

# ON THE MOVE

YES FOR  
**WORKERS RIGHTS!**  
NOVEMBER 8, 2022

YES FOR  
**WORKERS RIGHTS!**  
NOVEMBER 8, 2022

YES FOR  
**WORKERS RIGHTS!**  
NOVEMBER 8, 2022

## Vote YES on Workers' Rights Amendment

PAGE 7

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
AFSCME

AFSCME Council 31  
205 N. Michigan Ave.  
21st Floor  
Chicago, IL 60601

VOTERS OK RIVER  
BLUFF FUNDING PAGE 4

AFSCME PEOPLE  
ENDORSEMENTS PAGES 8-9

IL SUPREME COURT  
ELECTIONS PAGE 10



**ON THE MOVE**

Illinois On the Move is published six times annually by Illinois Public Employees Council 31 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO. Send correspondence to: bconboy@afscme31.org or: AFSCME, On the Move, 205 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Floor, Chicago, IL 60601

Roberta Lynch, Executive Director  
Mike Newman, Deputy Director  
Ben Conboy, Editor  
Tom Greensfelder, Designer

**COUNCIL 31 EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS**

**Executive Director**  
Roberta Lynch  
**Deputy Director**  
Mike Newman  
**State Sector Executive Vice-President**  
Ralph Portwood, Local 1866  
**Private Sector Executive Vice-President**  
Yurvette Simmons, Local 3237  
**Local Government Executive Vice-President**  
John Rayburn, Local 1215  
**Secretary**  
Dave Delrose, Local 1028  
**Treasurer**  
David Morris, Local 805

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**State Conference Board Co-Chairs**  
Cheryl Graham, Local 785  
Tim Worker, Vandalia, Local 993

**REGION I VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Phil Cisneros, Local 3969  
Safiya Felters, Local 2854  
Susanne Littlefield, Local 2912  
Kobie Robinson, Local 3835  
Crosby Smith, Local 2645

**REGION II VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Terry Boone, Local 672  
Cody Dornes, Local 46  
Tom Opolony, Local 89  
Tawny Proulx, Local 172  
Tamara Rietman, Local 3693  
Miguel Vazquez, Local 3297

**REGION III VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Arnold Black, Local 2971  
Shaun Dawson, Local 2073  
Elizabeth Hutson, Local 1019  
Jack Matthews, Local 1964  
Trudy Williams, Local 3433

**REGION IV VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Gregory Faulkner, Local 799  
Jerry Grammer, Local 1175  
Julie Latempt-Brazier, Local 2887  
John Medley, Local 1805

**TRUSTEES**

Keith Kracht, Local 203  
Vickey Leadingham, Local 978  
Danny Williams, Local 29

**RETIREE CHAPTER 31 REPRESENTATIVE**

Larry Brown

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Anti-union groups sling mud and lies**

*Billionaires fear strong unions*



BY ROBERTA LYNCH

**WE DID THAT BY STANDING UP AND FIGHTING FOR WHAT WE DESERVE.**

**W**e're driving them crazy! Or driving them out of town—way out! You remember...it was just four years ago that Bruce Rauner was governor of Illinois. He boasted that he was going to take away our collective bargaining rights, eliminate our pensions, get rid of our "generous" benefits.

And, of course, his biggest boast of all was that he would drastically weaken our union—driving "thousands" from our ranks—with the Janus lawsuit he sparked.

You'll remember Rauner's biggest boosters—the Illinois Policy Institute and its legal arm, the Liberty Justice Center. The IPI churned out reports and press releases aimed at backing up Rauner's attacks on public employees—portraying us as lazy and overpaid. And they echoed Rauner's claims that it was a union to blame—our's—for all of the gains that public employees had made.

They were right about that, if nothing else. It was, in fact, when public employees—state workers, city workers, county workers and others—came together in a union to stand up for themselves and stand up together that some of the most underpaid and forgotten workers in our country in the 1950s became some of the most fairly compensated and respected by the 2000s.

We did that by forming one big union that stretched into every corner of this state; by refusing to be divided by occupation, jurisdiction, race, gender or geography; by standing up and fighting for what we deserved; and by making clear to elected officials that we would support those who stood with us and oppose those who turned their backs on us.

And yes, we did secure a decent standard of living for ourselves and our families, we did gain security and dignity in our retirement years, we did make sure we had access to affordable health care and safer conditions on the job.

Yes, we did all that. And for reasons I can never fathom, that measure of economic

progress for our state's public servants just enraged Bruce Rauner and his billionaire buddies. So much so that they poured their riches into groups like the Illinois Policy Institute—and now the Freedom Foundation—whose overriding aim is to take down our union and drive down our standard of living.

So far, it hasn't worked out too well for them. Yes, Rauner's surrogate, Mark Janus, prevailed at the US Supreme Court with its anti-worker majority and succeeded in making the entire public sector a "right-to-work" realm in which employees who are represented by a union can refuse to pay any dues to that union, even while benefiting from its work.

But Rauner's fantasies of thousands upon thousands of union members heading for the doors were smashed on the rock-hard unity that led members to recommit to building our union even stronger. As it turned out, it was Rauner who headed for the door—the exit door to be precise—when he was overwhelmingly defeated for reelection.

But Bruce wasn't our only problem. His biggest backer, billionaire buddy Ken Griffin, hung around for a few years after Rauner hustled off to Florida. Griffin's particular obsession was public employee pensions—and he fastened on the Illinois Supreme Court as his method to eliminate them. Griffin contributed millions to defeating Illinois Supreme Court Justice Tom Kilbride in 2020 and laid the groundwork to elect more Republicans—believed to be reliably unsympathetic to the pension protection clause of the Illinois constitution—to the Supreme Court in the current election cycle.

Meanwhile, Rauner's ugly progeny, the Illinois Policy Institute and its kissin' cousin the Freedom Foundation have been furiously stepping up their game—besieging public employees of every type with their glossy anti-union mailers and their faux-friendly email messages, all but pleading with union members to "opt out." Millions are being spent without convincing more than a handful of folks to abandon the solid wall of solidarity that has been the key force in improving financial security and working conditions for countless workers all across this state.

Now comes the billionaires' worst nightmare of all: The Workers' Rights Amendment, which would enshrine our right to collective bargaining in the Illinois constitution. It will be on the ballot this fall and polling shows broad public support. That's pushing IPI off the cliff of disinformation on which it normally perches and straight down into outright lies. They are actually telling people that a vote in support of workers' rights to stand up for job safety and fairness is a vote to raise each person's property taxes by \$2,100. How desperate and despicable can they get?

We probably don't know the answer to that yet. Another billionaire union-hater, Dick Uihlein, just dumped a cool million into an arm of the IPI to escalate the attacks on the Workers' Rights Amendment. Republican gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey voted against the measure in the state senate and continues to oppose it. And the consistently anti-union Chicago Tribune recently ran an almost full-page op-ed trashing it.

Our course is clear. We need to make sure we vote "yes" for the Workers' Rights Amendment on Nov. 8—and get our friends and neighbors to do the same. We need to continue to trash all the trashy anti-union mailers from IPI and the Freedom Foundation when they turn up in our mailboxes. And we need to maintain the unity and solidarity that are so essential to building a better future for us all.

# State workers press for changes to hiring process



Since the onset of the COVID pandemic, there has been a steep decline in staffing at state agencies. Now the situation has reached crisis levels at many worksites, jeopardizing employee health and safety.

OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, Council 31 has analyzed state data on staffing levels and vacancies. The analysis clearly points to the bureaucratic procedures at the state's Department of Central Management Services (CMS), the agency that manages the hiring process. Union members have shared accounts of how short-staffing has led to unsafe working conditions and staff burnout, causing even more workers to leave state service.

"This is a multi-faceted problem that requires a multi-faceted approach from the state," Council 31 Director of Research and Employee Benefits Martha Merrill said. "They should be looking at making wages more competitive with the private sector, streamlining the hiring process and

improving working conditions on the job."

The staffing crisis hits hardest at agencies where adequate staffing is most critical, such as correctional facilities, health care facilities, veterans' homes and social services.

Understaffing can lead to unsafe working conditions. Employees at correctional facilities have seen an alarming increase in workplace injuries and assaults on staff. State data on staff injury/assaults indicate an increase of nearly 50% this year, in comparison to the end of 2020.

Dennis Young, president of Local 1175 and a correctional sergeant at Menard Correctional Center, said a lot of the security staff at the prison are forced to work 12- to 16-hour shifts multiple times a week.

Menard currently has about 120 vacant positions.

"The fatigue is horrible," Young said. "Imagine sitting in a guard tower for 8 hours on a midnight shift, and then having to stay in that same tower for another full 8-hour shift. That same guy might have also worked a 16-hour shift the day before and only had 8 hours off."

For the last two years,

begin to combat the shortages.

Specifically, the state plan includes:

- Developing and implementing an emergency statewide recruiting campaign focused on staff for DHS facilities, veterans' homes and prisons;
- Implementing emergency retention measures for employees of these 24/7 facilities;

partner in the state's hiring and recruitment efforts.

Gov. Pritzker recently met with state employees who serve on the Council 31 Executive Board to hear firsthand the strains that understaffing puts on employees and the services they provide. Those AFSCME leaders conveyed in personal and powerful terms the harm that understaffing is causing, and they urged swift action to address the problem.

Union members have consistently pointed to the stress and health risks posed by excessive amounts of mandatory overtime. AFSCME recently issued a comprehensive set of recommendations for improving hiring and retention in IDOC and the union has gone to arbitration on a statewide grievance over the failure of DHS to comply with a memorandum of understanding negotiated with the union which limits the state's ability to mandate overtime.

"We are not going to rest until state operations return to more safe and humane staffing levels," Lynch said.

**"We're not going to rest until state operations return to more safe and humane staffing levels."**

Council 31 has met with CMS to address this staffing crisis. Union leaders have repeatedly asked for reports on the progress to fill vacancies, but the state does not track the progress of its hiring practices.

In response to calls from AFSCME and other advocacy groups, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced on Aug. 31 that his administration is implementing a statewide hiring and retention strategy that he says will

- Working with these agencies and IDES to expand recruitment through community partnerships and outreach to those receiving unemployment benefits; and
- Working with partners in local areas to increase job fairs to find and recruit new employees.

Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch welcomed the announcement and vowed that AFSCME will be a

# River Bluff backed by voters

Winnebago County voters OK tax increase to keep public nursing home funded



Employees of the River Bluff Nursing Home successfully campaigned to prevent the privatization of the publicly funded home.

**O**n June 28, Winnebago County put a question to the voters: would you raise your own property taxes to keep a beloved nursing home in public hands? The answer came back loud and clear.

76% of Winnebago County voters and 97% of voters in the city of Rockford sent the message that a property tax increase is a small price to pay to keep an essential service like the River Bluff Nursing Home open and serving their community.

The .05% property tax increase would mean an increase of only \$25 per year for a home worth \$150,000. The increase would bring in an estimated \$2 million per year to the facility.

If the ballot measure had failed, the next step for the county would have likely been to sell the nursing home to a for-profit company, pricing out many of the residents who depend on its affordability, or even close the home altogether.

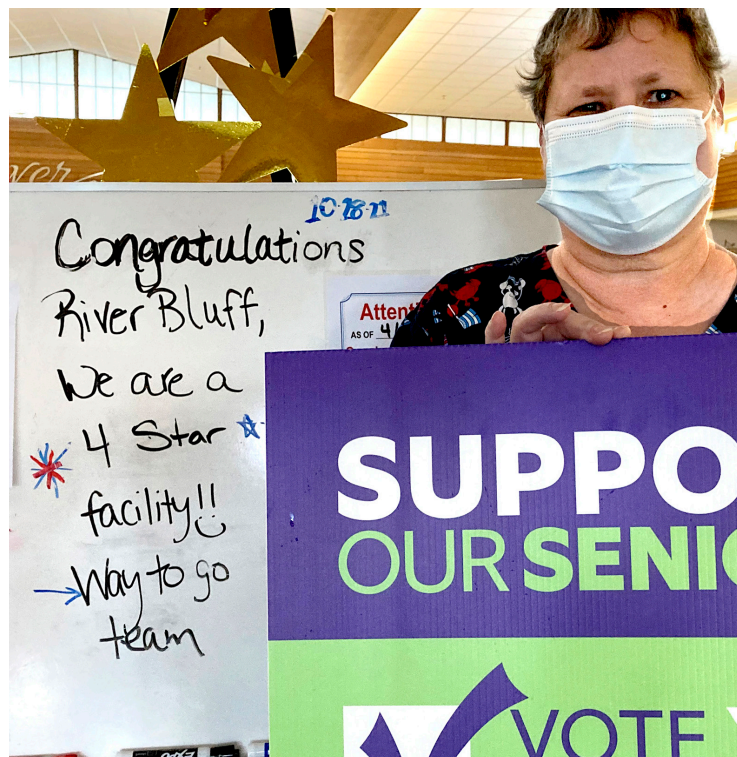
AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Sara Dorner led the campaign to educate voters on the importance of keeping River Bluff public and fully

funded, organizing a coalition of community groups and local candidates for public office.

“Our union members mobilized with coalition partners to help the community show County Board members how much their county home is valued,” Dorner said. “These funds are going to make sure that River Bluff has the resources needed to recruit and retain the high-quality staff that the residents deserve.”

The publicly funded nursing home has long assured access to quality long-term care for seniors in Winnebago County, no matter how little money they have. Nurses, nurse assistants, housekeeping, maintenance and dietary staff at the facility are all members of AFSCME Local 473.

The nursing home’s finances had been threatened in recent years by declining Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, and by the fact



“They were happier than a goose laying eggs.”

– VAUGHN FOWLER ON RIVER BLUFF EMPLOYEES’ REACTION TO THE VOTE

that the tax levy that keeps the home running has not been raised since 1989.

Vaughn Fowler, a maintenance worker at River Bluff

and steward for Local 473, said the River Bluff staff’s reaction to the decisive vote was unlike anything he’d ever seen.

“They were happier than a goose laying eggs,” Fowler said. “The feeling goes beyond joy. There was love for us from the community. With their yes vote, they said, ‘We’re here for you.’”

Leading up to the vote, Fowler said that nerves among workers at River Bluff were at an all-time high.

“There was a lot of anxiety, a lot of tension,” Fowler said. “People didn’t know if they were going to have a job or not.”

The staff was worried about the future of their jobs, but they were also worried about the fates of the residents of the home if the ballot question would have failed.

“The people who work at River Bluff are like family,” Fowler said. “We’re with the residents seven days a week. Without their original families coming to visit with them, we are all they’ve got. If River Bluff had closed, it would have been like they lost a part of their family.”

The big win for the community is not yet a done deal as the Winnebago County Board is dragging its feet to increase the property tax levy that voters demanded. The ballot question, unlike a referendum, is non-binding and does not require the board to comply with the voters’ wishes.

There is a pending initiative led by Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara to freeze property taxes regardless of the harm that might be done to the nursing home and other vital services. AFSCME members are now pushing the board to follow through on the will of the voters.

County Board member Burt Gerl told WTVO TV News that sales tax revenue has exceeded expectations this year, leading the board to believe that it may not be necessary to actually increase the property tax levy to keep River Bluff funded.

“The property tax levy is necessary to keep River Bluff on sound fiscal ground for years to come,” Dorner said. “The staff and the residents of the home don’t deserve to be thrown to the whims of year-to-year sales tax revenue. They deserve a path to sustainable funding, something the voters overwhelmingly supported. Now it’s time for the board to give the voters what they asked for.”



# Staff shortages at Dixon CC lead to serious safety concerns

**S**taffing shortages across state government agencies have become increasingly acute over the past two years. At Dixon Correctional Center, understaffing and a change in offender population have combined to put security staff in serious danger.

A fully-staffed Dixon Correctional Center should have around 816 staff members to oversee the prison's roughly 1,400 inmates. Today, there are only about 579 employees—29% less staff than they should have.

Dixon is unique because it is not only the largest medium-security facility in Illinois, but it's also the state's primary psychiatric correctional facility, housing many erratic, unpredictable and violent offenders.

"We're short-staffed everywhere," said Eric McCubbin, president of AFSCME Local 817 and a supply supervisor at Dixon. "Staff assaults, drugs and weapons are all up. We've had 60 staff assaults since the beginning of the year, and the severity of them has gotten way worse."

McCubbin said the staffing shortages have led to the facility being forced to cut corners. They don't have enough staff to maintain mandatory posts such as guard towers, outer fence patrols and sergeant posts. Facility maintenance has also fallen by the wayside, leading to other critical safety issues.

Many cell doors no longer have functioning cuffing ports—the small hole in cell doors used to pass items to inmates or handcuff them before they are removed. Correctional staff are now forced to completely open the cell door before cuffing, exposing them to unrestrained inmates.

Last year, a security employee was performing the routine task of going cell to cell handing out toilet paper. Instead of handing the toilet paper through the cuffing port

as he would have done if it was functioning correctly, he had to completely open the door. The inmate immediately punched him in the face and knocked him unconscious.

With no backup security staff at hand, the inmate began

at Dixon. The employee's eye orbital was fractured, requiring 47 stitches and causing chronic vision problems.

"Morale is low," McCubbin said. "People are frustrated. They're coming in to work with a high likelihood of being

working a 16-hour shift.

Unsafe working conditions due to staffing shortages also put a strain on the individuals in custody. Without staff to safely monitor movement within the facility, tensions among inmates rise, leading to more violent incidents and more days under lockdown status.

Local 817 has voiced its concerns to various officials at all levels of the Illinois Department of Corrections. McCubbin said there's been movement on some issues—but silence on others.

One key area of concern—the cuffing ports—finally did receive attention. But when welders started repairing some of the broken ports, they quickly ran out of welding gas, and now the timeline to finish the repairs is uncertain.

"The conditions at Dixon Correctional Center and a number of other facilities across the state are really untenable," said Council 31 Regional Director Eddie Caumiant. "The department is finally taking some steps to address the understaffing crisis, but more needs to be done—and quickly." 🦋

**"He followed every rule there is, did nothing out of the ordinary, and he still could have been killed."**

— ERIC MCCUBBIN  
LOCAL 817 PRESIDENT

to drag the officer's unconscious body into the cell. Fortunately, someone on another floor heard the commotion and came to the officer's rescue.

"He followed every rule there is, did nothing out of the ordinary, and he still could have been killed," McCubbin said.

The officer has not been able to return to work after more than a year.

Another employee was attacked with a metal cane, resulting in what McCubbin said were some of the worst injuries he's seen in 16 years

assaulted, and they're working a lot of extra hours on top of it."

A spokesperson for the Illinois Department of Corrections told the local newspaper, Shaw Local News, that officers at Dixon have worked 47,311 hours of overtime from January to June of this year alone.

"We don't get to see our families or friends," McCubbin said. "Employees know when they're coming in that instead of working an 8-hour shift, they're probably going to be

# AFSCME members slam call to close JTDC



Local 3696 members at the JTDC say they were not consulted for a report prepared for the chief judge of Cook County.

**F**rontline employees, members of AFSCME Local 3696 at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) have said that a new report issued by a so-called blue ribbon committee charged with examining practices at the facility failed to include input from any JTDC employees.

The final report calls for the closure of the JTDC and the privatization of the services it provides, something AFSCME unequivocally rejects. The committee, convened by Chief Judge Timothy

Evans, examined several practices at the JTDC, including room confinement during certain times. The JTDC has consistently met or exceeded the standards laid out by the Illinois Department of

Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC).

With as many as 175 youths in the facility on any given day, the JTDC only houses youths on a temporary basis, often for only a few days. Forty percent are at the facility for fewer than 72 hours. The majority of the youth will spend fewer than three weeks at the facility.

“All the people who work here are children’s advocates,” said Local 3696 President Teesha Coleman. “If there was something bad going on, they would’ve said something,

because they care. They value these kids.”

find its way into a spirited and passionate letter defending the facility and its workers from what they see as the “lies” told in the report. “These kids are not underprivileged here,” Coleman said. “They love it here. And their parents are more comfortable when they’re here, because when they’re out on the street, they don’t know where they are.”

Also omitted from the report was any information related to the life skills classes that youths who must remain for longer periods of time at



because they care. They value these kids.”

The release of the report spurred Local 3696 into action. Coleman quickly convened members to gather input that would eventually

the center can take advantage of, like the barber college, disc jockey classes and electrical and painting apprenticeships.

The committee’s report also distorts the level of accessibility to mental health services at the JTDC, describing them as “limited.” In reality, state regulators described the facility’s medical and mental health services as “exceptional” compared to similar facilities.

“This report has wrongly besmirched the valuable work that the diligent and compassionate staff at the JTDC do every day,” Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch wrote in a letter to Judge Evans. “In light of the report’s severe shortcomings, which range from basic conceptual errors to its failure to conduct basic due diligence, we would urge that the Office of the Chief Judge refrain from moving forward with any of the Committee Chair’s policy prescriptions. In particular, the call to privatize the JTDC’s operations should be soundly rejected.”

## Vandalia Correctional Center downsizing on hold

**I**n response to forceful protests from AFSCME, state and local elected officials and the wider community, the Illinois Department of Corrections has halted a plan to sharply reduce capacity at Vandalia Correctional Center.

Many feared the plan was a precursor to closing the prison entirely. The good news came in a memo from IDOC Director Rob Jeffreys that was distributed to employees at the facility. “At this time, we

have decided to hold off on the consolidation/conversion at Vandalia,” Jeffreys wrote. The partial closure threat had drawn strong opposition. AFSCME members on the ground mobilized the local

community—gathering hundreds of petition signatures—and enlisted the support of area elected officials. Meanwhile Council 31 had pressed the department and governor’s office to reconsider, while invoking the union’s right to bargain over the impact of the changes that would have moved inmates and potentially staff to other facilities.

“Everyone agreed we cannot let this place close, but it takes the whole entire group to make any of this work. It takes a lot of leg work, but you can’t

sit back and count on someone else to do it,” said AFSCME Local 993 President Ryan Tompkins. “That’s what solidarity is, and solidarity works.”

While IDOC changing course is welcome news, it’s not the final word—particularly in Vandalia, where correctional employees and local residents alike have become accustomed to repeated threats to close the facility.

But the Jeffreys memo makes clear that IDOC now understands it cannot make any unilateral changes. “If it is decided in the future to revisit this plan, we will notify AFSCME Council 31 and continue discussions,” the director’s memo says.

“We’ve really pushed hard these last couple months,” Tompkins said. “And we’re going to keep up the good fight.”

# Vote “YES” on Workers’ Rights Amendment!

## MAKE UNION RIGHTS A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT

This fall, voters across Illinois will vote on the Workers’ Rights Amendment, which would enshrine in the Illinois constitution the rights of every working person to form a union.

### Section 25. Workers’ Rights

(a) Employees shall have the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions, and to protect their economic welfare and safety at work. No law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and work place safety, including any law or ordinance that prohibits the execution or application of agreements between employers and labor organizations that represent employees requiring membership in an organization as a condition of employment.

**YOUR RIGHT TO YOUR UNION!**

**POLITICIANS COULDN'T TAKE AWAY YOUR RIGHTS!**

Yes  No

If approved by voters, the Workers’ Rights Amendment will add protections to the state Constitution that will make it much harder for current or future politicians to limit your voice on the job, weaken your union or take away your right to collective bargaining.

The Workers’ Rights Amendment would help us build an economy that works for every Illinoisan. It helps families by guaranteeing workers’ rights to join together to negotiate for pay raises, lifting worker pay to help deal with rising costs and will help create good-paying jobs available to all workers.

The proposed constitutional amendment has survived several court challenges by anti-worker groups wanting to throw the Workers’ Rights Amendment off the ballot. Now, these anti-union groups’ only hope to defeat the amendment is that not enough people make their voices heard at the ballot box.

According to researchers from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Workers’ Rights Amendment could potentially help to keep 70,000 Illinois workers from falling into poverty, preserve health insurance for 281,000 workers and drive up wages in industries across the state.

The researchers even predict that passage of the constitutional amendment could save up to 900 lives over the next 10 years, due to the fact that Illinois already sees 32% fewer work-related fatalities than states that don’t support union rights.

But, like any proposed amendment to the Illinois constitution, the amendment has a high bar at the ballot box. It must receive a majority of all those casting a ballot

(even if they don’t vote on the measure) or a 3/5 majority of those voting on the measure. That’s why it’s so important to be sure to vote yes on the Workers’ Rights Amendment.

### How will the amendment benefit AFSCME members?

The Workers’ Rights Amendment will:

- Ensure that the collective bargaining rights that are so essential to the progress AFSCME members have made cannot be reduced or taken away;
- Ban the kind of tactics that Bruce Rauner used to try to strip us of our workplace rights;
- Prevent the state legislature, as well as any county board, city council, or other local government body, from limiting in any way the rights we have secured by law or in our contracts; and
- Provide constitutional protection for our rights on the job, just as the pension protection clause bars any reduction in our pension benefits.

### How do I vote “YES”?



The Workers’ Rights Amendment will be at the very top of every ballot in Illinois with the title “Section 25. Workers’ Rights” and will include the full text of the amendment that would be added to the state constitution. Check the box for “Yes.”

If you are not registered to vote, it’s not too late. Visit [elections.il.gov](https://elections.il.gov) to register so you can vote “yes” to permanently enshrine union rights in our state constitution.

# WORKERS' RIGHTS

## AFSCME PEOPLE Recommendations

Workers' rights are on the ballot in Illinois this November, from critical state Supreme Court elections all the way down to county boards. Here's what you need to know:

- **Early voting begins Thursday, September 29**
- **Election Day is Tuesday, November 8**
- **To find your polling place, request a mail-in ballot or learn how to register to vote, visit [elections.il.gov](http://elections.il.gov)**

*Council 31's endorsement process begins with regional PEOPLE Committees that are made up of rank-and-file AFSCME members. Each PEOPLE committee uses a variety of tools to decide who to recommend in a particular race; voting records, questionnaires, candidate interviews and information provided by the legislative staff are all considered. Party affiliation is not a basis for endorsement. The bottom line is the candidate's support for issues that benefit working families.*

### NATIONAL U.S. Senate

Tammy Duckworth, 100%

### U.S. House of Representatives

- District 2: Robin Kelly, 100%
- District 3: Delia Ramirez
- District 4: Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, 100%
- District 5: Mike Quigley, 100%
- District 6: Sean Casten, 100%
- District 8: Raja Krishnamoorthi, 100%
- District 9: Jan Schakowsky, 100%
- District 10: Brad Schneider, 100%
- District 11: Bill Foster, 100%
- District 12: Homer "Chip" Markel
- District 13: Nikki Budzinski
- District 14: Lauren Underwood, 100%
- District 17: Eric Sorensen

### ILLINOIS Statewide

- Attorney General: Kwame Raoul
- Secretary of State: Alexi Giannoulias
- Comptroller: Susana Mendoza
- Treasurer: Michael Frerichs

### Judicial

- 1st Supreme Court District, Retain: Mary Jane Theis
- 2nd Supreme Court District (Thomas): Elizabeth "Liz" Rochford
- 3rd Supreme Court District (Kilbride): Mary K. O'Brien
- 2nd Appellate Court District (Burke): Chris Kennedy
- 3rd Appellate Court District (Wright): Sonni Choi Williams
- 5th Appellate Court District, Retain: Judy Cates

### State Senate

- Senate District 2: Javier Loera Cervantes
- Senate District 5: Patricia Van Pelt, 92%
- Senate District 6: Sara Feigenholtz, 100%
- Senate District 9: Laura Fine, 100%
- Senate District 11: Mike Porfirio
- Senate District 14: Emil Jones III, 84%
- Senate District 15: Napoleon Harris III, 84%
- Senate District 17: Elgie Sims, 100%
- Senate District 18: Bill Cunningham, 100%
- Senate District 20: Cristina Pacione-Zayas, 100%
- Senate District 21: Laura Ellman, 68%
- Senate District 23: Suzanne Glowiak Hilton, 88%
- Senate District 25: Karina Villa, 100%
- Senate District 26: Maria Peterson
- Senate District 27: Ann Gillespie, 100%
- Senate District 28: Laura Murphy, 92%
- Senate District 29: Julie Morrison, 100%
- Senate District 31: Mary Edly-Allen
- Senate District 34: Steve Stadelman, 100%
- Senate District 36: Mike Halpin
- Senate District 40: Patrick Joyce, 88%
- Senate District 42: Linda Holmes, 100%
- Senate District 43: Rachel Ventura
- Senate District 46: Dave Koehler, 100%
- Senate District 48: Doris Turner, 72%
- Senate District 49: Meg Loughran Cappel, 88%
- Senate District 52: Scott Bennett, 92%
- Senate District 56: Kris Tharp
- Senate District 57: Christopher Belt, 88%

### State House

- House District 3: Eva-Dina Delgado, 100%
- House District 4: Lilian Jimenez
- House District 5: Lamont J. Robinson, 100%
- House District 6: Sonya Marie Harper, 100%
- House District 7: Emmanuel "Chris" Welch, 100%
- House District 8: La Shawn K. Ford, 100%
- House District 9: Lakesia Collins, 86%
- House District 10: Jawaharial "Omar" Williams, 93%
- House District 11: Ann Williams, 100%
- House District 12: Margaret Croke, 100%
- House District 13: Hoan Huynh
- House District 15: Michael Kelly, 100%
- House District 16: Kevin Olickal
- House District 17: Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, 100%

- House District 18: Rob...
- House District 19: Lin...
- House District 21: Ab...
- House District 22: An...
- House District 23: Ed...
- House District 25: Cu...
- House District 27: Jus...
- House District 29: Th...
- House District 30: Wi...
- House District 31: Ma...
- House District 32: Cy...
- House District 33: Ma...
- House District 34: Nic...
- House District 35: Fra...
- House District 36: Ke...
- House District 38: De...
- House District 39: Wi...
- House District 41: Jar...
- House District 42: Ter...
- House District 43: An...
- House District 44: Fre...
- House District 49: Ma...
- House District 50: Ba...
- House District 51: Na...
- House District 53: Ma...
- House District 54: Ma...
- House District 55: Ma...
- House District 56: Mi...
- House District 57: Jo...
- House District 58: Bo...
- House District 59: Da...
- House District 61: Jo...
- House District 62: Lar...
- House District 66: Su...
- House District 67: Ma...
- House District 68: Da...
- House District 69: Pe...
- House District 72: Gre...
- House District 76: Lar...
- House District 77: No...
- House District 80: An...
- House District 81: An...
- House District 83: Ma...
- House District 84: Ste...





# ISSUES ON THE BALLOT

## Propositions: 2022 General Election

John Gabel, 100%  
Dorsey LaPointe, 100%  
Melvin Rashid  
Dionne Gurrer-Cuellar, 84%  
Gar Gonzalez, Jr., 100%  
Artis Tarver II, 85%  
Justin Slaughter, 93%  
Addeus Jones, 85%  
William "Will" Davis, 93%  
Mary Flowers, 77%  
April Nichols, 100%  
Marcus Evans, Jr., 93%  
Nicholas "Nick" Smith, 100%  
Frances Ann Hurley, 100%  
Dolly Burke, 72%  
Lillian Meyers-Martin, 100%  
Bill Guzzardi, 93%  
Bet Yang Rohr, 100%  
Cristina Costa Howard, 100%  
Anna Moeller, 93%  
Ed Crespo, 92%  
Laura Hirschauer, 93%  
Barbara Hernandez, 100%  
Beela Syed  
Mark Walker, 100%  
Mary Beth Canty  
Martin Moylan, 100%  
Michelle Mussman, 100%  
Nathan Carroll, 100%  
Bob Morgan, 100%  
Daniel Didech, 100%  
Dorice Mason, 100%  
Laura Faver Dias  
Lizanne Ness, 93%  
Laurice West, 100%  
Lorena Vella, 100%  
Loretta Janko  
Lorena Johnson  
Lorena Yednock, 100%  
Lorena Hernandez  
Lorena DeLuca, 100%  
Lorena Stava-Murray, 100%  
Lorena Hanson  
Lorena Kifowit, 100%

House District 85: Dagmara "Dee" Avelar, 100%  
House District 86: Larry Walsh, Jr., 100%  
House District 91: Sharon Chung  
House District 92: Jehan Gordon-Booth, 100%  
House District 96: Sue Scherer, 100%  
House District 98: Natalia Manley, 100%  
House District 111: Joe Silkwood  
House District 112: Katie Stuart, 93%  
House District 113: Jay Hoffman, 100%  
House District 114: LaToya Greenwood, 100%

### COUNTY

#### Champaign

Executive: Steve Summers  
Clerk: Aaron Ammons  
Sheriff: Dustin Heuerman  
Board District 4: Jennifer Lokshin  
Board District 4: Elizabeth Hanauer-Friedman  
Board District 5: Leah Taylor  
Board District 5: Bethany Vanichtheeranont  
Board District 11: Wayne Williams  
Board District 11: Lorraine Cowart

#### Cook

President: Toni Preckwinkle  
District 1: Brandon Johnson  
District 4: Stanley Moore  
District 5: Monica Gordon  
District 6: Donna Miller  
District 11: John Daley  
District 12: Bridget Degnen  
District 13: Josina Morita  
District 14: Scott Britton  
District 15: Kevin Morrison  
District 16: Frank Aguilar  
District 17: Daniel Calandriello

#### DuPage

Chair: Deb Conroy  
District 2: Yeena Yoo  
District 2: Paula Deacon Garcia  
District 2: Elizabeth "Liz" Chaplin  
District 3: Lucy Chang Evans  
District 5: Dawn DeSart  
District 6: Greg Schwarze

#### Jackson

County Clerk: Frank Byrd

#### Kane

District 4: Mavis Bates  
District 5: Deidre L. Battaglia  
District 8: Michelle Gumz  
District 12: Steve Bruesewitz  
District 13: Michael Linder  
District 16: Ted Penesis  
District 23: Christopher W. Kious

#### Knox

Treasurer: Robin Davis  
Sheriff: James Robertson  
Clerk & Recorder: Scott Erickson  
District 1: Cheryl Nache  
District 2: David Amor  
District 3: Pamela Davidson  
District 4: Pam Godsil  
District 5: James Secrist

#### Lake

District 1: Brian Hayden  
District 4: Gina Roberts  
District 6: John Wasik  
District 7: Carissa Casbon  
District 10: Jessica Vealitzek  
District 11: Paul Frank  
District 12: Paras Parekh  
District 13: Sandy Hart  
District 15: Jennifer Clark  
District 16: Esiah Campos  
District 17: Alicia Timm  
District 18: Sara Frederick Knizhnik  
District 19: Marah Altenberg

#### Madison

Clerk & Recorder: Debbie Ming-Mendoza  
Board District 16: Chris Hankins  
Board District 17: Victor A. Valentine, Jr.  
Board District 19: Nick Petrillo  
Board District 21: Emily Gavilsky  
Board District 26: Collin VanMeter

#### McHenry

District 1: Theresa Meshes  
District 2: John K. Collins  
District 3: Carolyn "Lyn" Campbell  
District 5: Kelli Wegener  
District 6: Chamille "Cece" Adams

#### Rock Island

Sheriff: Darren Hart

#### Stephenson

Board District C: Casey Jacobs Anthony  
Board District C: Debra Devine  
Board District D: William "Bill" Hadley  
Board District E: Laura Youngblut  
Board District I: Edward Klein  
Board District I: Shannon Muick

#### Whiteside

Board District 1: Fidencio Hooper-Campos  
Board District 1: Joan Padilla  
Board District 1: Sean Bond  
Board District 2: Shawn Dowd  
Board District 2: Cody Dornes

#### Will

Clerk: Lauren Staley Ferry  
Board District 1: Joe VanDuyne  
Board District 2: Judy Ogalla  
Board District 5: Sherry Williams  
Board District 7: Vince Logan  
Board District 8: Mica Freeman  
Board District 10: Meta Mueller  
Board District 11: Jacqueline Traynere

#### Winnebago

Board District 2: Lindsey Lancaster  
Board District 5: Dave Tassoni  
Board District 6: Richard Kennedy  
Board District 10: Joe Hoffman  
Board District 15: Christopher Scrol  
Board District 19: Angela Fellars

*Federal and state legislative incumbents are noted by inclusion of their AFSCME PEOPLE voting record. AFSCME does not typically endorse in uncontested races.*



# PENSION PROTECTION KEY ISSUE IN ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT CONTESTS

## The Supreme Court elections in the 2nd and 3rd Districts are among the most important races on the ballot for workers' rights

The Democrat-led court has repeatedly invoked the state's constitutional pension protection clause to reject attempts to cut pension benefits (first for state and university employees and retirees in the 2015 Heaton case, then for city of Chicago employees and retirees in 2016's Jones v. MEABF) and to uphold health benefits for retired state employees (in a 2014 case called Kanerva).

However, in 2020 billionaire Ken Griffin initiated an effort to knock those Democrats off the court because he objected to their defense of public employee pensions. Griffin recently left town, but the dark money organization he helped to start—Citizens for Judicial Fairness—is still at work, with more than \$5 million to spend.

There are currently two open seats on the court that are the basis for hard-fought political contests in this election

cycle. Candidates in judicial races can't take positions on issues that might come before the court, but we know that the Ken Griffin PAC believes that Republicans would be much more likely to undermine pension rights.

### Which seats are open?

Last year, the state legislature redrew the state judicial districts for the first time since 1964.

The two districts with open seats are the 2nd, which includes all of DeKalb, Kendall, Kane, McHenry and Lake Counties, and the 3rd District, which includes all of Bureau, LaSalle, Grundy, DuPage, Will, Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. If you live in one of those counties, then you'll be able to vote in one of the critical contested Supreme Court races.

## AFSCME'S RECOMMENDATIONS



### 2ND DISTRICT ELIZABETH "LIZ" ROCHFORD

In the 2nd Supreme Court District, Democrat Elizabeth "Liz" Rochford is running against Mark Curran, the former Lake County sheriff.

Rochford said her passion for service started as a child growing up with her father, a Chicago police officer, and her mother, a special education teacher.

Her career began as an assistant state's attorney before moving into private law practice. She served for 23 years as commissioner of the Illinois Court of Claims and has served as a judge for the past 9 years.

As a judge, Rochford pioneered Lake County's family court dedicated to self-represented litigants, which utilized web-based and other educational materials to offer plain language and simplified court process.

The Illinois Supreme Court, through its rules and its supervisory authority over all state courts, has a tremendous influence on how the court system actually works. Judge Rochford is the person with the experience, integrity, and the commitment to judicial excellence to use that influence to effectively expand access to justice.



### 3RD DISTRICT MARY KAY O'BRIEN

Mary Kay O'Brien is an experienced and highly qualified judge with deep roots in the community and a long history of public service.

Justice O'Brien has served on the 3rd District Appellate Court for nearly 18 years. She has heard more than 4,500 cases and served on numerous committees, including the Supreme Court Rules, Legislative and Appellate Court Access to Justice Committees, the Illinois Courts Commission, and the Lawyers Assistance Program, among others.

O'Brien was raised on the family farm in Reddick, Illinois where she learned the importance of hard work, integrity and public service from her parents. Her father Don is a retired Local 265 sheet metal worker. Prior to becoming a judge, O'Brien served as a state legislator from 1996-2003.

O'Brien was elected four times by the voters of the 75th District, won a decisive victory for the 3rd District Appellate Court in 2004, and was retained in 2014 by nearly 80% of voters. Justice O'Brien attended Western Illinois University and the University of Illinois, where she earned her law degree.

# Union martyr killed in 1932 finally gets his recognition

**O**n the banks of the Illinois River in the town of Marseilles during the Great Depression in 1932, a massive, federally subsidized dam rebuilding project promised opportunity and work.

But as the project got underway the local community learned that the contractor and all the workers came from beyond Illinois and the wages they were paid were substandard. Frustrated local workers marched on the job site on July 18, 1932. And the next day 300 workers marched, demanding local work at area wages.

As the marchers approached the dam site, there was an eerie silence—no work was happening. Suddenly, from railroad cars, a bullet fusillade erupted. “Big Steve” Sutton, a Croatian immigrant, iron worker and laborer, fell to the ground with a bullet in his lung and two in the stomach. Another marcher, Cecil Hopton, was shot through the eye. A melee ensued with hand-to-hand combat, the out-of-state workers descending to beat the local protestors. Almost 20 were injured.

The contractor’s general superintendent Herbert W. Miller was driving to the site from Joliet, having reached a local hire agreement with the laborers and the electricians. Tragically, he arrived with that news too late as chaos descended.

The 127 out-of-state workers were arrested and counseled to leave town by the sheriff and Illinois State Police. Illinois AFL President Reuben Soderstrom and Marseilles banker Sherman Lewis negotiated a union hiring agreement with the contractor. Eight of the contractor’s employees were charged for the murder, but no conviction records have ever surfaced.

A new union was formed to represent the workers on the dam—today’s Laborers International Union of North America Local 393, which currently

covers LaSalle, Bureau and Putnam counties.

Steve Sutton and the dam battle were Illinois Valley legends, tales repeated in barrooms, kitchen tables and union meetings. How did the larger world learn the story?

Thanks to the persistence of retired Local 393 Business Manager David Raikes and the support of Local 393, Steve Sutton’s memory is now commemorated with an Illinois State Historical marker at the dam site. An April 28 Workers’ Memorial Day ceremony brought out over 500 local citizens, along with state and local elected officials and rock icon Tom Morello of the band Rage Against the Machine.

Speakers included Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Attorney General Kwame Raoul, Treasurer Mike Frerichs and Comptroller Susana Mendoza, along with Illinois AFL-CIO President

Tim Drea. Additional speakers included Marseilles Mayor Jim Hollenbeck, Methodist Pastor Megan Thompson, Illinois State Historical Society board member Chuck Stanley, Illinois Labor History Society President Larry Spivack, ULLICO representative Brandon Phelps and Illinois 76th District State Representative Lance Yednock, an Operators 150 member.

Morello, who has Marseilles childhood roots, performed a lively set, including



From left: Ottawa Mayor Dan Aussem, LIUNA VP John Penn, Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Comptroller Susana Mendoza, Illinois Labor History Society President Larry Spivack, state Rep. Lance Yednock and David Raikes, retired LIUNA Local 393 business manager.

“Night Falls,” his song recounting the 1932 march and Sutton’s murder. He invited the audience to the stage for a bouncing, hearty sing-a-long of the Woody Guthrie classic, This Land is Your Land.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul acknowledged

**Eight of the contractor’s employees were charged for the murder, but no conviction records have ever surfaced.**

“the workers who have put their lives on the line...and specifically, as we dedicate this plaque, I speak in remembrance of ‘Big Steve’ Sutton. A working man who stepped up in defense of himself and his fellow workers, paying with his life, and giving rise to a proud and strong legacy of organized labor in this part of Illinois.”

The gathering ended with a rousing rendition of labor’s anthem, “Solidarity Forever” by ILHS member Bucky Halker, with the crowd cheering and singing along.

At the northeast corner of the Illinois River bridge at Marseilles now stands a permanent historic marker, with beautifully designed and landscaped surroundings donated by local labor.


Honoring Steve Sutton, Illinois State Historical Society board member Chuck Stanley



Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello performs a rendition of Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land.”

quoted another old labor song, “Joe Hill,” in his remarks.

“It takes more than guns to kill a man, Joe Hill ain’t never died.”

Steve Sutton and those other union forebearers who marched for decent wages and local jobs in Marseilles will long be remembered. 

This article is based on an account in the Illinois Labor History Society Reporter written by Mike Matejka, Vice-President of the Illinois Labor History Society.



SUPPORT THE  
ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY  
BY BECOMING A MEMBER AT  
[IllinoisLaborHistory.org](http://IllinoisLaborHistory.org)

# ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



As Local 1514's contract negotiations dragged on, the members donned green AFSCME hats to send the message to management that they remain united.

## The highway to solidarity

NEGOTIATIONS WERE MOVING along well in Champaign County until Local 900's bargaining team hit a snag: The county refused to budge on instituting a cap on insurance premiums for highway workers.

That didn't sit well with their members from other bargaining units. They've had a cap on their insurance premiums for years; how is it fair that the county can single out one department and force them to pay up to \$60 more a month compared to their coworkers in other departments?

"Our entire membership came together to hold fast for the highway folks because it was very important to all of us

that they were treated fairly," said Local 900 President CeCe Phillips. "We can't let those folks have to absorb the entire cost of insurance increases."

The county wouldn't budge. Local 900 put together an action plan and got more than 100 members to sign onto a petition in less than 24 hours. They showed up at county board meetings and held a picket outside of the courthouse. Even members of management and local elected officials showed up for the picket to stand in solidarity with the highway workers.

Most importantly, the bargaining committee vowed not to settle a contract until the highway department got the same rights that everyone else in the local had.

Finally, the county couldn't ignore the pressure Local 900 had generated. The members had won.

"We never knew if we were going to get the cap," Phillips said. "But we won. It was amazing to see everyone from all of these different departments come together for each other."

The insurance cap wasn't the only big win for Local 900. For all of the non-highway bargaining units, they secured wage increases of 13.5% over the life of the three-year contract, and the highway department got an additional 9.5% and a new uniform allowance. They also secured Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

The contract received near-unanimous ratification from the members.

The bargaining team was led by Council 31 Staff Representative Natalie Nagel and included Phillips, Treasurer Laura Clark, Vice President Jarod Tinsley, Steward Bernard Joiner, Steward Angela Lusk, Stan Kaiser, Cody Berry, Shantall Jones and Robert Burkhalter.

## Long fight pays off in Aurora

IT TOOK NEARLY THREE YEARS at the bargaining table, but at last members of AFSCME Local 1514 have won a contract they can be proud of. The new four-year deal with the city of Aurora Public Works includes a 13% increase in wages over three years, much-needed increases in tool and clothing allowances, and two new paid holidays.

With 6% in retroactive wage increases and 7% in increases over the next two years of the contract, the 136 maintenance workers and mechanics are happy that their long fight resulted in a big win.

"Members are feeling great about it," said Local 1514 President Ruben Delgado. "They understand the wage increases were in line with what we wanted. Our members are very happy knowing that it's all done. They're really excited with what we brought to them and they're ratified."

In another big win, Local 1514 secured improved

language that allows members to be eligible for overtime after taking paid time off. Now, they can get the overtime pay they deserve even if they took time off earlier in a pay period, something Delgado said benefits both the city and the members.

"It really benefits the employees and the city, because now we have staff on hand who are able to maintain services on a Saturday or a Sunday," Delgado said. "If you take a Friday off just for a personal reason and you're able to work on Saturday or Sunday to help out the city for any work, now you'll be eligible for overtime, which is a good thing for both sides."

After the city of Aurora returned unsatisfactory proposals on wages and other issues, members knew they had to take action. The local ordered a sea of bright green and white AFSCME hats, and after management saw the wave of solidarity on display, the tone of the negotiations changed.

"The action sure did make a rumble with management in certain departments, and we feel like that helped us out in finishing negotiating our contracts," Delgado said. "The hats sent a message. Guys showing their solidarity with their negotiating team, it really resonated with the city."

The bargaining team led by Council 31 Staff Representative Chris Hooser included



Local 900 vowed not to agree to a contract unless insurance premiums were capped for highway workers.

Delgado, Vice President Justin Davis, Treasurer Rutilio Palip, Recording Secretary John Scott and Executive Board members Bradley Gilkey and Gary DeMario.

## “Standby” for better pay in Bensenville

LOCAL 1167 MEMBERS IN the village of Bensenville have won a new contract that reinforces their union rights and security, achieves wage increases and secures pay for workers put on standby duty who previously did not receive pay for that time.

Many of the village’s workers would be put on “on-call” status where they could be called in to work in an emergency, such as a snowstorm or a water main break. Workers put on on-call status would be compensated. But other workers would be put on “standby” status, something Local 1167 members noted had no functional difference with on-call status. The only difference was those on standby didn’t get paid for that time.

Now, with their new contract, the workers that make Bensenville work will get paid \$65 per week for being on call, and \$25 for every day that they are on standby.

“Members are thrilled about that,” said Local 1167 President John Jackson, a water technician who’s been with Bensenville’s utility department for more than 23 years. “They haven’t had a good contract like this one in a while. We’ve been trying to get the standby pay for years. It’s very significant.”



## CHICAGO NEGOTIATIONS

**City of Chicago employees have been fighting for a fair contract for months now, but management seems intent on stalling for as long as they can. City offices are flooded with AFSCME members’ signs demanding a fair contract for the workers that make Chicago work as the bargaining committee keeps up the pressure at the table.**

Treasurer Edilia Powers said that members are buzzing about the wage increases they’ve won, giving them validation for their work throughout the pandemic. Altogether, they got 13% in raises over the next two years, with 2.5% retroactive to 2021 and 3.5% retroactive to the beginning of 2022.

“It means we were valued, appreciated,” Powers said. “I think it shows what we

can achieve when we stand together, work together and try to achieve what’s best for all members.”

Jackson said he has seen a newfound respect for the union’s contract following the ratification.

“Every time I go to [human resources] now, they have the contract open on their desk,” Jackson said. “It didn’t used to be like that. They used to wait

for us to notice that something was against the contract, now they have people that respect us, respect the union and respect the contract.”

The bargaining team was led by Council 31 Staff Representative Chris Hooser and included Jackson, Powers and executive board member Jason Tyson.

## Fair contract in Peoria

AFTER MONTHS OF INTENSE negotiations and one tentative agreement turned down, members of Local 2519 at the Peoria Sanitary District signed a new contract which includes much-needed changes to their bereavement leave policies and healthy pay increases.

New leadership at the district wanted to make their mark in their first contract negotiations, leading to a stalemate that went on for months.

“We started negotiations in April and we just signed in August,” Pasley said. “We had what seemed like hundreds of meetings over this. We fought back and forth for ages. It was

a solid uphill battle to get what we have.”

But Local 2519 held firm. The result was nearly 15% in raises over the life of the contract and scrapping the hated four-tier pay scale for employees who move into a better paying position within the district. Before the new contract, the employee who switched positions would have to slowly scale up to their new pay level over four years. Now, they will get full pay right away.

“We had some heated arguments,” Pasley said. “They stood their ground and we stood ours. At the end, we came together and came back with something to vote on.”

This is the last contract Pasley, a 17-year veteran of the Peoria Sanitary District, will negotiate. By the time the five-year contract is up, he’ll be retired.

“Hopefully for the younger guys, the next contract will be a lot easier,” he said.

The bargaining team was led by Council 31 Staff Representatives Nick Richards and Tim Lavelle, and included Pasley, Chief Steward Rich King, Vice President Marvin Davis and Darrell Bailey.



Members of Local 1167 (right) seal the deal on their new contract with the village of Bensenville.

# SHORT REPORTS



Chuck Carver (top right) was asked to marshal the Bloomington-Normal Labor Day parade alongside members of Locals 1110 and 3236.

## Leading the way on Labor Day

AFTER AN INTENSE CONTRACT fight with Illinois State University that brought more than 300 building, grounds and dining service employees with AFSCME Local 1110 to the brink of a strike, Local President Chuck Carver was asked to marshal the Bloomington-Normal Labor Day parade.

"Our fight for a fair contract sent the message that when everyone comes together, there's solidarity in the entire group," Carver said. "We had a lot of unions stand with us. That shows there was power in numbers. You stand alone and you have no power, but when you stand together there's power."

Local 1110's successful contract campaign included a powerful strike authorization vote, ultimately winning a four-year agreement that raised wages by 12 to 26% and was overwhelmingly ratified.

Dozens of AFSCME members from ISU (including the clerical local, 3236) and the surrounding area marched together in unity on Labor Day. The parade was led by ISU's booming school band, with Carver and other labor activists following shortly behind. For a moment, he assumed the raucous applause from parade-goers was for the band.

"They were clapping for us," Carver said. "It was amazing just to see peoples' reactions. It wasn't just people coming out with their kids to get candy—they were truthfully out there to support us."

Carver was honored that he was chosen as a marshal, but ever the activist, he tried to deflect the spotlight away from himself and towards his union brothers and sisters.

"I was completely honored," he said. "But I still felt that someone else probably deserved it more than me."

## Standing together for adequate staffing

MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 1610 at Read Mental Health Center and the Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago teamed up with their colleagues in the Illinois Nurses Association (INA) to hold an informational picket at the facilities to bring attention to the critical levels of understaffing.

Both Read and the veterans' home have AFSCME members and RNs represented by the INA working side by side. The facilities are so short-staffed that many workers there have been forced to work as many as four double shifts per week, leading to even

further staffing strains.

"We wanted to send the message that something needs to be done about this," said Council 31 Regional Director Anne Irving, who organized the joint picket. "Both our members in AFSCME and the workers in the INA are experiencing the same things: extreme amounts of overtime and unsafe working conditions."

The members marched in solidarity with one another around the facilities, carrying picket signs demanding safe working conditions.

The workers wanted to send a message, and they know for a fact that the message was received. They could see the

director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs in the window of the facility video recording their picket as they marched around the drive. They all gave him a friendly wave.

## DeKalb gears up for fight

IN LATE JULY, THE DEKALB County Board voted to move forward with privatization of the DeKalb County Rehab and Nursing Center. The County Board voted to enter into a non-binding letter of intent to sell the public nursing home to

a private, for-profit corporation from outside Illinois.

The vote on the letter of intent to sell came after a motion to put a referendum on funding for the nursing home on the November ballot failed on an 11-11 tie vote, with two board members absent and not voting. The county board will need to hold another vote on the final sale of the property to for-profit Illuminate HC, but the county has not yet submitted the required permit application necessary for a change in ownership.

Members of AFSCME Local 3537, residents, and community supporters are gearing up for the next phase of the fight. Members and Council 31 staff are hard at work educating the community about why the DeKalb Rehab and Nursing Center should remain safely in public hands.

For weeks, nursing home residents, their families, and community members have joined AFSCME members in rallying support for the public nursing home. Sharing why the publicly owned home is important to them, community members contacted board members and submitted letters to the editor at local newspapers.

While the home has been managed by a private company for over two decades, as a publicly owned facility, the county board is responsible for oversight and financial management of the home. By selling the facility to a for-profit corporation, DeKalb County residents will lose one of the only affordable, high-quality options for senior care in the area. 🦅



Members of Local 1610 at Read Mental Health Center and the Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago picket with their coworkers in the Illinois Nurses Association to draw attention to the common problems plaguing their workplaces.

# RETIREE NOTES

## Senior voting power

FOR NEARLY 45 YEARS, ONE fact has remained unchanged for politicians throughout the country: If they want to win their elections, they must focus on voters over 65.

The statistics show that to be even more true over the last few elections when in 2014, 60% of eligible voters 65 and older turned out to vote, followed in 2020 by 79%. This is far above the other age demographics.

Since the turnout in midterms tends to be lower, that voting bloc is even more important. As midterm elections near, let's review a few issues at the heart of retirement security:

### MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

- Congress has passed—and President Biden has signed—the Inflation Reduction Act to bring down the costs of prescription drugs and rein in the deficit.
- Republican Senator Rick Scott is pushing for privatizing and potentially eliminating Social Security and Medicare. He proposed an 11-point plan that included the “sunsetting” of the Social Security Act in 5 years. This would eliminate both Medicare and Social Security.

### RETIREMENT SECURITY

- One of the least known parts of the American Rescue Act of 2021: Passed by President Biden and Congressional Democrats, it shored up 1,400 severely financially troubled multiemployer pension plans which serve 10 million participants.

### PENSION FUNDING

- Gov. Pritzker and the Illinois legislature passed a budget that for the first time since the creation of the pension ramp in 1994, appropriates more money to pay down the pensions debt than the minimum required by law. The extra \$500 million will save an estimated \$1.8 billion in the long run on the unfunded liability.
- State Sen. Darren Bailey, who is running against Gov.



Sub-chapter 82 Treasurer Dorinda Miller makes a donation to the Jacksonville Food Center.

Pritzker to be governor of Illinois, has been a consistent and vigorous critic of public employee pensions, actually going so far as to introduce

**AFSCME retirees can be a key force in fostering voter turnout to defend our retirement security.**

legislation that would repeal the pension protection clause in our state constitution—eliminating the legal safeguard that enabled our union to block laws that would have drastically cut our retirement benefits.

AFSCME retirees can be a key force in fostering voter turnout to defend our retirement security. Reference AFSCME's list of endorsed candidates who are committed to protecting our retirement.

## Medicare may finally rein in RX costs

A HISTORIC DEAL WAS STRUCK to pass the Inflation Reduction Act. It would allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices and cap out-of-pocket drug costs, actions that AFSCME has been pushing for decades.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, this would save the federal government an estimated \$288 billion over 10 years. The majority of the savings would come as a result of prescription drug price negotiations and the rebates that would encourage pharmaceutical companies to keep price increases below the rate of inflation.

Medicare drug negotiations would begin in 2026 with 10 of the most expensive drugs eligible for the process. That number would increase to 15 drugs in 2027 and to 20 drugs by 2029. The bill would also extend the solvency of Medicare through 2031, three years more than current estimates for the program's Part A Hospital Insurance (HI) trust fund.

In addition to allowing the federal government to negotiate drug prices, this bill would address the climate crisis and require corporations to finally pay their fair share in taxes. It will reduce the deficit by more than \$300 billion, helping fight inflation. This is a major win for seniors, consumers at large, and future generations.

## Retirees focus on food access

“RETIRES ON A FIXED income are often the first to be hurt by the fluctuations in the economy,” says Steve Radliff, president of Jacksonville Sub-chapter 82. “It can reduce their access to food, energy or prescription drugs, because those have the largest impact on their pocketbook.”

As a result, many of our retiree sub-chapters who make donations to local food pantries during the holiday season are now trying to assist throughout the year as well.

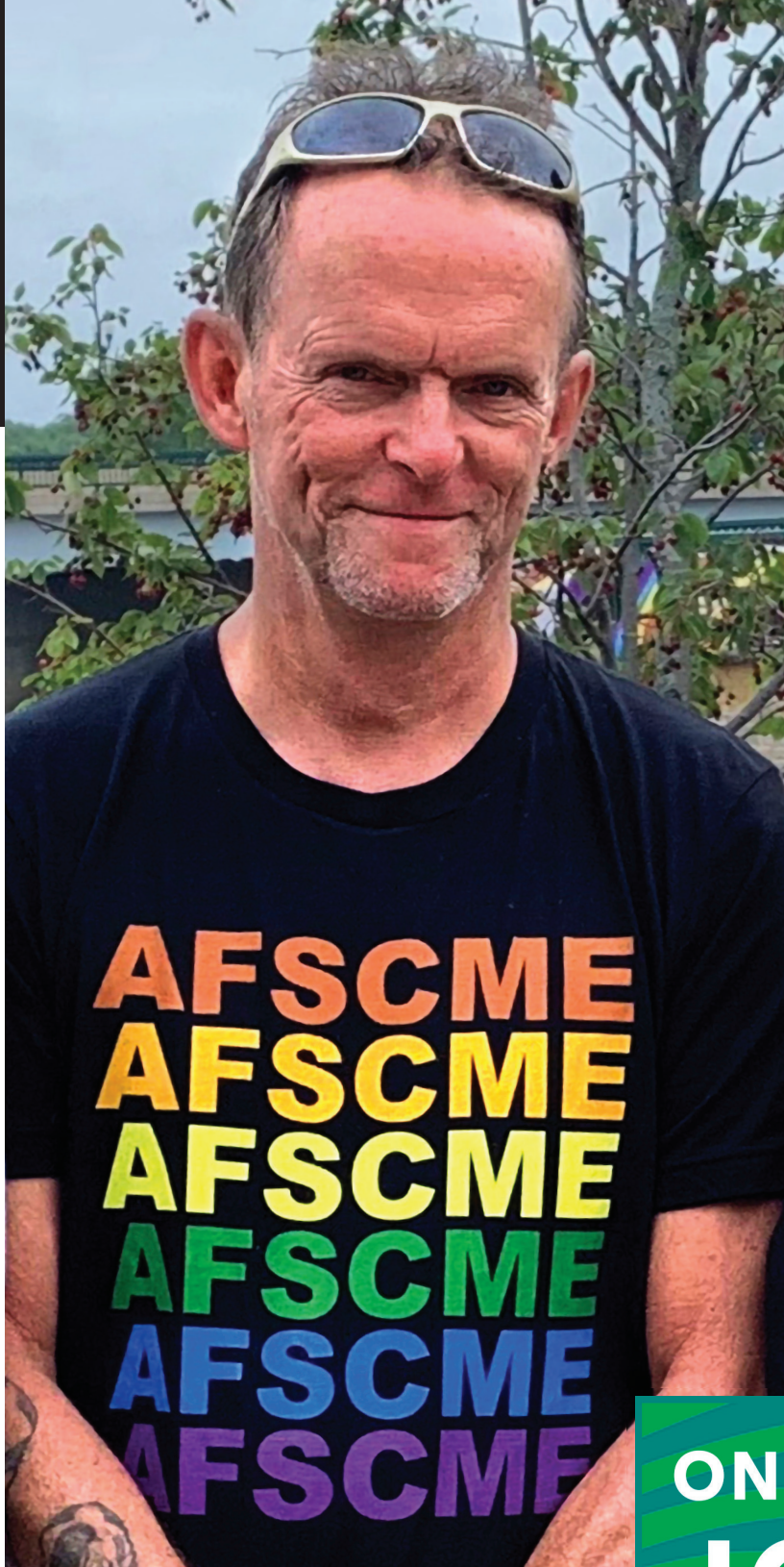
This is the case with Sub-chapter 82 in Jacksonville, where the members voted

unanimously to contribute to both the Central Illinois Food Bank and the Jacksonville Food Center.

“We are fortunate that our work lives provided us with some securities,” said Dorinda Miller, treasurer for Sub-chapter 82, “and we can wake up each day and know that we will have food on our tables. Unfortunately, we know that not everyone is as lucky. The people needing food assistance include the homeless, the single parent family, the elderly, perhaps our neighbor...and could even be ourselves one day.”

“The bottom-line is that the higher prices impact those on fixed incomes particularly hard,” stated Radliff, “and our members will continue to support our local communities both while working through the public services we provide and during retirement.”

“Our union motto has always been “an injury to one is an injury to all,” concluded Miller. “The lack of food security is indeed an injury and AFSCME retirees are stepping up to help heal the injury...one meal at a time.”



# IN MEMORIAM

## Craig Kurzrock

### AFSCME Local 172

#### MENTAL HEALTH TECHNICIAN II

part of his. At Mabley, we don't see them as clients really. We consider them our brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and Craig really embodied that.

– Kim Piskie

His work, both at Mabley and with the union, completed him. It was his world. When he got

to see the people he cared for at Mabley achieve a new goal, that meant everything to Craig. He would be so happy for the individual, and if he knew



they were more capable, he would push them to achieve more. He advocated just as hard for the individuals in his care as he did for the union. This work completed his life. I've never met someone with a heart as big and as true as Craig's.

– Tawny Proulx

He loved giving back. He wanted to go to work and give a piece of himself to the job every day. He had such a generous nature.

– Jared Harshman

#### How did Craig impact your life?

You could always count on Craig. He was always there for you when you needed it. If another local needed something, he was there. He wanted to help people understand the union contract and help people understand their rights. He was there for them when they needed a voice, and that meant a lot to him. If there was something going on in the community where he could lend a hand, he was there. He always showed up no matter what. – Jared Harshman

#### What did the union mean to Craig?

At one time in Craig's life, he worked in Louisiana for a non-union company. They had to work seven days a week with no benefits, no health

insurance, bad pay and no voice. He told me, "I never want to see anyone work for a company like that." It stuck with him, that people could be treated so unfairly, so unjustly. He believed in the power of unions so much that he took personal days to go to Wisconsin when they were fighting

---


**"This work completed his life. I've never met someone with a heart as big and as true as Craig's."**

---

the attack on collective bargaining there. He was all pro-union. He gave extra money beyond his regular dues. He wore his AFSCME jacket with pride. – Tawny Proulx

Craig played a huge role in the operations of our local's PEOPLE program because he knew how important political involvement is to our center and to all state employees. He always made a point to make sure that everyone was up to date and knew what was going on in the political arena. – Lynette Roach

#### How did Craig embody solidarity?

Craig was the voice and fist of solidarity. He walked picket lines, parades, door-to-door knocking campaigns, phone banking, rallies, everything. He did this because he believed in what is right. He only wanted Mabley, this state and this country to be a better place. Years ago, when Gov. Quinn tried to close our center, Craig played a huge part in campaigning, petitioning and educating the community on Mabley and how the loss of our employees would impact this community. Without Craig's hard work and the hard work of many others, I don't know if our center would still be here today. – Lynette Roach 

Craig Kurzrock was a mental health technician II at the Jack Mabley Developmental Center (Mabley) in Dixon for more than 14 years. He passed away suddenly on August 26, leaving behind a legacy of service, both to his clients and to his union brothers and sisters in AFSCME Local 172. We asked those who knew Craig to share some of their memories with On the Move.

#### Tell us about Craig.

He loved our clients more than anything. Every one of the clients at Mabley wanted Craig to take them to their doctor's appointments, because they knew when Craig was taking them, that meant McDonald's on the way home. A lot of our clients are very scared to go to the doctor, but they actually looked forward to going when Craig would take them. Every year, he would buy the whole home new Halloween costumes, whether the center had the money to pay for them or not. When the fund didn't have money, he would pay for them out of his own pocket. – Tawny Proulx

#### What did Craig love about his job?

He loved making a difference and making an impact on the clients' lives. Craig felt like he was part of their family, and they felt like they were