

AFSCME Council 31

2017 Legislative Agenda

Protect workers' rights

The corporate elite and right-wing forces have launched a massive and sophisticated 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 responsible budgets and adequate revenues for state and local governments

The rollback of the temporary income tax increase in January 2015 at the insistence of Governor Rauner has resulted in woefully inadequate revenues for state operations and state funded services. The accumulated backlog of state bills has now grown to more than \$11 billion. Illinois' severe 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 local governments, 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 restoration of the 2011 income tax rates until a fair tax system can be implemented.
- 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 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.
- Continue to support passage of an appropriation to pay back wages owed to employees in several state agencies.

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 at the 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.
- Support legislation that would establish strict accountability standards that must be met before services could be privatized.
- Oppose efforts to weaken or repeal the laws that currently restrict privatization of any public services.

Support adequate staffing levels and quality service delivery in state agencies

Over the past 14 years the State of Illinois has lost more than 30% of its workforce, ranking Illinois near the bottom for the number of state employees per capita and has remained so on Governor Rauner's watch. From public safety, to child protection, to the care of our veterans, the elderly and other vulnerable citizens, essential public services have been compromised as a result. AFSCME will:

- Oppose efforts that would further jeopardize quality public services by the reduction of headcount in any state agency.
- Oppose any proposed closures of state facilities, such as prisons or developmental centers, which will inevitably lead to reduced access to services and further staffing shortages at other facilities.

Fight to improve wage levels in community disability agencies and other AFSCME-represented human service providers.

Thousands of workers serving individuals with developmental disabilities in community-based agencies, as well as other human service providers, have joined the ranks of AFSCME in order to improve their working lives. Employees in these agencies must depend on money from the state to ensure funding for pay increases. AFSCME has been leading the way in the fight for additional state funding earmarked for wage increases, including the proposed \$15/hour measure vetoed by Governor Rauner this past year. AFSCME will:

- Continue to work with other concerned organizations to lobby for sufficient funding in any budget plan to provide for a fair wage increase for employees of community disability agencies and other human service providers.
- In collaboration with our partners in the Care Campaign, resume the battle for legislation which establishes a minimum wage of \$15 per hour for workers in state-funded community disability agencies.

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, further

reducing access to higher education for working families. 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:

- Ensure that our state universities are at least funded at 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).

Oppose cuts to public employee pensions

AFSCME Council 31, along with our union partners in the We Are One Illinois coalition, waged 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 continuing to demand changes that will reduce the benefits of current employees, as well as undermine the current defined benefit systems for all public employees. 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.