

AFSCME Council 31

2018 Legislative Agenda

Protect workers' rights

The corporate elite and right-wing forces have launched a massive and sophisticated nationwide campaign to drive down wages and destroy public employee unions. Led by Governor Bruce Rauner, their champion here in Illinois, corporate interests have also continued to press to weaken all laws that protect workers, whether in the private or public sector. AFSCME will:

- Fight any effort to weaken or diminish the collective bargaining rights provided to employees by the Illinois Public Employee Labor Relations Act and the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act.
- Work to defeat any effort to pass any version of so-called “Right-to-Work” legislation in Illinois.
- Oppose any efforts to diminish workers’ compensation or unemployment insurance benefits.
- Support efforts to raise the minimum wage in Illinois.
- Support legislation requiring paid family leave for all employees.
- Support efforts to stop sexual harassment in the workplace.

Support responsible budgets and adequate revenues for state and local governments

Governor Rauner’s three-year obstruction of a responsible state budget resulted in the tripling of the state’s backlog of unpaid bills, leaving the state in dire fiscal straits despite the eventual passage of a permanent tax increase. Under Rauner, the backlog on unpaid bills grew to historic levels topping out at \$16.6 billion. Illinois’ revenue shortage threatens jobs, schools, health care and other vital public services. The state’s chronic budget shortfalls have a negative fiscal impact not only on state services, but on cities, counties, state-funded private agencies, and public universities which are reliant on state funding. AFSCME will:

- Advocate for measures to move Illinois toward a fair tax system, including the enactment of a constitutional amendment that would allow for graduated tax rates that require the wealthy to pay their fair share.
- Support efforts to close corporate tax loopholes and oppose efforts to expand such unfair giveaways.
- Support other revenue-raising measures that would address the state’s budget shortfall, such as modernizing the state sales tax, while opposing measures that would reduce income to the state.
- Support legislation that would expand the responsible taxing authority of local governments and oppose legislation limiting that authority.
- Oppose any legislation that would undermine adequate funding for local government services, including but not limited to, any effort to reduce local governments’ share of the income tax distributed through the Local Government Distributive Fund.

Pay state employees wages owed

Press for passage of an appropriation to pay the remaining back wages owed to more than 20,000 employees in several state agencies for negotiated wage increases withheld in 2011.

Oppose cuts to public employee pensions

AFSCME Council 31, along with our union partners in the We Are One Illinois coalition, continues to wage a hard-fought battle to protect the pension benefits earned by union members at the state, university and local government levels. Even though the Illinois Supreme Court has clearly affirmed the constitution's pension protection clause, the Governor and his legislative allies are attempting to reduce the benefits of current employees, as well as undermine defined benefit pension systems for all public employees. Moreover, Cook County has continued to push for changes to its pension system that AFSCME has previously blocked. AFSCME will:

- Continue to press for a solution to the pension funding crises that is constitutional and ensures retirement security for public employees.
- Oppose efforts to force public employees into risky defined-contribution retirement plans.
- Oppose unconstitutional cuts to the pension benefits of employees or retirees in any public pension system.

Demand safer working conditions

Changing policies in the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of violent assaults on staff by inmates and youth. In addition, employees at the Quincy Veterans Home have been sickened by repeated outbreaks of Legionnaire's Disease. Violent assaults on staff in state run mental health and developmental centers are a growing concern. And the very serious assault of a DCFS caseworker has brought to light the dangers employees in that agency face. AFSCME will press for continued legislative oversight and action to pressure the Rauner Administration to make the necessary changes in policy, staffing levels, and working conditions to reduce the dangers that employees face on the job.

Fight privatization of public services and assets

As the State of Illinois, public universities and local governments struggle to balance their budgets, Governor Rauner as well as local government and university officials are looking to privatization of public services and assets as a way to save money without any regard for the impact on employees or the quality of services provided. Time and again, taxpayers suffer the consequences of these ill-conceived schemes. AFSCME will:

- Oppose all legislation that would have the effect of privatizing any service currently provided by public employees.
- Oppose efforts to weaken or repeal the laws that currently restrict privatization of any public services, such as the law prohibiting privatization of school district support services.

Support adequate funding for state universities

State universities have been a particular target for Rauner's budgetary reductions and the resulting operational shortfalls have meant substantial cutbacks at many campuses. Such cuts

have already led to employee layoffs, as well as making contract negotiations very difficult. AFSCME will continue to work in coalition with other unions, educational advocates and student organizations to:

- Restore state university funding to at least the FY2015 appropriation level.
- Oppose any cuts having the effect of reducing access to higher education for working families, including but not limited to, the elimination of tuition waivers for university employees and their families or cuts to the Monetary Assistance Program (MAP).

Fight to improve wage levels in community disability agencies and other AFSCME-represented nonprofit agencies

Thousands of workers serving individuals with developmental disabilities in community-based agencies, as well as other human service providers, depend on money from the state to improve wages. AFSCME has been leading the way in the fight for additional state funding earmarked for wage increases over the opposition of Governor Rauner. Last year AFSCME helped override his veto to win the first wage increase for direct support personnel in community agencies in almost 10 years. AFSCME will:

- In collaboration with our partners in the They Deserve More coalition, continue the battle for legislation which phases in a minimum wage of \$15 per hour for workers in state-funded community disability agencies by July, 2020.