recommended that the camp

remain open in a vote of 7-2, echoing the concerns of the area's residents.





# MAKING ILLINOIS WORK

## AFSCME members across Illinois celebrated Labor Day with family, friends & supporters

Union members are working for fundamental, lasting change. We know that this country needs an economy that works for everyone, not just the richest and most powerful. We are fighting so that all working people can support their families and build a better future.

Good jobs are what truly strengthen our families and communities—and our economy. Public policies and budgets that support good jobs can help put our economy back in balance by ensuring that all those who work hard can have a decent standard of living.

On Labor Day weekend this year, AFSCME members all across Illinois joined in parades and other community events to honor the working people who built this country and keep it working today. At a time when union members face unprecedented attacks from a wealthy elite, Illinois citizens enthusiastically applauded AFSCME floats and signs—affirming our efforts to stand up for public services and the employees who provide them.







Pana



Chester



Peoria



Granite City



Chicago

# Hundreds of NIU employees opt to join AFSCME

At Northern Illinois University, many staff members had gone more than five years without a pay raise



NIU employees proudly sign cards voting yes for their union.

**D**oing important support work for professors, students, academic departments and university administration, more than 600 clerical, technical, paraprofessional and administrative workers at Northern Illinois University have long been in need of a boost in income. Most of these workers are paid less than \$15 an hour.

THAT'S WHY A GROUP OF MORE THAN 100 WORKPLACE LEADERS FORMED A UNION ORGANIZING committee and was able to quickly build support among a majority of their co-workers. By signing up to join AFSCME, employees voiced their desire to bargain for better pay and stronger rights on the job.

These employees play a vital role at NIU, yet they have no voice in the decisions that affect them at work. Often the face of the university with students and visitors, they work in every office and department of the university: Admissions and records, international student services, budgeting and finance, academic departments and more. They are office managers within colleges and departments, child care providers at a day care center for faculty, staff and students, IT support, immigration specialists, business managers, book

store staff and even broadcast engineers and news specialists.

In recent years, the university has not replaced many retired staff members, increasing the workload and responsibilities for support staff dramatically without increasing their compensation. Short-staffing can hurt students when programs are stretched so thin that overloaded staff are unable to help students flourish.

Working for the university should be a good, middle-class job, but starting salaries for NIU's clerical staff are

below the federal poverty level for a family. At a recent town hall meeting, NIU spokespeople asserted that support staff are at the heart of their operations. However, NIU pays the lowest salaries to its administrative staff of any state university. In fact, some student workers are making as much as the full-time staff who have worked at NIU for years.

Hundreds of AFSCME members already work on campus in building, food

and health services. These workers have made substantial gains in their wages and benefits over their years as AFSCME members. For example, AFSCME-represented janitors start at \$12 an hour and benefit from annual step increases. After four years of service, janitors are paid \$19.10 an hour. But an office support associate, who hasn't had union representation, is making \$9.78 after six years of service. That's the union difference.

## ONE WORKER'S STORY—IN HER OWN WORDS

### Laura Harris, union activist and leader at Northern Illinois University

I came to NIU about three years ago and immediately noticed the disparity in wages between what we're paid and what other universities and organizations pay for the job we do. I've never had a raise or a cost-of-living increase. It seems like we're the last ones on the list—we are always put off to later. My co-workers and I are dedicated; we like our jobs, we're knowledgeable and we work hard. But we don't want to be taken for granted anymore.

That's why we contacted AFSCME. We want a voice on the job and we are ready to take action.

I'm 50 years old and I work 60 hours a week. As the Office Manager for the Department of Special and Early Education, I only make \$13 an hour. I work another job as a bookkeeper for a print company to help make ends meet. If we have a



voice on the job and a seat at the table, my hope is that people like me won't have to go out and find another job just to make the house payments.

During this process, our faculty has become more aware of what we are paid and they are very surprised. They tell me, "We didn't know you were paid so low!" When you tell someone in the community that you work at NIU, people respect that and it makes me proud. But in my heart I know the University should take better care of its employees.

Coming together with my co-workers to form a union has been an inspiring process. We're all very excited about it. It's taken off so fast and so many people have gotten involved. It's a different atmosphere at work now. We're hopeful. We see that as a group we are accomplishing something.

# Union wins another round in legal action to protect pensions

City of Chicago's pension-cutting legislation declared unconstitutional

**O**n July 24, a Cook County Circuit Court judge ruled on the side of active and retired City of Chicago employees who have always paid their fair share toward a modest retirement.

The court struck down legislation enacted last year that made steep cuts to pension benefits of participants in the Municipal Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund (MEABF).

The ruling follows an Illinois Supreme Court decision

earlier this year impacting state and university employees and teachers outside Chicago. The Supreme Court found legislation that made similar cuts to the pension benefits of participants in the SERS, SURS and TRS violated the state's constitutional prohibition against diminishment of public employee pension benefits.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who pushed the bill to cut the MEABF pension benefits, argued that it would be able to pass constitutional muster because it offered "consideration"—a commitment by the city to begin making its full pension contribution—in exchange for the benefit cuts. AFSCME and three other unions filed suit to overturn the law in January, challenging the Mayor's theory.

The Circuit Court affirmed the unions' argument. "This principle is particularly compelling where the Supreme Court's decision is so recent, deals with such closely parallel issues and provides crystal-clear direction on the proper interpretation of the law," the judge wrote. "The City's argument is fundamentally at odds with the Supreme Court's teachings."

"Overturning city pension cuts and protecting the life savings of public servants, this ruling is a win for all Chicago," AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "All city residents can be reassured that the Constitution—our state's highest law—means what it says and will be respected, while city employees and retirees can be assured that their modest retirement

**"Protecting the life savings of public servants, this ruling is a win for all Chicago."  
—AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch**

income is protected."

Under the ruling, employees and retirees enrolled in the MEABF and the Laborers Fund are entitled to recoup what they have already lost in higher contributions and lower benefits since the new law was implemented on January 1.

In addition, the judge rejected the city's threat to abandon the pension funds if the cuts were overturned. Again citing the Illinois Supreme Court's recent rul-

ing on a similar case, the judge emphasized that employers—in this case, the city—have an "enforceable obligation to pay [pension] benefits."

In light of the strong and clear ruling of the Circuit Court and the Supreme Court rulings, AFSCME urged the Emanuel Administration not to waste further time and taxpayer dollars on an appeal. Unfortunately, the city almost immediately announced its intention to take its case to the Supreme Court.

"AFSCME is ready to defend the integrity of the state constitution and the modest pensions that city employees and retirees have earned," Lynch said. "After diligently saving for a lifetime, public service workers deserve to retire in dignity."

## 19th Biennial AFSCME Council 31 Convention



**AFSCME members from across the state will gather in Springfield this October to adopt resolutions that will guide our work and vision for the next two years. Hundreds of delegates will also attend workshops and plenary panels with guest speakers, including International President Lee Saunders.**

**Follow @AFSCME31 on Twitter for live coverage of the biennial convention from October 15 to 17.**



# ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



City of Freeport workers and their families come together for good jobs and a fair contract.

## City of Freeport employees win raises, fight to protect health care and public services

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CITY of Freeport, 70 members of AFSCME Local 3367 overwhelmingly ratified a three-year successor agreement on September 2. The Freeport City Council voted to approve it a week later.

Negotiations for the contract were contentious and protracted. The workers circulated petitions, conducted worksite “sticker ups” and informational pickets, met with City Council members and packed City Council meetings. In April, a federal mediator stepped in to help prevent an impasse at both parties’ request.

After being presented with the city’s “last, best and final offer,” the workers voted to authorize a strike on June 22. But negotiations continued without a work stoppage, and the bargaining team held fast, fighting to protect benefits and winning

a lump-sum COLA payment and annual increases totaling four percent over the life of the contract. The three-year contract is retroactive to May 1, 2014, and expires on April 30, 2017.

“While our membership made the collective decision to resolve this phase of the struggle, we have a fight ahead,” said Don Hall, president of Local 3367. “We received a lot of community support, and we are ready and more determined than ever.”

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Joe Bella and Staff Representative Ed Sadlowski, the Local 3367 bargaining team included President Don Hull, Vice President Don Packard and Executive Board members Dawn Fernandez, Patrick Ingram and Brian Johnson with Toni Busker, Scott Maher, Katie Nolan and Katy Westaby.

that better reflect current operations and provide for overtime to be offered based on seniority.

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Ed LaPorte, the local 2232 bargaining committee included President Tronda Minnie and Recording Secretary Jeffrey Minnie. While the team was unable to secure increases for 2014 or 2015, they will return to the table to negotiate with the university next year.

## City of LaSalle employees improve longevity pay

WATER TREATMENT AND STREET department workers, 911 telecommunicators, office administrators and other AFSCME members employed by the City of LaSalle recently won a three-year agreement with wage increases in every year of the contract. Employees and their families will benefit from a seven percent raise over the life of the contract, as well as a significant gain derived from rolling longevity pay into the workers’ base pay.

“This was one of the best contracts we’ve seen since becoming a union,” said Local 2823 President Jennifer Terry, a city payroll clerk.

“Our longevity pay is based on our years of service and it has always been separate from our base pay. Now it is rolled into our base so overtime and other benefits are reflective of our total salary.”

The bargaining team stayed focused at the table to convince the mayor and representatives of the city council that if the police have that longevity pay benefit, other city workers should as well.

“We also won a bump in our clothing allowance and more flexibility with sick time. Instead of needing to take a half-day for a doctor appointment, we can take our sick time in one-hour increments,” said Terry.

AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Randy Dominic led the Local 2823 bargaining committee, which included President Terry and Vice President Thomas Lijewski. The team settled the contract quickly; negotiations began in early August and members ratified their new contract on August 28.



Deputy Tim Price, Sheriff Shannon Wolff and Chief Steward Deputy Shane Rinehart

## Randolph County sheriff's deputies and courthouse officers win raises

RANDOLPH COUNTY SHERIFF’S deputies and courthouse security officers of AFSCME Local 2402 won new three-year agreements in August. The agreements are effective retroactively to December 1, 2014, and include annual wage increases totaling 8.5 percent over the life of the contract.

“With both sides making reasonable concessions, this was collective bargaining at its best,” said Council 31 Staff

Representative Ty Petersen. “Negotiations went smoothly and we were able to hammer out a deal that works for everyone, including the people of Randolph County.”

The local 2402 bargaining team—led by Peterson, with Deputy Shane Rinehart and Officers Mary White and Richard Tooley—negotiated with Sheriff Shannon Wolff and the Randolph County Board.

## Joliet School District, Park District workers make gains

JOLIET SCHOOL DISTRICT 204

bus drivers, drivers’ aides and dispatchers successfully negotiated a four-year contract. More than 140 members of AFSCME Local 197 and their families will benefit from a 12 percent raise over the life of the contract that was ratified on September 9.

In addition to winning a three-percent annual wage increase, the school district workers won increased protections for their route assignments and summer school route selection.

The Local 197 bargaining team included President Jim McDonald, Vice President Inez Hite, Recording Secretary Mildred Harris and Executive Board member Hugh Jeffers, and was led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Joe Pluger.

Also in Joliet, nearly 50 members of AFSCME Local 791 service and maintain more than 1,650 acres of parks, golf courses, forest preserves and other Joliet Park District facilities. These workers, who include maintenance staff, craftsmen, horticulturists, aquatic technicians and more, ratified a new four-year agreement earlier this sum-

mer. Protecting health care and other benefits, the workers won two percent raises in every year of the agreement.

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Joe Pluger, the Local 791 bargaining committee included President Brian Eggemeyer, Vice President Ted Woolsey and Executive Board member Tom Willaby.

While the contract was being negotiated, AFSCME members also helped elect a fellow AFSCME member, Joe Mutz of Local 440, to the Park District Board of Commissioners.

## Southern Illinois University/Edwardsville

NEGOTIATIONS AT SIU/Edwardsville have proven difficult in recent years as Illinois’ public universities face unstable funding. The end result for the 105 members of AFSCME Local 2232 who provide custodial services on the campus was a two-percent wage increase for one year, retroactive to 2013.

The agreement ratified on July 13 also made some improvements to the contract



## Imitation: The sincerest form of flattery



All over the state, AFSCME's colorful "We Support State Workers" signs (above) stand in yards and office windows. They're so popular that the Illinois Policy Institute—a right-wing front group that's connected to Governor Rauner and the Koch Brothers but claims to be an independent

research organization—created a strikingly similar one of its own (right). But the joke is on them: In addition to providing the vital public services that every Illinois community relies on, every state employee is a taxpayer, too—and that's all the more reason we have strong public support.

## Illinois Supreme Court hears state employee back pay case

For nearly four years AFSCME has been battling in court—and winning each round—to secure the back pay owed to thousands of state employees. Now the case has made its way up to the Illinois Supreme Court, which heard oral arguments on the dispute on September 23.

THE CONFLICT STEMS FROM A DECISION BY THEN-GOVERNOR PAT QUINN IN 2011 TO WITHHOLD A NEGOTIATED PAY RAISE. AFSCME SWIFTLY WON A RULING BY AN INDEPENDENT ARBITRATOR THAT THE WAGES WERE OWED AND MUST BE PAID. BUT THE STATE APPEALED THE ARBITRATOR'S RULING IN CIRCUIT COURT.

The Circuit Court denied the appeal and affirmed the arbitrator's decision that the

wages must be paid. At that point, Governor Quinn agreed to accept the Circuit Court ruling and not to pursue any further appeals. However, Attorney General Lisa Madigan disagreed with the governor and appealed the Circuit Court ruling to the First District Appellate Court.

In September 2014 the Appellate Court issued a

unanimous decision flatly rejecting the Attorney General's argument that funding for the wages must be appropriated and affirming AFSCME's argument that the arbitrator's order to pay the wages should be upheld.

"We hold that the arbitrator's award comports with the overriding public policy of permitting the State to negotiate enforceable multi-year collective bargaining agreements with unions of state employees, and the award furthers the express constitutional policy forbidding the General Assembly from passing any acts, including insufficient appropriations bills, that impair the obligation of contracts," the appellate judges wrote.

Despite the clarity of the

Appellate Court's ruling, the Attorney General subsequently appealed that ruling to the Illinois Supreme Court, securing a stay of the lower court's ruling that required immediate payment of the wages owed.

As this case has slowly made its way through the legal system, AFSCME has been able to secure payment of all or partial wages owed for thousands of employees through administrative and legislative pressure. But there are still several thousand employees who are each owed thousands of dollars. The Supreme Court's ruling will be critical for them.

"State workers have waited far too long for what is owed to them," Council 31

Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "AFSCME has never given up this fight. We've won every legal round so far and we are optimistic that the Supreme Court will affirm the sound reasoning of the lower courts."

The late Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka had clearly stated that if there was a court order that the wages must be paid, she would immediately issue the checks—without any additional legislative authorization.

"If the Supreme Court ruling upholds the arbitrator's decision, we would hope that the current Comptroller, Leslie Munger, will follow through on the commitment that her predecessor made," Lynch said.

# RETIREE NOTES



Retirees from Subchapter 66 (Lake County) deliver a Medicare birthday cake to Congressman Bob Dold's office in Lincolnshire to urge him to keep the federal program affordable.

## Lake County retirees deliver Medicare birthday cake to US Congressman

ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF Medicare, AFSCME retirees had one birthday message for the US Congress: Hands off our Medicare.

Retirees from the Lake County sub-chapter delivered a birthday cake to US Congressman Bob Dold at his Lincolnshire office, calling on him to end his attacks on the critical federal insurance program. The delivery of birthday cakes was part of a nationwide initiative aimed at lawmakers who have a poor voting record on the issue of Social Security and Medicare, and across the country more than 200 birthday cakes were delivered to members of the US Congress in their home districts.

"As Medicare celebrates its 50th year, there is a continuing push by some politicians like Rep. Dold to dismantle the program," said Barbara Franklin, recording secretary for Chapter 31. "Retirees in our area are struggling to get by, but they know how much worse things would be without Medicare."

John Tilden, president of the Lake County sub-chapter said, "Rep. Dold has not been on the side of retirees when it comes to Medicare, and we hope that he will use this

anniversary as an opportunity to re-think his positions. Retirees need to speak up about Medicare to make sure it will last for future generations."

## New retiree subchapter chartered in Eastern Illinois

RETIREES IN EASTERN ILLINOIS now have a chartered sub-chapter to call their own. Officially chartered in August, AFSCME Retiree Sub-Chapter 91 serves Effingham, Jasper, Crawford and Clay counties and already numbers more than 200 members strong.

Elected president of the new sub-chapter was Floyd Clark, who served most of his 29-year career as a correctional officer at Robinson Correctional Center and was formerly the president of Local 3649.

Previously, retirees in the area would receive all the benefits and communications associated with being a member of AFSCME retirees, but had no official sub-chapter to build collective power locally. But now, as Clark pointed out: "By organizing members from our local area into an active retiree sub-chapter, we can build and strengthen relationships with our elected officials to protect our hard earned retirement benefits."

Sub-Chapter 91 meets on the second Monday of each

month at 11 a.m. at Monical's Pizza, located at 1703 West Main Street in Robinson.

## Rauner sets sights on state, university retiree health care

BRUCE RAUNER HAS TARGETED the health care plans of state and university retirees for cuts that could result in a massive increase in out-of-pocket insurance costs.

Rauner has repeatedly stated since his inauguration that the health insurance plans used by state and university workers and retirees should be "more in line with those received by the taxpayers that pay for them." When pressed for clarification of what this would mean in dollar figures, Rauner administration officials said that the health care plans should be more like "bronze plans" offered under the Affordable Care Act.

While the Governor has moved off his initial demand, the Administration continues to forward a health care proposal that will place state and university worker health care benefits among the worst in the nation.

It is also important to note that last summer's Kanerva decision by the Illinois Supreme Court only dealt with charging retiree health care premiums. Out-of-pocket costs such as co-payments, deductibles, prescription costs, and dependent con-

tributions could all still be subject to increases under that Supreme Court ruling.

"Retirees should not be lulled into a false sense of security. The health care premium case in particular was narrow in scope, and did not touch upon the biggest driver of rising costs for state and university retirees: Out-of-pocket expenses," Chapter 31 Retiree Coordinator David Amerson said. "The fact that out-of-pocket costs can still rise should be apparent to all retirees who saw their co-pays and deductibles continue to increase after the Kanerva decision. Retirees need to pay close attention to developments in Springfield, and be prepared to act to protect their retirement security."

## Remembering Joyce King

THE AFSCME FAMILY WAS SADDENED this summer by the passing of Retirees Chapter 31 Executive Board member and long-time union advocate Joyce King.

Joyce King, born November 23, 1925, in Waukegan, worked as a social worker with the Department of Children and Family Services in Peoria for 42 years. In 1979, fed up with the poor working conditions, Joyce contacted AFSCME after some of her co-workers were fired for voicing their con-

cerns.

Joyce subsequently was elected the first chief steward of her new union local, a position she served in until her retirement in 1994. She also served on the negotiating committee that brought home the first state master contract.

Upon retirement, Joyce remained a fierce advocate for workers' rights. She served on the State Employees Retirement System board of trustees for 15 years and was an executive board member of AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 for 21 years. She also served as the recording secretary for the Peoria retiree sub-chapter for 19 years.

Joyce was active in her community, serving on the Peoria Women's Civic Federation Board and the American Association of University Women Board.

"We've done so much as a union to improve working conditions," Joyce told On the Move the year she retired. "The union has great potential not just for helping employees, but it also gives people some feeling that they have control over their work situation."

If you live in an area of the state without an organized sub-chapter and are interested in starting one, contact AFSCME Retiree Coordinator David Amerson at (217)

# Chicago cab drivers join AFSCME

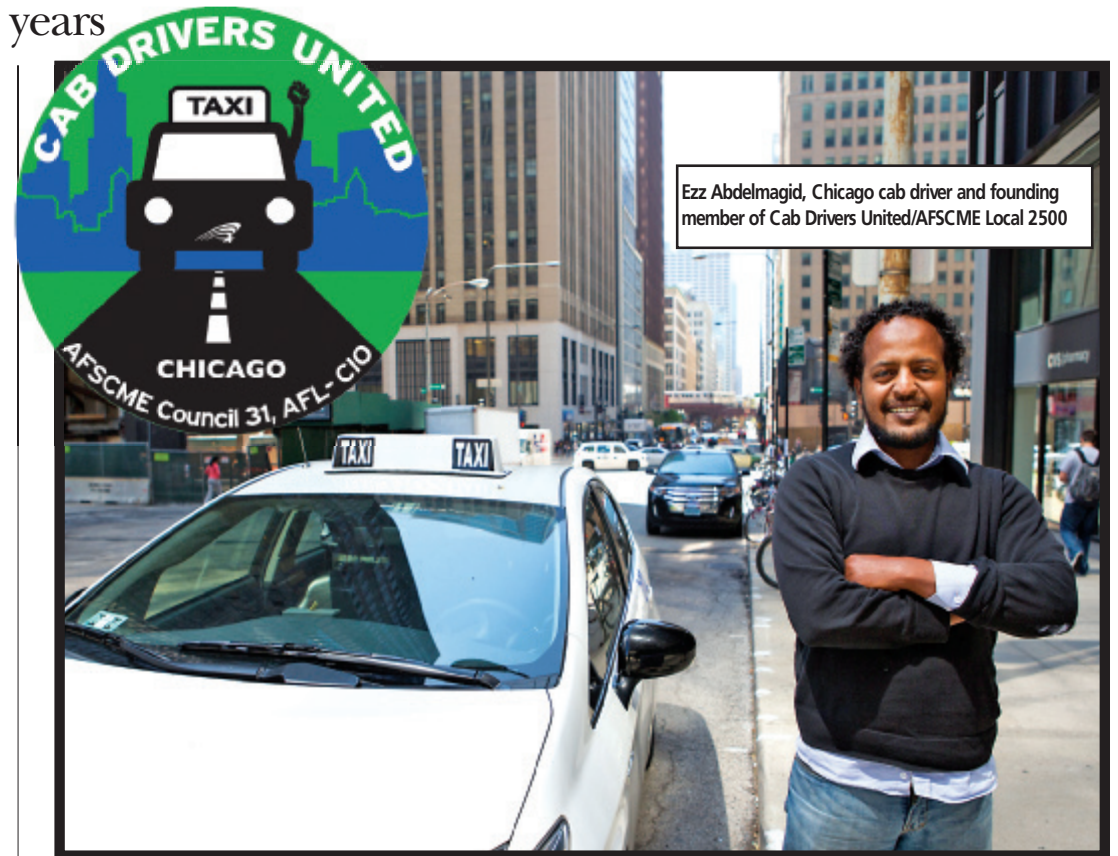
Following decades of being treated like second-class citizens by the City of Chicago, cab drivers took a historic step this August, forming their own local union, Chicago's first cab union in 30 years

**M**ore than 150 drivers attended Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500's inaugural meeting at Malcolm X College, becoming full dues-paying members and pledging to continue building power to demand the respect they deserve as ambassadors of the city who provide residents and visitors with safe and professional service.

“THE DAYS WHERE THE CITY OF CHICAGO FEELS THEY CAN TREAT US LIKE WE DON'T MATTER and make decisions that

affect us and our passengers without our input are over,” said Chicago cab driver Ezz Abdelmagid.

Taxi drivers are not new to AFSCME. New Orleans drivers have built their union with AFSCME and are growing stronger. Chicago's Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500 will be able to draw on the experience, the power and the resources of AFSCME Council 31 to win a strong, effective voice in the decisions that affect their profession and livelihood. “If every driver becomes a union member, the sky is our limit. We will negotiate with the city so we can fend for ourselves and support our families,” said Chicago cab driver Nnamdi Uwazie. “We deserve respect. With thousands of drivers standing united in Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500, we have our respect now.”



Ezz Abdelmagid, Chicago cab driver and founding member of Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500

Visit [CabDriversUnitedAFSCME.org](http://CabDriversUnitedAFSCME.org) or [Facebook.com/CabDriversUnitedAFSCME](https://www.facebook.com/CabDriversUnitedAFSCME) to learn more.

# Budget impasse halts payments to state health insurance plan

AFSCME Council 31 seeking court order to ensure continued funding

**I**n a story that was developing as On The Move went to press, the state Department of Central Management Services (CMS) released a memo to group health insurance participants asserting that the state could no longer pay medical or dental claims as a result of the budget impasse.

THE MEMO RAISED THE SERIOUS CONCERN THAT DOCTORS, HOSPITALS, DENTISTS OR OTHER health care providers might require state health plan participants to pay upfront for their care.

In response, AFSCME and other unions filed suit in circuit court seeking a court order to require that the payments be made. The filing amended a pending lawsuit over state employee pay that had previously resulted in a court order

ensuring state employee paychecks would continue despite the budget impasse.

The CMS memo said the state had stopped processing claims incurred by participants in the self-funded medical and dental plans, but the Rauner Administration subsequently admitted it had also halted premium payments to the HMO plans. Payment of medical and dental claims and premiums would resume once the FY 2016 budget is in place and funds have been appropriated, the memo said.

CMS informed the union that it was working with all health plans to mitigate the impact of this payment freeze on plan participants and ensure uninterrupted medical care.

The HMO plans had agreed to continue to operate as normal without disruption, CMS said, but questions remained as to how individual doctors, hospitals, dentists and other medical providers in self-insured plans would react to the state's announcement.

“We are very concerned that medical providers in the self-funded plans will demand that employees or retirees pay



the full cost of a service at the time of the treatment,” AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said, “especially since there is no sign that the budget impasse will be resolved in the near future.”

CMS recommended that any employee or retiree whose physician or other health care provider insists on payment at the time of treatment should contact their health plan for assistance.

“We are documenting any and all problems that arise,” said Lynch.

While it was not yet clear how the administration's payment freeze will affect health plan participants, AFSCME took proactive legal action to seek to ensure that health coverage is not in any way interrupted or compromised.

The health insurance crisis was only the latest harmful consequence of Governor Rauner's

failure to work constructively toward developing and enacting a FY 2016 budget with adequate revenue to fund it.

“As long as Governor Rauner continues to demand the passage of legislation that destroys union rights in our state as a precondition for tackling the state's budgetary woes,” said Lynch, “Illinois will continue its steady downward spiral into fiscal disaster.”

# Privatization accountability ordinance aims to assure quality

**D**ecisions to privatize public services and assets have vast repercussions for workers, families and communities. In Chicago, Mayor Richard M. Daley sold off the city's parking meters for \$1.6 billion, at least \$3 billion less than they were worth—a move that still costs Chicago taxpayers \$35 million a year in lost revenue.

Three years ago, the city privatized the Water and Sewer Customer Service Call Center, which addresses residents' concerns and billing inquiries. The city turned over control of the call center to a Japan-based, multi-national corporation called NTT. AFSCME submitted a proposal to keep the center in house and protect the jobs of the current 32 employees. Ignoring questions regarding performance oversight, the city quickly moved ahead with NTT and those jobs were lost, forcing the workers to move to other placements in the city, often for lower wages.

Amidst growing public concern about the lack of oversight and accountability in such privatization deals, AFSCME worked with the Better Government Association and other organizations to press for enactment of an ordinance that would bring greater transparency to any consideration of subcontracting of city operations.

Alderman Roderick T. Sawyer of Chicago's 6<sup>th</sup> Ward led the charge for passage of the ordinance in the Chicago City Council, working to develop a broad consensus among elected officials, including Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

"The City Council didn't hear anything about the call center deal until it already occurred," Alderman Sawyer said. "I think that is unconscionable. That's why I worked with AFSCME and others to craft this ordinance to prevent any type of deal like this from happening again without input from the City Council and from the public."

"The initial cost for privatizing the water call center was \$800,000 more than keeping it in-house," said Jo Patton, AFSCME Council 31 special projects director. "If this ordinance was in place three years ago, the city would have had a challenge explaining to residents why it was cutting 32 good public-sector jobs without any assurance of improved cost or service."

Losing public-sector jobs costs the city too, Alderman Sawyer said. "These deals are displacing workers with good union jobs. If we eliminate these jobs, we eliminate families' ability to pay their mortgage, buy groceries or take public transportation—the social costs are enormous. We're talking about devastating communities, particularly black and brown communities that I represent."

Introduced in the council on July 29 with Mayor Emanuel as the sponsor and 40 aldermen signed on, the Privatization Transparency Accountability and Performance Ordinance would put the following safeguards in place:

- Prior to privatizing a service, the city would be required to conduct a cost-effectiveness study, the City Council Budget Committee would have to hold at least one hearing and the privatization proposal would need City Council approval.
- Any proposal to privatize a significant city asset would require a 90-day review period,



AFSCME member Monica Vergara fielded customer inquiries at the water and sewer call center before it was privatized by the city of Chicago.



Alderman Roderick T. Sawyer of Chicago's sixth ward promotes the privatization accountability ordinance at a press conference.

- monitoring by an independent advisor, public access to information regarding the proposal and several public hearings.
- Private contractors' performance and compliance would be monitored regularly.

"This has been an arduous process," Sawyer said. "After three years we finally have the ordinance in front of the council with the mayor's support and it looks

like we are going to pass it."

Susan Littlefield, president of AFSCME Local 2912, whose members were removed from their positions at the call center, knows firsthand what privatization accountability deals can mean to working people: "It is in the best interest of all City of Chicago taxpayers to have the privatization accountability ordinance passed. We all have a right to know who is providing our city services and the true cost of those services."