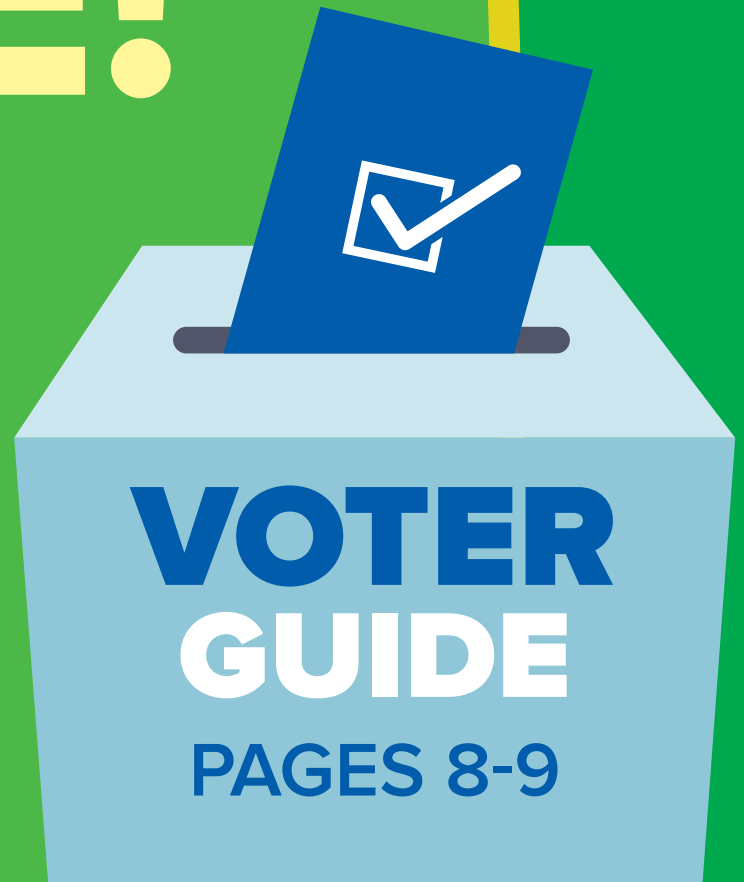


MOVE

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

READY.
SET.
VOTE!



Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
AFSCME

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

AFSCME members gear up for election PAGE 3

Labor Board judge rules in state contract dispute PAGE 5

20th anniversary of strike at Anna Veterans' Home PAGE 16

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Big Lie theory

The Illinois Policy Institute plays a critical role in Rauner's web of deception.



BY
ROBERTA LYNCH

**FIGHTING BACK
AGAINST THE
ILLINOIS POLICY
INSTITUTE'S
ATTACKS IS UP
TO ALL OF US.**

Recently public employees all across Illinois opened their mailboxes to find a letter from a group few had ever heard of—the Illinois Policy Institute—urging them to drop their AFSCME membership and become a Fair Share feepayer. The IPI claimed they just wanted to help employees save the cost of paying full dues.

HUH? WHAT GROUP IS SO CONCERNED WITH THE WELL-BEING OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES THAT IT would spend tens of thousands of dollars in mailing costs just to help them out?

Definitely not the Illinois Policy Institute.

Founded in 2002, the IPI kicked into a higher gear when Bruce Rauner became governor. Now they serve as an echo chamber for Rauner's goals like driving down public employee wages, ending pensions, outsourcing public services, and shielding rich people from taxes. And they know the only way to achieve that agenda is by eradicating unions in our state.

The IPI's role in Rauner's web is to demonize government in general and public employees in particular by wielding phony statistics and distorted facts in an endless stream of fake "research" reports, newspaper columns, web videos and media commentaries.

Like Rauner they are firm believers in the Big Lie theory of mass communication: Take any fake fact—for example, that Illinois state workers are the nation's highest paid, or that AFSCME is asking for a \$3 billion raise in state contract negotiations—and repeat it nonstop in the hope that it will eventually appear to be true.

What motivates their fierce animosity to public services and the employees who provide them? The IPI is a secretive group, refusing to reveal its sources of income, but media reports have unmasked backers including Bruce Rauner and the Koch Brothers.

Nowhere on the IPI website does one find any recognition of the array of difficult, demanding and severely under-resourced jobs public employees perform.

No appreciation for teachers who spend their own money for supplies in underfunded

schools. No recognition of the dangers faced by firefighters, police officers, correctional officers, or other public safety personnel who put themselves at risk to protect us. No acknowledgement of the responsibility borne by child protective investigators, disability caregivers, public health monitors, or others on whom human lives depend. And certainly, not even a shred of appreciation for the countless public servants who perform the essential functions that make our communities happen every day—the garbage collectors, snow plow drivers, highway maintainers, water technicians, and so many more.

Instead you will find there—and in countless reports, op-eds and media messages—an effort to portray public employees as lazy, useless human beings who are doing nothing more than trying to rip off and game the system. They've got a mocking little video that portrays a state employee as someone who seems to have no actual job assignment while looking for every possible way to avoid doing any work.

And that's not all. The Illinois Policy Institute has created its own media outlets—the Illinois News Network, which provides stories free of charge to newspapers, and the Illinois Radio Network, which does the same for broadcast stations—to inject its biased views into the mainstream. And next month they're scheduled to release an hour-long "documentary" film smearing House Speaker Mike Madigan.

They even control a law firm, the Liberty Justice Center, that has provided legal representation in lawsuits aimed at instituting anti-union "right-to-work" schemes at the local government level and aiding Rauner's efforts to end fair share.

Now, amidst its nonstop insults and attacks directed at public employees, IPI actually had the gall to turn around and send many of those same employees that slick mailer, dripping with concern for their well-being and urging them to drop out of the union.

What they fail to mention is that if enough workers quit the union, there will no longer be a union—exactly what Bruce Rauner and IPI want to see happen.

Fighting back against the IPI attack is up to all of us. You can start by tossing their deceptive mailers in the trash. As always, read your union bulletins and attend your local union meetings. And visit AFSCME31.org/TheRealIPI to get the facts and watch a new video that exposes their true agenda. Then spread the word by talking to your co-workers, telling your family members, and sharing these resources with your Facebook friends, so they know the truth, too.

But being aware and staying informed are only half the battle. We have to take action. And the fall election is right in front of us. You can bet the IPI is engaged, trying to elect more Rauner puppets and defeat legislators who stand with working people.

Rauner's providing the big money—more than \$20 million for Republican legislators who will back up his anti-worker agenda in the General Assembly. We can't match his millions. But we can take our message directly to our fellow voters by reaching out in our communities.

If the prospect of the IPI and Bruce Rauner hand-picking the members of the General Assembly makes you shudder—and it should—then visit AFSCME31.org/ReadySetVote today to volunteer to help stop the Rauner/IPI takeover of our democracy.



On the Move

AFSCME 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: nmcnamara@afscme31.org or: AFSCME, On the Move, 205 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Floor, Chicago, IL 60601

Roberta Lynch, Executive Director
Mike Newman, Deputy Director
Nell McNamara, Editor
Dolores Wilber, Designer

COUNCIL 31 EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

State Executive Vice-President
Ralph Portwood, Stateville CC, Local 1866

City/County Executive Vice-President
Carmin Willis-Goodloe, Cook County Hospital, Local 1111

Private Sector Executive Vice President
Yolanda Woods, Hope Institute Local 2481

University Executive Vice-President
Dorinda Miller, U of I Clericals, Local 3700

Secretary
Dave Delrose, Will County, Local 1028

Treasurer
Rob Fanti, Sheridan CC, Local 472

BOARD MEMBERS

State Conference Board Co-Chairs
Gloria Arseneau, (RC-14), Northeastern Illinois State Employees, Local 2794
Gary Ciacio (RC-9), Shapiro, DC Local 29
Kathy Lane, (RC-63), Northwestern Illinois State Employees, Local 448

REGION I VICE-PRESIDENTS (Cook and Lake Counties)

Safiya Felters, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Local 2854
Ellen Larrimore, Northeastern Illinois University, Local 1989
Stephen Mittons, Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2081
John Rayburn, Chicago Public Library, Local 1215
Kobie Robinson, Cook County Assessor's Office, Local 3835
Crosby Smith, Ludeman Developmental Center, Local 2645

REGION II VICE-PRESIDENTS (Northern Illinois)

Garry Cacciapaglia, City of Rockford, Local 1058
Carlene Erno, Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2615
Tom Minick, Moline Schools, Local 672
Ruby Robinson, Collar Counties State Employees, Local 2833
Yurvette Simmons, United Cerebral Palsy of Will County, Local 3237

REGION III VICE-PRESIDENTS (Central Illinois)

Mark Kerr, McFarland Zone Center, Local 2767
Gary Kroeschel, Sangamon County State Employees, Local 2224
Matt Lukow, Springfield Area State Employees, Local 1964
David Morris, Illinois State Employees, Local 805
Steve Nurdyke, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Local 2600
Trudy Williams, Fulton County Sheriff's Dept. & Courthouse, Local 3433

REGION IV VICE-PRESIDENTS (Southern Illinois)

Chris Milton, Madison County, Local 799
Cary Quick, Choate MH/DC, Local 141
Mike Turner, Southern Illinois Department of Corrections, Local 415
Tim Worker, Vandalia CC, Local 993

TRUSTEES

Stephen Howerter, Canton Correctional Center Employees, Local 3585
Miguel Vazquez, Aurora Sanitary District, Local 3297

RETIREE CHAPTER 31 REPRESENTATIVE

Larry Brown

AFSCME members gear up for election

Local union delegates chart path forward for working families

Hundreds of delegates from local unions across Illinois came together for the AFSCME PEOPLE Conference on August 27 to chart a winning strategy for working families in the November elections.

PEOPLE, AN ACRONYM FOR Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality, is AFSCME's political arm. The conference capped a months-long grassroots process in which local union and retiree delegates in all 11 PEOPLE regions statewide met to review legislative voting records and responses to the union's candidate questionnaire, as well as conduct candidate interviews.

The recommendations from those regional meetings were submitted to the statewide PEOPLE Executive Committee, which met on August 26 and

Duckworth over incumbent Sen. Mark Kirk in that critical contest, which could help to determine control of the U.S. Senate.

"It is imperative to the future of the labor movement that we elect candidates who will nominate and confirm Supreme Court justices who support workers' rights and a fair economy," AFSCME Council 31 Director of Political Relations John Cameron told conference delegates.

"While the Friedrichs case was blocked, the Supreme Court is expected to hear other

"The only force strong and united enough to stop Rauner in his tracks is the labor movement."

unanimously voted to endorse all recommended state legislative candidates.

In addition to participation in workshops on grassroots campaign strategies, delegates to the conference made endorsements in key federal and statewide races. See the AFSCME Voter Guide on pages 8-9 for a complete list.

National elections have far-reaching implications

DURING A PRESIDENTIAL election year, the excitement around Election Day is especially intense. Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton is endorsed by AFSCME and leads Republican nominee Donald Trump in Illinois by a solid margin in the polls.

But turnout is still critical for the presidential race, and perhaps even more so in the race for United States Senate. Delegates to the PEOPLE conference endorsed Tammy

similar cases brought by anti-union groups to strip collective bargaining rights from working people," he said.

One man rule in Illinois?

THE ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN PARTY has raised \$20.9 million so far in this election cycle ... and \$20.1 million came from a single source: Gov. Bruce Rauner.

"There's something deeply disturbing about someone who spends millions of his own money to purchase seats in the legislature while at the same time vetoing bills that would expand the right to vote in Illinois," Sen. Andy Manar told the 500 local union members at the PEOPLE conference.

The senator was referring to Rauner's recent veto of legislation that would have made Illinois the fifth state to implement automatic voter registration and expand the opportunity for its citizens to vote.

What's more, a Rauner-



AFSCME Council 31 PEOPLE delegates listen to remarks by Sen. Andy Manar; Rep. Emanuel "Chris" Welch also addressed the crowd.

backed firm—the Liberty Justice Center, the legal arm of the Illinois Policy Institute—has spearheaded a lawsuit attempting to eliminate same-day registration at polling places in Illinois this November. If successful, voters would face longer lines, delayed results and a lot of confusion since more than 110,000 voters signed up on Election Day in the March primary.

"Rauner is trying to bust unions and hurt working families across the state," said Rep. Chris Welch, the chief sponsor of the union-backed arbitration bill HB 580. "That's why we have to get out on Election Day for good, union-supporting candidates who stand up for working families."

Laser focus on state legislative races

AFSCME ACTIVISTS LEFT THE conference energized to get out the vote this fall in response to AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch's call to action.

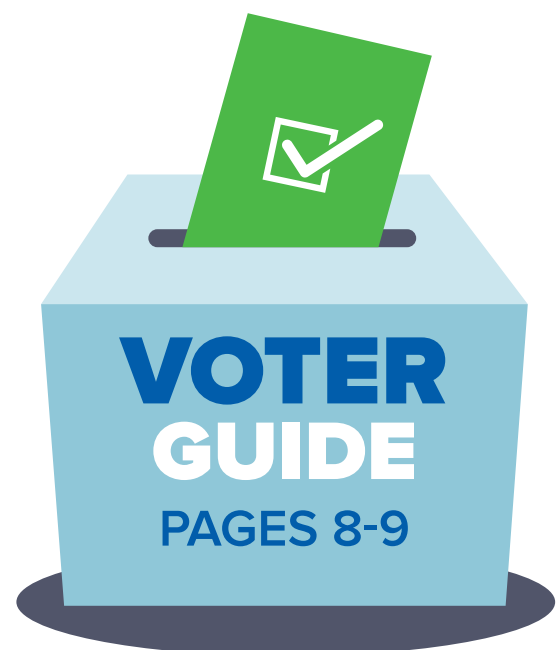
"We had 10,000 people ready to take on Governor Rauner at the historic May 18 rally in Springfield. Now we are

ready to go out, talk with voters and do the work to turn the tide on Rauner's Turnaround," Lynch said. "People power can beat big money, but it takes a lot of union members out knocking on doors in their communities to combat Rauner's millions."

There are contested races in every corner of the state. If Rauner's money helps him pick up more seats in the legislature, he will redouble his anti-worker assault and public employees could lose their fundamental bargaining rights in the next two years.

However, if AFSCME and other concerned Illinoisans work together and vote for candidates who support working families, we can win a veto-proof majority that can ensure a fair budget, a brighter future for Illinois and a fair contract for state employees.

"The only force strong and united enough to stop Rauner in his tracks is the labor movement," said AFSCME Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman as he closed out the conference. "When we run on all cylinders, we win."



Governor vetoes DSP fair wage bill

Rauner says no to higher wages for caregivers

Gov. Rauner vetoed legislation that would have set a \$15 base wage for direct support personnel (DSPs) who care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in nonprofit agencies.

THE GOVERNOR'S AUGUST 26 veto of House Bill 5931 came despite thousands of phone calls and postcards urging his signature, and despite evidence that low wages are hurting the state's community-based care system.

Rauner's veto leaves DSPs stuck with an "average hourly wage [of] about \$9.35, which has led to a severe staffing shortage that's forced some group homes to close and leave many families without the help they need," the Chicago Tribune reported.

The veto was widely covered by the media, with one reporter asking Rauner how he sleeps at night after ensuring the continued struggles of so many people in need.

"This legislation is a necessary step to address the workforce retention crisis for community disability services," AFSCME Council 31 Director of Public Policy Anne Irving said.

"Employee turnover continues to escalate as vacancies are ever harder to fill. After eight years with no increase from the state, agencies are having a difficult time keeping the lights on, let alone providing decent wages that ensure a stable workforce."

Coalition delivers clear message to Gov. Rauner

DSPs across the state joined forces with the community-based agencies that employ them and the family members of the individuals they serve to urge Rauner to support caregivers, build a stable workforce and preserve quality of services for people with disabilities.

Because of this grassroots lobbying campaign, legislators understand how hard it is for underpaid DSPs to balance care for the vulnerable with the challenge of caring for their own families. As a result, HB



Sen. Heather Steans addresses reporters at a news conference days before the veto.

"DSPs care for our most vulnerable while our community-based system crumbles around them. We must raise wages now."

— Sen. Heather Steans

5931 passed in May—the first time such legislation had successfully passed the Illinois General Assembly.

Thousands of people signed postcards urging Rauner to approve HB 5931, and a coalition of AFSCME members, families and community agencies delivered them to the governor's office on August 17.

"We don't have enough staff to ensure the best possible care for people with developmental disabilities," Trinity Services CEO Art Dykstra told reporters at a news conference that day. "This system is very vulnerable and the people who depend on it are suffering."

Erica Hall, a DSP at Ray Graham Association for 14

years, told reporters how much she loves her job and how the low wages impact her family.

"I do this work because it's rewarding," Hall said. "But I have to work 70 hours a week to support my three-year-old son. I want to be there for my family *and* the people I care for at work. I need better pay so I can do both to the best of my ability."

Sen. Heather Steans, a champion for the living-wage bill, joined advocates at the press conference. "The average DSP in Illinois is paid less than \$20,000 a year for full-time work," she said. "That means half of DSPs and their families have to seek public assistance to make ends meet."

"DSPs care for our most vulnerable while our community-based system crumbles around them. We must raise wages now."

Opportunity in November

Adding insult to injury, just two days before he vetoed the fair wage bill, Rauner issued a proclamation making September 11-17 "Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week" in Illinois to "recognize the dedication and vital role" of DSPs.

AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch called this empty gesture "heartless" and urged AFSCME members to push back where it could hurt the governor the most—at the polls.

"The upcoming election gives us an opportunity to show Rauner something he can't ignore: the reelection of those lawmakers who stood with us, and the defeat of lawmakers who enable the governor's relentless attacks on working people," she said.

Bruce Rauner is spending millions to elect legislators who will back his anti-worker agenda and allow him to govern by veto. But the legislators who stood with caregivers and people with disabilities and passed the \$15 wage bill could vote to override Rauner's veto when the General Assembly reconvenes in November.

"To make that happen," Lynch said, "we need to work hard to elect a working, veto-proof majority in the legislature."



Thousands of DSPs, advocates and family members wrote messages to Gov. Rauner, urging him to save quality services for people with disabilities. He ignored their pleas.

Labor Board judge issues “split” recommendation in state contract dispute

Rejecting governor’s complaint, judge says parties not at impasse on all issues

Administrative Law Judge Sarah Kerley of the Illinois Labor Relations Board found that the state of Illinois and AFSCME Council 31 are not at impasse on a number of issues in the state contract dispute now before the Board.

IF THE BOARD AGREES with the judge’s Sept. 2 recommended order, Gov. Rauner would be required to return to the bargaining table instead of acting immediately to impose all his harsh contract terms on state employees.

The Rauner Administration should “cease and desist from failing to bargain collectively in good faith with [AFSCME]” and “upon request, bargain collectively in good faith with the union,” ALJ Kerley wrote.

She found that the administration has refused to provide information to AFSCME that the union needs to develop pro-

While the judge found the parties were not at impasse on the critical issues of wages and health care, she did find impasse in other areas.

AFSCME disagrees with some of Kerley’s findings. For example, AFSCME contends that the parties are not at impasse on subcontracting and other issues.

“While we are disappointed that the judge believes the parties are at impasse regarding subcontracting,” AFSCME Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman said, “she does make clear that her finding does not prevent the issue from

The Rauner Administration should “cease and desist from failing to bargain collectively in good faith”

posals and said Rauner must do so. Kerley recommended that the Labor Board order the state to resume bargaining on wages, health care and other issues, and to do so in good faith.

“We are pleased that the ALJ’s recommendation underlines what AFSCME has been saying all along,” AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. “There is no impasse on key issues, and the parties should get back to the bargaining table to resolve them.”

A “split” decision

AFSCME Council 31 is asking the Labor Board to order the Rauner Administration to return to the bargaining table and negotiate in good faith. The ALJ upheld much but not all of the union’s argument.

being negotiated further.”

Newman was the key witness in the extended Labor Board hearing.

“Ever since Rauner’s representatives broke off negotiations with our union back in January and walked away from the bargaining table, AFSCME has repeatedly made clear that we want to reach a fair agreement,” Newman said. “We are still prepared to do the hard work of compromise to make that possible.”

In contrast, the Rauner Administration for eight months has refused to even meet with the AFSCME Bargaining Committee. Instead, Rauner wants the unilateral power to impose his demands, forcing public service workers in state government to work under his unfair terms or go out on strike.



Protesters gathered at the Illinois Capitol building on May 18 to call on Gov. Rauner to drop his harmful agenda, pass a fair budget and settle fair contracts for public employees.

Next steps

Now that the ALJ has issued her recommended decision, both parties have the right to file written “exceptions” on points of disagreement, as well as replies to the other party’s exceptions.

Those filings and the recommended decision all go before the full Labor Board, which has indicated it could consider them and act on a final decision in November.

“We hope the Board will find that the parties are not at impasse on any issue and direct

the administration to return to the bargaining table,” Lynch said. “But there is no need to wait—Governor Rauner should direct his representatives back to the bargaining table now to develop a compromise agreement that is fair to all.”

GET THE FACTS!



While they are working hard every day to serve the people of Illinois, state employees should not have to worry about their future.

Illinois state employees have been inundated with misleading and negative communications from Gov. Bruce Rauner and his administration.

For example, the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) has produced videos rife with falsehoods and glaring omissions about key issues of contract negotiations, including health care and what happens if state employees are forced to strike.

AFSCME31.org/FairContract is a new web page that provides factual information about what’s at risk in this fight for a fair state contract and how the administration’s last, best and final offer would impact AFSCME members and their families.

One of the first posts on the website is a two-minute AFSCME video (pictured) debunking some of the most misleading statements from a CMS video about the Rauner Administration’s health care proposals.

AFSCME31.org/FairContract

Building our union

City of Chicago membership grows

Liz Supa had not received a raise from her employer in six years. AFSCME members at the City of Chicago have negotiated good contracts over the years, but employees like Supa who were not union members have fallen behind.

“WHEN I STARTED IN 2008, WE were the same [wage rate] as AFSCME members,” Supa said. “But now it’s way different ... they keep getting raises. We were like, wait a minute. This

isn’t fair. So we decided to try to join the union too.”

Supa, a reprographic technician III stationed at police headquarters, has worked for the city for eight years. She



Liz Supa at work in the “union print shop” at Chicago Police Department headquarters.

has helped modernize printing operations while saving the city money by keeping more complex jobs in-house: “It’s turned into a union print shop!” she said proudly.

Supa’s position was certified last year. “Now I can count on raises in the future to alleviate the costs of living in the city of Chicago.”

And she’s not alone. Since the beginning of 2015, 200 employees in more than 30 job titles have signed up to join the more than 3,000 AFSCME members who work for the city of Chicago.

A helping hand

DAHPNE SMITH BECAME A UNION steward with AFSCME Local 505 years ago, after unfair treatment from a supervisor compelled her to file a grievance. “I hadn’t even read my contract, but my union steward told me I had rights,” she said. “That’s when I became really interested in the union.”

Smith is a communicable disease control investigator, traveling throughout the city to ensure that individuals with infectious diseases are getting the treatment they need.

“I noticed the unfairness in wages, benefits, and the treatment of non-union employees and I started reaching out to them,” Smith said. “You have to pay it forward.”

Rona Jeongco is one of



Daphne Smith of Local 505 attended the International Convention this summer in Las Vegas. She has been helping organize co-workers to become AFSCME members.

the employees who recently petitioned to join AFSCME. A senior procurement specialist who has served the city for almost 15 years, Jeongco has taken it upon herself to help organize co-workers to join the union.

“There are a lot of issues that aren’t being addressed. How do you go to management for assistance when your issue is with management?” Jeongco asked. “That doesn’t really work. With a union, we will have representation.”

Brighter future with AFSCME

DIONNE MILLS, AN ADMINISTRATIVE services officer II in the

human resources department, has worked for the City of Chicago for 20 years. She just became an AFSCME member last year.

“As a union member, I will get a step increase for the next five years, whereas before I would have been stuck where I was,” Mills said. “Now the salary for my last five years will be higher so I can retire earlier. And I have AFSCME to thank for that.”

City of Chicago employees are continuing to organize as word spreads. And AFSCME members like Smith are ready with support and encouragement.

“I tell people who aren’t happy that a unit is better than one,” Smith said. “A helpful hand is better than a finger.”

Homewood Public Library employees win union

Margaret Novak, a reference librarian at the Homewood Public Library, said cuts to hours, benefits and paid time off led her to seek union representation with AFSCME—and her fellow members were ready to organize too.

“Morale was just so poor that finally we’d had enough,” Novak said. Novak and her co-workers petitioned to join AFSCME earlier this year and were certified as a union in August.

Lisa Stilts said she got involved because “we had no voice at all.” Stilts even considered finding another job, but she decided to stay and try to make a difference at the library.

“I thought: I can’t just leave. This is the district I pay taxes to, where I raised my children, and we weren’t providing the kinds of services we should have been. They’re going to have to listen to us now.”

A majority of Homewood Public Library employees signed up to join AFSCME Council 31 in a matter of hours due to the strength and unity of the organizing committee. Even their families were supportive of the workers’ decision to unionize.

“These last years at work have affected them because you can’t help but take stuff home with you,” Stilts said of her family. “I have teenage daughters and now they know I’ll take up the fight. I think it is important to show girls that no one else is going to do it for us.”

According to Novak, since organizing the union, morale has already improved at the library.

“This was a big boost. Now there is a light at the end of the tunnel.”



New AFSCME members at Homewood Public Library, from left to right: Lisa Stilts, Ashley Sander, Margaret Novak, Sandy Sullivan, Kym McNabb and Kathy Tisoncik.

Corrections staff protest unsafe working conditions

Increasing breakdown of order puts safety and security at risk

After six Pontiac Correctional Center employees were assaulted by inmates on August 21, frontline staff picketed outside the prison, demanding input on policies and procedures to ensure the safety of both employees and inmates. A similarly motivated protest at Stateville Correctional Center two weeks later pointed to systemic problems in Illinois state prisons.

“WE HAVE REPEATEDLY CALLED attention to the growing safety problems at Pontiac Correctional Center, but our concerns have not been addressed,” said correctional officer Joe Lewis, president of AFSCME Local 494. “Violent incidents like this are becoming more and more common. They are the direct result of a lack of employee involvement in safety issues.”

Corrections staff have been dealing with increasingly violent outbursts and harassment of all kinds, including kicking, punching, thrown urine and feces, and even assaults with handmade weapons.

Officers at correctional facilities across the state share the same concern: New policies and procedures are being mandated with no input from staff on the ground and without the resources needed to implement the changes safely.

Mental health lawsuit settlement

A class action lawsuit regarding treatment of mentally ill inmates resulted in a settlement between the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the plaintiffs. Known as Rasho, the settlement requires millions of dollars for new residential treatment units for mentally ill inmates and increased mental health and security staff.

When U.S. District Court Judge Michael Mihm approved the settlement, he warned that the unresolved state budget is “the 900-pound gorilla in the room.”

Many of the improvements that aim to protect the safety of inmates and security staff

are contingent upon the state approving a budget—yet new policies are already being implemented without the necessary resources to make them effective.

Inmates are already being screened and diagnosed as severely mentally ill (SMI), which means their penalties for rule infractions are minimal compared to general population inmates. This new policy has been mandated before any treatment units have been made available to house SMI inmates.

“We’ve got inmates with serious issues that definitely

need help,” said Steve Howerter, president of AFSCME Local 3585 at Canton Correctional Center. “But the hard part is that they are treated differently while living with the general population. That creates an unsafe environment for everyone.”

Howerter, a corrections counselor, has worked for IDOC for nearly 30 years. Employees are doing their best, he said, but staff shortages and the growing number of SMI-diagnosed inmates make a difficult job even harder.

“We’re not set up to be a mental health facility,” he said.

No support from the top

Support for security staff from DOC during this time of great change has been minimal.

“We want to do the right thing, we try to do the right thing, but we’re overwhelmed,” Howerter said. “And the first thing that happens after something like the incident at Pontiac? The administration picks apart staff response.”

Shortly after security staff members were assaulted at Pontiac, DOC made a public statement claiming that employees

failed to follow procedures. But that claim was never substantiated.

The root of the problem, officers say, is that staff have no input on safety issues.

“In 18 years I’ve never had any policymaker or administrator come and ask, ‘How can we make it better?’ or ‘What do you think of this policy?’” said Kelley Beale, a correctional officer at Shawnee Correctional Center and president of AFSCME Local 3605.

doing our job for 22 years,” Portwood said. “The decisions the administration is making don’t coincide with what we’re dealing with on the ground.”

One major problem is that security staff has a hard time maintaining order when many of the inmates face no consequences for even the most severe actions.

“More and more inmates are acting out and we have less and less control. Our hands are tied,” Portwood said.

“The current situation, in which both staff and inmates

“We’ve got inmates with serious issues that definitely need help ... but we’re not set up to be a mental health facility.”

“They don’t want to hear what we’ve got to say, but when something goes wrong they say we’re not doing our job. It’s a lose-lose situation.”

Ralph Portwood, a correctional sergeant at Stateville Correctional Center for 22 years and president of AFSCME Local 1866, echoes these concerns.

“They gave us two days of training regarding the SMI inmates and that’s supposed to change the way we’ve been

are at risk, cannot continue,” said Eddie Caumiant, AFSCME Council 31 regional director. “The AFSCME DOC Standing Committee has made that extremely clear with management. We strongly object to any attempt to scapegoat employees for the problems that are arising and will continue to meet with DOC to develop a plan of action that prioritizes the safety of staff and inmates.”



Pontiac Correctional Center | PHOTO: THE PANTAGRAPH

READY. SET. VOTE.

Voter Guide: 2016 General Election

Election Day 2016 will have a decisive impact on the future of workers' rights in Illinois. The following candidates are recommended by AFSCME Council 31.

NATIONAL RACES

- PRESIDENT:** Hillary Clinton (D)
U.S. SENATE: Tammy Duckworth (D)
U.S. CONGRESS:
 District 1: Bobby Rush (D)
 District 2: Robin Kelly (D)
 District 3: Dan Lipinski (D)
 District 5: Mike Quigley (D)
 District 7: Danny Davis (D)
 District 8: Raja Krishnamoorthi (D)
 District 9: Jan Schakowsky (D)
 District 10: Brad Schneider (D)
 District 11: Bill Foster (D)
 District 12: CJ Baricevic (D)
 District 17: Cheri Bustos (D)

STATE RACES

- ILLINOIS COMPTROLLER:** Susana Mendoza (D)
ILLINOIS SENATE:
 Senate District 22: Cristina Castro (D)
 Senate District 23: Tom Cullerton (D)
 Senate District 25: Corrine Pierog (D)
 Senate District 26: Kelly Mazeski (D)
 Senate District 28: Laura Murphy (D)
 Senate District 29: Julie Morrison (D)
 Senate District 31: Melinda Bush (D)
 Senate District 38: Christine Benson (D)

- Senate District 49: Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant (D)
 Senate District 50: Sam McCann (R)
 Senate District 52: Scott Bennett (D)
 Senate District 58: Sheila Simon (D)
 Senate District 59: Gary Forby (D)

ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

- House District 6: Sonya Harper (D)
 House District 10: Melissa Conyears (D)
 House District 11: Ann Williams (D)
 House District 12: Sara Feigenholtz (D)
 House District 15: John D'Amico (D)
 House District 18: Robyn Gabel (D)
 House District 20: Merry Marwig (D)
 House District 24: Lisa Hernandez (D)
 House District 35: Frances Hurley (D)
 House District 44: Fred Crespo (D)
 House District 45: Cynthia Borbas (D)
 House District 46: Deb Conroy (D)
 House District 48: Steve Swanson (D)
 House District 50: Valerie Burd (D)
 House District 55: Marty Moylan (D)
 House District 56: Michelle Mussman (D)
 House District 59: Carol Sente (D)
 House District 60: Rita Mayfield (D)
 House District 61: Nick Ciko (D)

- House District 62: Sam Yingling (D)
 House District 63: John Bartman (D)
 House District 68: Tricia Sweeney (D)
 House District 69: Angelique Bodin (D)
 House District 71: Mike Smiddy (D)
 House District 72: Mike Halpin (D)
 House District 74: Bill Butts (D)
 House District 75: Martha Shugart (D)
 House District 76: Andy Skoog (D)
 House District 77: Kathleen Willis (D)
 House District 79: Kate Cloonen (D)
 House District 81: Greg Hose (D)
 House District 84: Stephanie Kifowit (D)
 House District 93: John Curtis (D)
 House District 94: Bobby Pritchett (D)
 House District 95: Mike Mathis (D)
 House District 96: Sue Scherer (D)
 House District 99: Tony DelGiorno (D)
 House District 110: Dennis Malak (D)
 House District 111: Dan Beiser (D)
 House District 112: Katie Stuart (D)
 House District 113: Jay Hoffman (D)
 House District 114: LaToya Greenwood (D)
 House District 115: Marsha Griffin (D)
 House District 116: Jerry Costello (D)
 House District 117: John Bradley (D)
 House District 118: Brandon Phelps (D)

AFSCME members speak out for state senate candidates

Senate District 31: Melinda Bush (D)



Cheryl Graham, President of AFSCME Local 785

You can look at her voting record – Sen. Melinda Bush is 100 percent for us. She told me once that she is one of us: She is a worker. Her opponent may have more money than her, but they will never outwork her.

It doesn't get much better than Sen. Melinda Bush. She is everything we need in politics. She is Rauner's Number One target because she goes against what he's trying to do.

That's why members of my local are going door-to-door as many Saturdays as possible to support Sen. Melinda Bush.



Senate District 52: Scott Bennett (D)



Ann Zetervall, President of AFSCME Local 3700

I'm going to vote for Sen. Scott Bennett because he supports labor unions and workers 100 percent.

Sen. Bennett is very active in our community. I see him at every event. It's really wonderful to have someone who clearly cares about what's going on.

Scott Bennett spoke at our last membership meeting. AFSCME Local 3700 will be knocking on doors to get him reelected and will be recruiting more volunteers to join us.

Senate District 59: Gary Forby (D)



Julie Yana, President of AFSCME Local 141

We don't have to lobby Sen. Gary Forby. He's for Southern Illinois, he's for labor. He has a 100 percent voting record for AFSCME.

Sen. Forby is really invested in Southern Illinois and he's very accessible if you need to speak with him. He always takes the time to listen. He speaks our language and he understands what we're going through.

Local 141 will absolutely be walking the streets, going door-to-door for Sen. Forby. We're sharing his message with our members. We all know him and we know he needs our vote. We know he fights for us.

AFSCME members speak out for state house candidates

House District 20: Merry Marwig (D)



Roberto Botello, Recording Secretary of AFSCME Local 1610

Merry Marwig understands the struggles that labor faces. I know this because she was present during the PEOPLE endorsement meeting and she has a lot of support in the district.

Incumbent Rep. Michael McAuliffe no longer supports labor—he supports the governor’s turnaround agenda. He’s already running TV ads.

I’m taking it upon myself to volunteer with the get-out-the-vote campaign. I’m going to talk to voters in my community to ensure they’re aware that it’s an election year and that AFSCME-endorsed Merry Marwig is an important candidate.

House District 71: Mike Smiddy (D)



Carlene Erno, President of AFSCME Local 2615

Candidates say lots of things during elections that don’t always come true. But your voting record doesn’t lie. Rep. Mike Smiddy has a 100 percent voting record for labor and you can’t argue with that.

Our local and our community are totally committed to make sure we have a champion for labor in the house, and that is Rep. Mike Smiddy. We don’t have to call Mike Smiddy and tell him how to vote because he knows how to vote. He was an AFSCME member.

Labor can never match the dollar amount that the top one percent of America is putting in these races to buy candidates. So the lies, the misinformation that is being put out constantly over the airwaves about Mike Smiddy from billionaire Bruce Rauner has to be fought with boots on the ground from AFSCME and labor. And that’s the only way we can win this race.

House District 79: Kate Cloonen (D)



Gary Ciaccio, AFSCME Local 29

I’m going to work hard to get Rep. Kate Cloonen reelected. During her two terms, she’s been very accessible.

Every time we needed her vote, she was there. No matter where anyone else stood, she was there with us: on back pay, on the budget, on the arbitration bill. Any time we asked, she listened to our issues and she was there for us.

Gov. Rauner is pouring more than one million dollars in this race because he wants Kate Cloonen gone. We have to get out and do the work to make sure she stays.

House District 93: John Curtis (D)



Keith Powell, President of AFSCME Local 3567

We made several hundred calls to Rep. Hammond on SB 1229 and HB 580 [fair arbitration bills for state employees]. We met with her in Springfield on numerous occasions. I thought she was with us, but obviously Rauner got to her. She lied to my face.

That’s why I’m actively helping AFSCME-endorsed John Curtis. He’s a fair man. He wants to do the right thing. He understands unions; he’s an IFT union member. But he’s at a disadvantage because of the amount of money being pumped into Hammond’s campaign. She has giant billboards all over the place bought with Rauner money.

I’m going to do as much as I can to help John Curtis. I think he would do the right thing.

House District 95: Mike Mathis (D)



Dave Spinner, President of AFSCME Retiree Sub-Chapter 87

AFSCME members and retirees cannot trust incumbent Rep. Avery Bourne after her betrayal on the arbitration bill. Rep. Bourne voted present on SB 1229 when only one more vote was needed to override the veto.

I am voting for AFSCME-endorsed Mike Mathis. Mike is an IMRF Retiree and one of us.

I am going to do everything I can to ensure that Mike Mathis wins this race. He will stand with his district.

House District 99: Tony DelGiorno (D)



Brian Bond, President of AFSCME Local 2600

When incumbent Rep. Sara Wojcicki-Jimenez first took office, many of us in the area had gone to talk to her and she would say she supported state employees, but at the end of the day her actions did not reflect her words.

The calls and communications she received were overwhelmingly telling her to support state employees and she still did not vote to help us. Bottom line is she does not represent her constituents.

AFSCME-endorsed Tony DelGiorno is a person born and raised locally. He’s not from a wealthy family. He is someone that government employees can count on to represent us.

It’s going to be close. We need to get out and go door to door or phone bank to help Tony DelGiorno get his message out.

House District 115: Marsha Griffin (D)



Jerry Grammer, President of AFSCME Local 1175

AFSCME-endorsed Marsha Griffin is a teacher and her husband has a long history of service in corrections.

Incumbent Rep. Terri Bryant has a background in corrections too, but more than 70 percent of the time she’s voted against us or not voted at all. I’m not going to vote for someone who votes no on issues that are important to my life. I thought for sure she was going to be on our side. But she totally disappointed us with her voting record. I’m not going to trust her again.

I will definitely be volunteering for Marsha Griffin because I don’t want Terri Bryant in office again.

COUNTY RACES

CHAMPAIGN

Auditor: John Farney (R)
County Board 5: Peter Tracy (D)
County Board 11: James Tinsley (D)

COOK

State’s Attorney: Kim Foxx (D)

JOHNSON

State’s Attorney: Andrew Wilson (D)

KANE

County Board 6: Brian Dahl (D)
County Board 8: Barbara Hernandez (D)
County Board 10: Todd Zies (D)
County Board 18: Nicolas Jimenez (D)

KANKAKEE

Auditor: Deborah Woodruff (D)
Treasurer: Nick Allen (D)
State’s Attorney: Jim Rowe (D)
Circuit Clerk: Jeffrey Hackley (D)

LAKE

Circuit Clerk: Erin Cartwright Weinstein (D)

LASALLE

State’s Attorney: Brian Towne (D)
Recorder: Mary Beth Kuhn-Feltman (D)
County Board 13: Dave Torres (D)

MADISON

County Board Chair: Alan Dunstan (D)
State’s Attorney: Tom Gibbons (D)

ROCK ISLAND

Circuit Clerk: Tammy Weikert (D)
Recorder: Kelly Fisher (D)
County Board 7: Steve Doye (D)
County Board 8: Brian Vyncke (D)
County Board 9: Jeff Deppe (D)
County Board 10: Cecelia O’Brien (D)
County Board 13: Richard Brunk (D)
County Board 22: Ryan Shoemaker (D)
County Board 24: Tim Erno (D)

SALINE

State’s Attorney: Mike Henshaw (D)

WILL

Coroner: Patrick O’Neal (D)
Recorder: Kristin Cross (R)
County Board 1: Robert Howard (D)
County Board 4: Jacqueline Traynere (D)
County Board 6: Joe VanDuyne (D)
County Board 10: Joe Carlasare, Tyler Marcum (D)
County Board 12: Larry Gilman (D)
County Board 13: Mark Ferry, Bill Thoman (D)

WILLIAMSON

State’s Attorney: Brandon Zanotti (D)

WINNEBAGO

County Board Chair: John Nelson (D)
Coroner: Bill Hintz (R)
County Board 10: Joe Hoffman (D)
County Board 12: Jamie Salgado (D)
County Board 17: David Soll (D)

SHORT REPORTS

Court sides with employees in Lake County Clerk Office

AFFIRMING AN ILLINOIS LABOR Relations Board decision, a state appellate court rejected Lake County Circuit Clerk Keith Brin's attempts to avoid bargaining with his employees and confirmed certification of their union, AFSCME Council 31.

"Circuit clerk employees serve the people of Lake County and we keep the courts running. We are dedicated to our work," said Louise Moore, an employee in the clerk's office. "The court's decision allows us to negotiate together with management for a fair contract. I hope the circuit clerk is ready to come to the table so we can work together to create fair working conditions and improve public services."

About 120 clerk's office employees organized a union with AFSCME, which was officially certified in July 2015. For more than a year, County Clerk Brin categorically refused to begin the process of negotiating a contract.

"The court's decision allows us to negotiate with management so we can work together to create fair working conditions and improve public services."

His office was charged with repeated violations of Illinois labor law. The labor board issued complaints alleging that Brin illegally intimidated and interfered with employees who helped organize the union—even firing one worker in retaliation for exercising her union rights.

"It's time for Keith Brin to put an end to the hostile work environment he's created and recognize the important work that his employees perform for the citizens of Lake County," said AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Colin Theis. "Employees just want to be treated with respect."

When the board issued its decision, Brin said he would appeal. However, he later rescinded that statement and pledged to bargain with the union members.

"We came together to form our union because we weren't being treated fairly," said Cindy Robers, an employee in the clerk's office. "The clerk's harassment and intimidation of us is out of bounds. We're more determined than ever to win a fair union contract and respect for the public service we provide."

Wall Street can work for us

WHAT IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT could raise hundreds of billions of dollars for education, infrastructure and other critical needs by leveling a miniscule tax on trades of stocks, bonds, derivatives and other investments? What if that tiny tax would also benefit working families?

This hypothetical win-win for our economy is actually a very real revenue solution called the financial transaction tax (FTT).

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) recently released a report that found an FTT would "result in a combination of increased tax revenue and decreased waste from a bloated financial sector." While generating huge revenues, the tax would also serve to limit financial transactions that have no benefit for taxpayers.

"Essentially, households and non-financial businesses would no longer be paying for financial transactions that add no value to the economy," said EPI analyst Hunter Blair, who authored the report along with Josh Bivens. "This is as good as a tax cut for them, and boosts their disposable income."

While proposed FTTs are very small, the tax is capable of raising billions because the vast numbers of trades conducted in the financial sector are worth hundreds of trillions of dollars. That's why the tax has steadily gained political support. Several proposals have already been put forward in Congress—and Sen. Bernie Sanders's presidential campaign used the FTT as a way to pay for its expansion of college aid.



Lake County clerks delivered a petition to the County Administrator on July 26, calling for improved staffing.

The financial sector has yet to pay its debts to the U.S. economy after creating the Great Recession of 2008 that continues to plague working families.

"An FTT would help ensure

the financial sector compensates other sectors of the economy (particularly U.S. households) for the damage the sector inflicted," the report states. "Through generating tax revenues, decreasing the fees Americans

pay on their investments, and shrinking unproductive parts of the financial sector, an FTT would help Wall Street work for Main Street."

It's hard to argue with that.

Aurora community speaks out to save library services

MORE THAN 100 COMMUNITY members filled the West Branch of the Aurora Public Library on August 8 to protest the Library Board's planned cuts to staff and services. The library's parking lot was completely filled with cars. Many people in the standing-room-only crowd wore stickers demanding "No cuts!"

"Our community will continue to fight back against the library board's cuts."

Members of AFSCME Local 2283 at the Aurora Public Library organized protests and community meetings over several months to ensure the public was aware of the proposed cuts. In response, the community came together to save the criti-



An Aurora mother tells the library board how much the library means to her family.

cal services the library provides.

John Savage, president of the Library Board, stressed the importance of "focus[ing] on a balanced budget" during his presentation at the August 8 meeting. Following Savage, Alderman Carl Franco urged the library board to consider increasing the library tax levy to prevent the cuts.

Ald. Franco said that his office had been flooded with calls and emails from concerned citizens who want to preserve services at their public library. He said if the Library Board would recommend a tax levy,

the Aurora City Council would be happy to consider passing it.

Numerous community members spoke out, many of them expressing anger about the disproportionate cuts to the West Branch and the closing of the Church Road Express Center. One mother who depends on the Express Center started crying while talking about how much her children and her community need the Church Road branch.

"I've been hearing now that you guys are ripping apart our library and I said to

continued on page 11

IPRA investigators fight for fairness, accountability

The City of Chicago's Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA) could be abolished if Mayor Rahm Emanuel's proposed ordinance passes the Chicago City Council. However, the ordinance is silent on what will happen to the staff of the agency, including AFSCME-represented IPRA investigators.

AFTER SEVERAL HIGH-PROFILE instances of police misconduct, the city's police department faces widespread demands for a more robust review of all allegations of officer-involved shootings and other questionable incidents. A report from the task force assigned to investigate current procedures recommended replacing IPRA with a new civilian police investigative agency, as reflected in Emanuel's ordinance.

While the report did not find frontline IPRA investigators at fault, there have been no answers from the mayor's office on what will happen to current investigators if IPRA is replaced.

Members of AFSCME Local 654 have met with aldermen, briefing them about the work they do and responding to their concerns. AFSCME Council 31 also submitted a report to members of the city council that explained how IPRA investigators are highly trained professionals whose efforts have been circumscribed by managerial edicts, legal restrictions and inadequate resources.

The union will continue its efforts to educate the city council and the mayor about the importance of preserving the experienced, professional investigators in any new police review agency.

Aurora community continued from page 10

myself, 'What, what are we going to be doing?' Because a lot of people, a lot of seniors, they don't have a way to go to the big library. They go by walking to the express center. My kids go by walking to the express center...

"I don't understand what happened. They gave us something very good for the community and now they want to take it from us. People in my area, they don't have wi-fi. When my kids need to do homework, they need a hotspot and they can go to the library."

The large crowd clapped and cheered her testimony.

Savage shut down the meeting at 8:30 p.m. despite the fact that there were still many community members with additional questions and objections. When asked if the board would recommend an increase in the library tax levy to the City Council, Savage said he would discuss the possibility

with the board, but cautioned that it would not be in time to stop the cuts.

In response to the public outcry, the Aurora Public Library board modified the proposed cuts. Rather than cut West Branch hours by 35 percent, the board now plans to cut hours at West by 25 percent and Santori by six percent.

"The union believes that substantial reductions in hours will result in a very confusing schedule that will further discourage library patrons," said AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Carla Williams. "Our community will continue to fight back against the library board's cuts."

Research shows that investment in libraries results in an increase in library visits and circulation. In other words, if libraries are better funded, more people use them. And that benefits the whole community.

IPRA Investigator LAKENYA WHITE

Excerpts from testimony to the Chicago City Council's Progressive Caucus



My name is LaKenya White and I am an investigator with the Independent Police Review Authority, IPRA. I have a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and I am currently working on my master's degree. I began working as an investigator in 2007 when IPRA was formed.

I am now a shooting specialist, which means I have the responsibility to respond to police shootings to conduct the preliminary investigation. This requires that I have significant training not only from the Chicago Police Department, but from the Illinois State Police, Northwestern University, and other agencies and organizations.

I am also the mother of two children, a 17-year-old African American male and a 13-year-old African American female. While I worry about my children being the victim of a senseless crime, I also struggle in the back of my mind if my children will be stopped by the police and how their interaction with the police will work out. I know that reform in the Chicago Police Department and IPRA needs to occur. I, along with my fellow investigators, want to be part of the solution to help reform police accountability.

IPRA investigators recognize that our agency is an essential component of the current police oversight process and the logical focus of reform efforts. But proposals to completely dismantle IPRA, including its current investigative staff, are impractical, unfair, and could significantly set back efforts at improving police accountability.

IPRA investigators are required to follow CPD's Use of Force model. According to the Use of Force model, the amount of force used by an officer must be objectively reasonable in light of the circumstances faced by the officer, as perceived by the officer on the scene. Investigators cannot consider subsequent evidence that a person

did not pose a threat. In order for any reform to occur, CPD's Use of Force model must be revised.

Secondly, problems also stemmed from the policies and practices of prior IPRA leadership, which include inadequate resources.

And lastly, total replacement of IPRA's educated, trained and experienced professional investigators is not justified and would create even more problems.

The job is challenging and demanding. We are responsible for tracking down witnesses, viewing autopsies, gathering vast amounts of information, and critically analyzing evidence. Replacing these experienced professionals would be extremely difficult, and training a whole new workforce impractical. Delays and bungled investigations would result, which would further undermine public confidence.

There are many thoughtful proposals that would improve police oversight and increase accountability and transparency. We urge you to make sure that whatever reform framework is adopted, that it includes investigators as part of the solution. Under strong, independent leadership, we have the experience and knowledge to ensure effective investigations and transparent process.

"IPRA investigators want to be part of the solution to help reform police accountability."

Personal Support Program helps AFSCME members thrive

Union-based employee assistance program has helped tens of thousands since 1992

Life can be stressful in so many ways. The challenges of balancing work, family and other obligations can sometimes become overwhelming. There can be problems with teenage children. Or difficulties with drugs or alcohol. That's why AFSCME established the Personal Support Program (PSP) to provide assistance for members and their families.

PSP, A UNION-BASED EMPLOYEE assistance program, began providing services to AFSCME-represented employees and their dependents in August 1992.

"Before I came to PSP, I worked for DCFS for five years," said Cheryl Bristor-Wilson, Interim Director of PSP and counselor for 23 years. "I wondered where state employees

could go when they need someone to talk to about the difficult things they see and do every day. I wanted to be a part of that."

AFSCME is committed to helping its members realize their full potential. PSP expands AFSCME's tradition of service to those it represents by providing professional

"PSP helps keep AFSCME members healthy so they can make good decisions for themselves and their families."

counseling and support as individuals and families experience personal challenges and life changes. The earlier assistance is provided, the easier it is to find solutions.

Trusted resource

Access to PSP services is an employee benefit that the union seeks to incorporate into collective bargaining agreements whenever possible. The program has become a trusted resource for AFSCME members who work in extremely difficult and stressful environments and

are addressing issues that can create personal or professional difficulties.

"We assist members with the many situations that may impact them at work and home," Bristor-Wilson said. "PSP helps keep AFSCME members healthy so they can make good decisions for themselves and their families."

PSP provides free, short-term counseling, as well as referral services for AFSCME-represented employees and their dependents who work for the City of Chicago, Cook County, the State of Illinois, and several other employers throughout the state.*

Help when you need it

Face-to-face sessions with a professional clinician are available at more than 40 locations statewide. Services provided by PSP are free of

charge and counselors are available Monday through Saturday, with early morning and evening hours available. Referrals to outside providers are made to enable individuals to use their health care benefits whenever possible.

"AFSCME members come to PSP with a range of concerns, including parent-child or marital conflict, financial problems, grief and loss, depression, anxiety, and work-related issues like interpersonal conflict or stress on the job," Bristor-Wilson said.

"Everything we discuss is strictly confidential," she emphasized. "We can't discuss a member's case with anyone without a release of information from that member. But sometimes we can help mediate a situation so that everyone benefits."

In addition to counseling services, PSP also offers consultations and educational seminars to local unions and work sites on a wide range of topics, including stress management, grief, critical incident debriefings, and time management.

"We're here to serve AFSCME families," Bristor-Wilson said. "Everyone needs a little help sometimes and we are here for you when you need us."

**Worried?
PSP can help!**

**Call the AFSCME
Personal Support
Program.**

1-800-647-8776



We're here when you need us.

"PSP helped me"

"I was dealt with in a completely professional and compassionate manner from my very first call to PSP."

"PSP helped very much. It felt good to talk to someone who listens and understands and helps you to deal with problems and issues."

"Setting up the appointment was done very promptly and professionally. The session was very helpful. I feel much better than I did before I got here."

* Other AFSCME locals eligible for PSP services:
347 Village of Round Lake Beach, 3905 Village of Fox Lake, 2891 Village of Homewood,
1473 City of Markham, 3780 Egyptian County Health Department, 2464 Jackson County,
2402 Randolph County, 726 City of Pana, and 3079 Sangamon County.

RETIREE NOTES

AFSCME retirees get out the vote

AFSCME CHAPTER 31 retirees wasted no time after the statewide PEOPLE Conference concluded to start getting union-endorsed candidates elected to office.

“This is a particularly important election for retirees,” said David Spinner, president of sub-chapter 87 (Decatur-Hillsboro). “Almost daily I am hearing from my members how their doctors and dentists are refusing to see them because the state is failing to pay their insurance claims. If we can help just a few more union-friendly legislators get elected this fall, then we can get our state back on track and our members can get the health care they earned.”

Retirees from Carbondale to Chicago have already started knocking on doors, making phone calls and writing letters to get the word out to other retirees about the importance of this election.



Kathy Breeden, president of sub-chapter 77 (Galesburg), casts her vote at the AFSCME PEOPLE Conference.



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin with AFSCME retiree David Spinner and AFSCME-endorsed candidate for House District 95, Mike Mathis.

“We can’t let money dominate this election. Billionaires like Rauner may be able to blanket the airwaves with negative commercials and mud-slinging,” said Larry Brown, president of Chapter 31, “but as we showed in the primaries, he’ll never match our ability to turn out volunteers and take our message straight to the voters.”

To volunteer to help union-supported candidates, sign up at AFSCME31.org/ReadySetVote.

Medicare Advantage benefit choice period

MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE STATE AND university retirees will have an open enrollment period for Medicare Advantage plans from October 14 to November 15.

If you do not wish to make changes to your health insur-

ance then no action is required. However, new enrollees and those who wish to make changes should check their mailboxes now for a benefit choice package from CMS.

During the open-enrollment period CMS will be hosting seminars across the state. The schedule will be included in your open-enrollment information.

Retirees can find detailed information about these plans as well as answers to frequently asked questions at AFSCME31.org/retirees/get-answers.

Kansas “Turnaround Agenda” threatens pensions

BRUCE RAUNER LIKES TO CLAIM that his “Turnaround Agenda” would lead to heightened prosperity in Illinois. However, when actually put into practice

these policies inevitably hurt working families, in particular public-sector employees and retirees.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback imposed his own version of the “Turnaround Agenda” in 2012, cutting taxes on the wealthy and large businesses. By the end of 2014, Kansas had run up a deficit of \$300 million, triggering additional spending cuts.

To fill the gap caused by lavishing tax cuts on the rich, Brownback took millions from social service, public health, transportation and youth education programs.

And this year, the Kansas legislature sent a bill to Brownback that allowed him to skip up to \$100 million in payments to the Kansas Public Employee Retirement System to help balance the budget.

“These types of policies, often masquerading as ‘pro-business,’ inevitably leave public pension systems vulnerable,” said Jeanne Cameron, Executive Director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans. “Anti-worker politicians like Brownback and Rauner craft huge tax subsidies designed to benefit only their wealthiest citizens. Their favorite way to pay for these is raiding social service funds and pension payments.”

In Illinois, Rauner’s proposed budget for 2017 asks the legislature to give him the power to conduct “fund sweeps,” which would allow Illinois to balance its budget by skipping payments to our pension systems—a practice that caused Illinois’ pension shortfalls in the first place.



ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

FOR HEALTH/DENTAL INSURANCE NONPAYMENT SERS AND SURS RETIREES



HAS YOUR HEALTH OR DENTAL CARE PROVIDER...

- Asked for payment upfront before rendering services?
- Directly billed you for the full cost of your services (not including co-pays or deductibles)?
- Refused you service because “your insurance isn’t paying claims?”
- Turned you in to a collection agency?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO...

1. Talk to your doctor or dentist.

Tell them your insurance is still good, but due to the state budget impasse they are withholding claim payments until the state has a budget and that the health insurance company is liable for these payments, not you.

2. Call your insurance company.

Explain what happened. They will likely tell you something similar to: “We can’t pay because the state isn’t paying us.” Take note of who you talked to and when.

3. Call CMS at 800-442-1300.

Explain what happened. Be specific about the payment problem you are experiencing (collection notices, withholding care, etc.). Take note of who you talked to and when.

4. If CMS is unhelpful, contact AFSCME by email at webaction@afscme31.org.

Celebrating Labor Day

Retirees celebrated the contributions of working men and women across Illinois on Labor Day.



ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

DeKalb County employees fight for good jobs

MORE THAN 300 MEMBERS OF AFSCME Local 3537 who work for DeKalb County officials, the health department and the nursing home won a five-year contract with annual raises and prevented huge hikes in health care contributions.

Marla Cradduck is president of the local and has worked as a certified nurse assistant at the DeKalb County Rehab & Nursing Center for 27 years. She said the county board was attempting to abolish a cap for employee contributions to their health insurance plans.

"Some of the cuts on the table could be devastating to us as employees and to the county itself," Cradduck said in testimony before the board. "So many of us are already making near minimum wage and we have families to support."

Cradduck's testimony emphasized that county employees live in the community and help its economy thrive. She also pointed out that bargaining proposals on the table unfairly discriminated against the mostly female AFSCME members.

"More than 80 percent of us are women," Cradduck said. "It feels like a terrible double standard when the county is asking female-dominated sectors to pay more for their health care than male-dominated sectors like the sheriff's department."

Cradduck's powerful testimony helped push the board to do the right thing for most of its employees and tentative agreements were reached in two of the bargaining units.

But there was still more fighting to do for nursing home workers. The county wanted these low-wage workers to accept a mere one percent wage increase while also cutting their incentive program and the retention bonus for longer-term employees.

The nursing home employees voted to reject the proposal and held member meetings to plan potential actions. The members held a picket, testified again at the board meeting and circulated a heart-wrenching video making their case, which inspired

hundreds of constituent emails and calls to county officials.

The county finally relented and came back to the table with an agreement that the workers ratified. Winning a tough fight made the local stronger than ever, with members already planning a labor-management meeting to protect and improve service quality at the health department and nursing home.

"Fighting for your co-workers makes the struggles you go through together during your day-to-day mean so much more. You know someone has got your back."

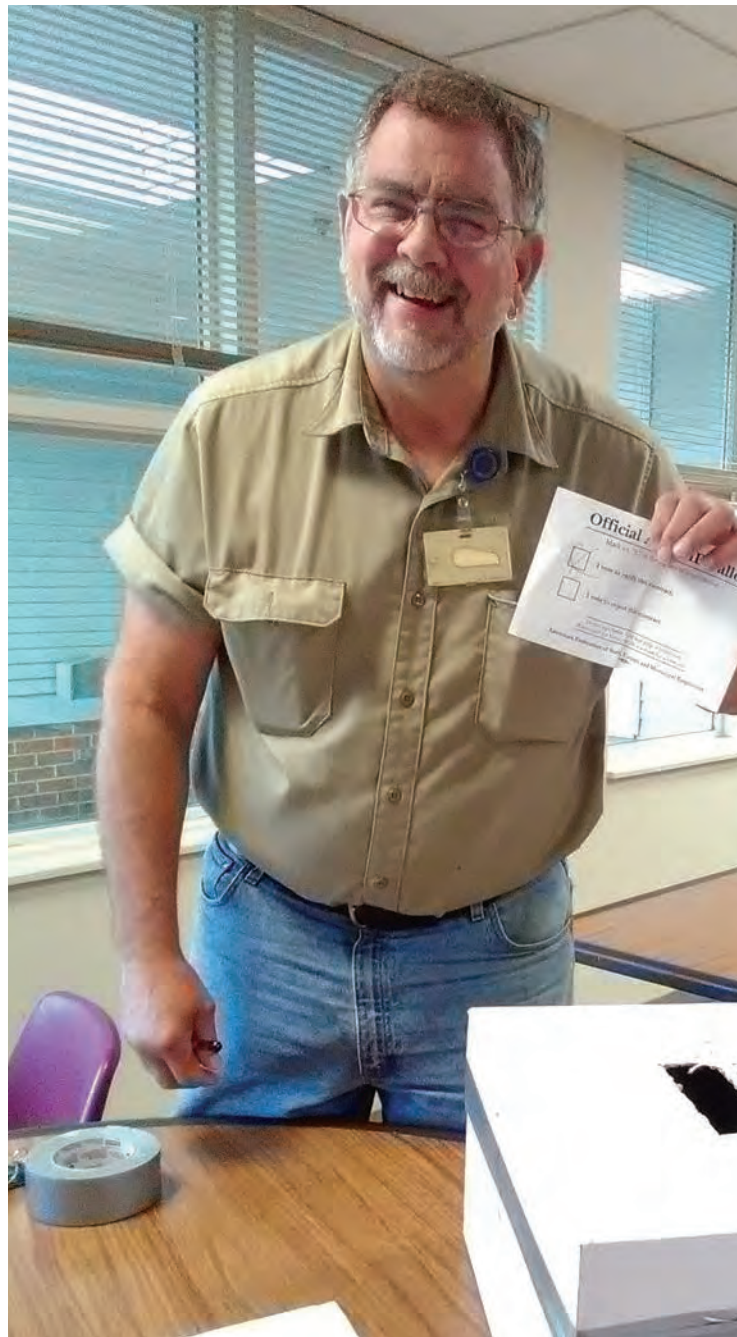
Local 3537 members became especially close when they lost one of their own earlier this summer. Kevin Reese, a bargaining committee member, passed away from cancer in August.

"Kevin was a great steward for his co-workers," said AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Sara Dorner. "Because of Kevin we brought important issues to the table and made more gains for everyone in the local."

The local is organizing a memorial fund for Reese's three daughters, who also lost their mother to cancer last year.

"Fighting for your co-workers makes the struggles you go through together during your day-to-day mean so much more. You know someone has got your back," said Chuck Coulter, a maintenance worker at the nursing home.

Led by Dorner, the AFSCME Local 3537 bargaining team included Cradduck, Steve O'Bryan, Dawn Lawton, Sherri Zabindin, Chuck Simpson, Sarah Lief, Kevin Fricke, Jim Sedal, Kevin Reese, Deborah Michaelowski, Deborah Wallace, Lauren Saks and Michelle Gibson.



AFSCME Local 3537 member Steve O'Bryan casts his vote in the DeKalb County contract ratification.

Cook County public defenders win long fight

ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDERS like Kevin Ochalla, president of AFSCME Local 3315, represent indigent clients who are accused of crimes in Cook County.

Since he's on the homicide task force, all of Ochalla's clients are accused of murder. He represents them from bond hearing to trial and

"I enjoy finding justice for those that have the least access to resources."

until the case is finished.

"I enjoy the idea of finding justice for those that are the least privileged or have the least access to resources in our community," Ochalla said. "It's our job to make the court, the jury and the state take notice of the person standing in front of them and not just the crime of which they are accused."

AFSCME locals at Cook County conducted universal negotiations that lasted more than three years and ultimately resulted in a five-year contract with annual raises. Members of Local 3315 will benefit from those hard-won gains.

"It was very frustrating," Ochalla said. "There were a lot of days when the county didn't show up or seemed to be purposefully delaying the process."

Chief negotiator Mike

Newman, deputy director of AFSCME Council 31, and the 50-person bargaining team persisted and won raises amounting to 10.75 percent over the life of the contract, plus a longevity increase for employees at the top of the wage scale.

Ochalla has been with the public defenders' office since 2003. He said many former clients will approach him and ask if he remembers their case.

"It's good to see them. You hope that they take that opportunity [of a good outcome in court] to help themselves out ... and a lot of them do," Ochalla said. "That's rewarding."

Big steps forward for support staff at Glenbard high schools

AFTER YEARS OF RECEIVING sub-standard wages for the area, support staff who work in the offices and classrooms of Glenbard's four public high schools won a 24 percent wage increase over the next five years.

"We knew going into it that we needed something big," said AFSCME Local 1970 President Cynthia Infelise. "When you're not even making 10 dollars an hour, three percent is just not enough."

"Once we got going, our members just realized how important it is to come together as one. We are going to keep building on that."

Secretaries, administrative aides and teaching aides at Glenbard North, South, East and West told their personal stories to management at the very start of negotiations.

"We laid it on the line. We're working three jobs just to make ends meet," Infelise said. She has worked at the high school for nine years and currently serves as the substitute coordinator. "We are going through so much just to survive."



AFSCME Local 1970 members celebrate their new union contract with Glenbard Public High Schools.

Largely made up of new members, the board was very receptive to the powerful testimony employees offered. Negotiations began in March and concluded just before school began this year.

Infelise said the local got a lot of support from the teachers, who wore green in solidarity during negotiations. The local also made sure to have two representatives for each high school so that communications were constant, keeping members motivated and engaged.

"Once we got going and the building reps got out there, the rest of our members just realized how important it is to come together as one," Infelise said. "We've gone from just 50 percent union membership to more than 75 percent in less than a year, and we are going to keep building on that."

Infelise was joined on the bargaining team by local vice president Verna Preisel, secretary-treasurer Shaun Morrison, recording secretary Linda Bothen, Janet Berger, Justin Selby, Mari Jourdan, Chris Gladish and Leo Aviles Val

Goff. AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative David Marlow led negotiations.

Randolph County local wins fair contract

RANDOLPH COUNTY WAS CALLING for concessions at the negotiating table with AFSCME Local 2402 members who work at the Randolph County Care Center. But the employees stuck together and won a fair contract that raises wages and protects health care.

"The county told us they were in deficit spending and struggling with a decline in sales tax dollars," said AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Patricia Rensing. "But we argued that AFSCME members at the care center actually generate revenue by operating a first-class laundry, which provides services to the center residents and two community hospitals."

Historically, Local 2402 bargained two-year agreements, but when the county came to the table with changes to health insurance as a primary objec-

tive, the bargaining committee negotiated a three-year contract settlement to protect members from steep increases.

The committee was able

to limit the financial impact of a first-time employee contribution to the health care plan by holding the cost to a \$25 monthly premium

contribution for the life of the contract. The bargaining team won 5.5 percent raises over three years, raised the wage floor for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) by \$2 per hour and made positive changes in paid-leave policies.

"I'm proud of our bargaining team," Rensing said. "Our intent was a fair agreement and through due diligence at the table we ratified a fair contract."

"This is a good contract. Bottom line: It protects our members."

"Having worked at RCC for 21 years, this is a good contract," Vickie Rednour said. Rednour is an LPN and recording secretary for the local. "Bottom line: It protects our members."

Rensing was joined on the Local 2402 bargaining team by local president Crystal Kempfer, a member of the janitorial staff; Lisa Carns, a certified nursing assistant and physical therapy assistant; Julie Clutts, a laundry supervisor; and certified nursing assistant Lucy Clayton.



Members of AFSCME Local 2402 at Randolph County won a fair contract that raised wages and protected their health care.

Anna Veterans' Home Strike: 20 Years Later



In a rural southern Illinois community in 1996, a small group of underpaid direct care, dietary and housekeeping workers—mostly women—went on strike at a privately-run state veterans' home. And they won.

Now we celebrate the 20th anniversary of this determined AFSCME local's hard-fought victory and their continued unity in the face of new challenges.

Workers at the Anna Veterans' Home, the state's first privately-operated veterans' home, formed a union with AFSCME not long after the facility opened its doors. But their battle for their first union contract was lengthy and hard-fought against ServiceMaster, a private vendor that was determined to turn a profit on the backs of aged veterans and those who cared for them.

After more than a year at the bargaining table, management was still refusing to increase wages above the minimum required by law or provide any health care or retirement benefits. And on the job, workers felt demeaned and intimidated on a daily basis without a union contract in place to secure their rights.

So in August 1996, employees at the Anna Veterans' Home voted overwhelmingly to go out on strike.

The start of the strike was dramatic. Workers, hands clasped and raised above their heads, walked out of the facility and formed a picket line surrounded by supportive union members and retirees, community allies, veterans, and residents' families.

"The hard part was walking away from the men and women we cared for, who fought for our country and our freedom," strike participant and AFSCME Local 3280 President Bonnie Brimm says today. "I

cried as I said goodbye to each of them and walked out the door. But we didn't really have a choice. We were striking for a better work environment for us and for them."

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

"Most of our group was single mothers and young people who didn't know much about unions," Brimm says. "But we showed everyone how the state was allowing this company to make money off of our backs while we served veterans. And winning the public's support—from workers, retirees, veterans, our families, *everyone*—is how we won the strike."

One by one, community leaders and elected officials came to the striking workers' aid. As the company brought in strikebreakers to staff the facility, the union reached out and signed them up as members. Most ended up joining the strike.

As the facts of the workers' treatment—low wages, no benefits—became more widely known and public support grew, then-governor Jim Edgar stepped in to urge the company to reach a fair settlement and end the strike.

After spending five weeks on the picket line, fighting for their jobs, their rights and their dignity, the AFSCME members won their strike.

"We had nothing to lose and everything to gain if we stood together. That's why we won: We were 100 percent together."

FIGHTING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Back at the table, the bargaining team won increased wages for every employee. Direct care staff who were making as little as \$4.50 an hour received a pay increase to \$8.50 an hour. The employer instituted a health care plan and paid 90 percent of the employees' premiums. The workers also won paid time off and double time for holidays.

"We had nothing to lose and everything to gain if we stood together," Brimm said then. "That's why we won: We were 100 percent together."

AFSCME members at the Anna Veterans' Home weren't done yet. After they won their strike, they successfully won legislative approval to make the home a state facility—and they became state employees. Today, they are more determined than ever to stand up for workers' rights.

"We fought so hard to get where we're at, and as union members we're never going to be able to stop fighting," says Brimm. "Governor Rauner is trying to destroy our union and our rights and we have to take a stand. I know we'll come out on top, but we have to be strong and stand together."

"United we stand, divided we fall. There's never been a truer statement in life."