

RETIREE NOTES



AFSCME Retirees Sub-chapter 85 of Centralia



AFSCME Retirees Sub-chapter 74 of Rockford

Retiree activism helps save ACA

ON FRIDAY, MARCH 25, CONGRESS pulled the bill repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) moments before it was scheduled for a vote.

AFSCME Retirees across the state have been calling legislative offices and participating in actions to stop the repeal and replacement of the ACA. Repealing the health care law initiated by President Barack Obama

would have had severe and widespread financial impact.

“Many families are paid minimum wage, while working one, two or more part-time jobs. They don’t receive health insurance from their employers,” said Sub-chapter 91 President Al Latoza. “If not for ACA, they would have no health insurance at all for themselves or their children. Retirees would not get free preventative checkups. Getting rid of this act would have negatively affected all ages.”

Replacement language

within the repeal bill would have removed premium caps for older individuals—insurance premiums could skyrocket up to five times as much as a younger person was to pay for the same care. The replacement legislation also cuts federal funding of Medicaid by \$560 billion in 10 years, cutting assistance for 70 million seniors who depend on nursing home and home care services.

AFSCME Retirees worked tirelessly to halt the legislation and their activism paid off when the harmful bill was pulled from the House floor before a vote.

“The activists of AFSCME Retiree Sub-chapter 163 made their voices heard emphatically by phone calls to all United States Senators and Representatives, in and outside of their respective districts,” said

of the dispute as to whether AFSCME and the administration were at impasse when Rauner walked away from contract negotiations more than a year ago.

The Supreme Court’s ruling means that the stay issued by the Fourth District Appellate Court will remain in place while the case is heard.

“This ruling is very exciting for AFSCME Retirees,” said Liam McDonnell, member of Sub-chapter 86.

“Now Rauner can’t impose harmful cuts to retiree health care, like removing language that sets premium benefit levels and doubles premiums for non-Medicare eligible dependents.”

One dangerous budget

ON MARCH 16, PRESIDENT Trump released his proposed federal budget which includes crippling cuts to programs of vital importance to seniors.

Cuts in the Budget Proposal include:

- Meals on Wheels: Last year Meals on Wheels served 2.4 million Americans. The program provides meals to seniors who are not easily able to shop or cook for themselves. Meals on Wheels receive 35 percent of its funding through the Older Americans Act, which is administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Trump’s budget would slash the Department of Health and Human Services budget by 17 percent, jeopardizing this and other vital programs.
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): Trump’s budget would eliminate LIHEAP completely, a program that provides short term financial assistance to 6.7 million seniors struggling to pay cooling and heating bills.

AFSCME will continue to fight for programs that protect seniors and against budgets that would undermine their financial security.

Sub-chapter 163 President Clyde Wilson. “We identify with ‘People Power’ and we’re a force that has to be dealt with.”

Pension-cutting bills

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS once again crafting legislation that will cut pensions.

Under pressure from Gov. Bruce Rauner, Democratic and Republican leadership in the Illinois Senate tried to push through legislation that would cut the pensions of working employees in the SERS, SURS and TRS pension systems.

The governor is refusing to agree to work toward resolving the state’s budget stalemate unless pensions are cut.

Senate Bill 16 would cut the pensions of active employees, and includes a plan to try to push employees out of the pension system and into 401(k)s. That would undermine the financial integrity of our state’s already severely-underfunded pension systems. SB 16 failed on the Senate floor on February 28 by a vote of 26-27-2 and was put on postponed consideration. It is likely to be considered again.

AFSCME, along with the We are One Coalition, is committed to fighting harmful pension legislation.

Stay remains

THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT denied the Rauner administration’s request for direct appeal

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