

ON THE

MOVE



Solidarity Wins

Voters Reject Rauner's Anti-Union Agenda



BIG WINS ON ELECTION DAY
PAGE 3

AFSCME MEMBERS STANDING STRONG
PAGE 5

AFSCME, WORKING FAMILIES PREVAIL
PAGE 8-9

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
AFSCME
AFSCME Council 31
205 N. Michigan
Ave.
21st Floor
Chicago, IL 60601



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
Tom Greensfelder, Designer

COUNCIL 31 EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

- Executive Director**
Roberta Lynch
- State Sector Executive Vice-President**
Ralph Portwood, Local 1866
- Private Sector Executive Vice-President**
Yolanda Woods, Local 2481
- University Executive Vice-President**
Ellen Larrimore, Local 1989
- Local Government Executive Vice-President**
John Rayburn, Local 1215
- Secretary**
Dave Delrose, Local 1028
- Treasurer**
David Morris, Local 805

BOARD MEMBERS

- State Conference Board Co-Chairs**
Gary Ciccio, Local 29
Kathy Lane, Local 448
Tim Worker, Local 993

REGION I VICE-PRESIDENTS

- Phil Cisneros, Local 3969
- Safiya Felters, Local 2854
- Lloyd Marshall, Local 3477
- Stephen Mittons, Local 2081
- Kobie Robinson, Local 3835
- Crosby Smith, Local 2645

REGION II VICE-PRESIDENTS

- Terry Boone, Local 672
- Garry Cacciapaglia, Local 1058
- Carlene Erno, Local 2615
- Tom Opolony, Local 89
- Yurvette Simmons, Local 3237
- Miguel Vazquez, Local 3297

REGION III VICE-PRESIDENTS

- Shaun Dawson, Local 2073
- Lori Gladson, Local 51
- Steve Howerter, Local 3585
- Melanie Hoyle, Local 2600
- Matt Lukow, Local 1964
- Trudy Williams, Local 3433

REGION IV VICE-PRESIDENTS

- Jerry Grammer, Local 1175
- Tad Hawk, Local 1805
- Chris Milton, Local 799
- Cary Quick, Local 141

TRUSTEES

- Tom Brown, Local 3654
- Jeffrey Reighter, II, Local 2856
- Tamara Rietman, Local 3693

RETIREE CHAPTER 31 REPRESENTATIVE

- Larry Brown

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rauner's loss is workers' win

A 15-point trouncing is a rejection of his anti-union agenda



BY
ROBERTA LYNCH

RAUNER AND HIS CRONIES THOUGHT WE WOULD CRUMBLE. WE PROVED THEM WRONG.

When an incumbent governor loses by 15 points—something that hasn't happened in Illinois since 1948—voters are doing more than picking a candidate. They are choosing sides. That's why Bruce Rauner's 54-39 trouncing means more than the loss of an election. Paired with the rout of his hand-picked candidates and legislative enablers, the results were an emphatic rejection of Rauner's anti-union agenda and his four years of attacks on working people.

Rauner's mission was to weaken unions and render workers defenseless. His models were Wisconsin and Michigan, where governors stripped workers' rights, then slashed wages, health benefits and workplace protections.

Rauner's chief target was the public sector, and because more than 35,000 AFSCME members in state government were his employees, his sights were set first on our union.

But today, after Illinois voters delivered Rauner's pink slip, AFSCME is still here and standing strong.

An outcome like this doesn't just happen, of course. For AFSCME members and our allies, it's the result of four years of standing together, fighting and winning, time and again.

We fought off Rauner's attempts to strip collective bargaining rights from all public employees in Illinois, no matter if they worked for state or local government, school districts or universities. We turned back continuing attacks on pensions.

State employees stood strong in our fight for a fair contract, even through an unprecedented and powerful strike authorization vote, staving off Rauner's phony claim of impasse and his scheme to impose massive hikes in health care costs and unfettered privatization of our jobs. We repeatedly challenged him on picket lines, in the media and in the courts, and we beat him in every legal battle.

In the midst of all that, we secured legislative approval for the back pay owed to

thousands of AFSCME members since 2011.

There's no doubt that these have been the most difficult four years many AFSCME members have faced on the job. Rauner's strategy was to belittle public employees in the press, starve us of resources needed to do our jobs, and to act unilaterally—and illegally—to drive down our incomes.

We never wavered, and for that, every AFSCME member has reason to be proud. Where Rauner and his cronies thought we would crumble, we summoned every ounce of our solidarity, grit and persistence to prove them wrong.

Those battles weren't easy—and some aren't over yet. Rauner's illegal freeze on step progression has thousands of state workers and their families falling behind. Our jobs, often demanding and even dangerous, are that much more difficult due to his inattention to the operations of state government and his constant media attacks.

And we have to keep rising up in the aftermath of the Janus case that Rauner filed and backed all the way to the US Supreme Court. Despite that profound political assault meant to weaken and divide us, through the AFSCME Strong program of signing up former fee-payers in every worksite, we actually have more dues-paying members today than we did before the Janus decision.

As we move forward now, we do so knowing that Rauner's anti-union crusade was a massive failure. Illi-

nois voters overwhelmingly repudiated Rauner and his mean-spirited anti-worker agenda. They rejected candidates willing to do Rauner's bidding and divide our state, opting instead for leaders who want to move Illinois forward together. Our neighbors in Wisconsin joined us in demanding an end to division and chaos by taking down Rauner's hero, Governor Scott Walker.

Yet even as we celebrate, we know the way forward won't be easy. There are contracts to negotiate, pension underfunding to address, and a lingering budgetary crisis, the hangover from Rauner's years of mismanagement in the form of billions of dollars of late fees and unpaid bills. And our enemies like the Illinois Policy Institute aren't going anywhere. They'll continue to try to score political points by blaming unions and union members for whatever ails our state.

As we go forward, we have good reason to believe that JB Pritzker, Juliana Stratton and the strong legislative majorities we helped to elect will be the opposites of Bruce Rauner and his followers. We will no doubt have our differences, but we can expect them to respect our rights, value our work, and work with us in good faith.

Most importantly, we have the knowledge that we came through the Rauner years together, stronger than ever, with a renewed sense of unity and determination that will serve us well as we meet the challenges to come.

Voters reject Rauner, slam door on anti-worker agenda

Governor Bruce Rauner's 54-39 re-election loss to challenger JB Pritzker rightfully took up the headlines, ending Rauner's one-term tenure with a resounding defeat. But just as importantly, pro-worker candidates swept the other statewide offices and expanded their legislative majorities.

"Illinois voters did more on Election Day than defeat Bruce Rauner and end his four years of conflict and failure," AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "Voters across the state came together to support working people and to repudiate not just Rauner personally but his mean-spirited, anti-worker, anti-union agenda up and down the ballot."

"This victory is overwhelming. I'm so excited and proud," said Don Wanack, president of AFSCME Local 943 at Pinckneyville Correctional Center and one of AFSCME's most dedicated volunteers.

"We had this humongous struggle, but every time it looked bleak, we withstood it. We've endured the fight of our lifetime. Rauner wasn't able to do to us what Scott Walker did to workers in Wisconsin. We need to recognize the power we have as a union. We've got so much to look forward to."

AFSCME-recommended candidates Kwame Raoul (Attorney General), Susana Mendoza (Comptroller), Jesse White (Secretary of State) and Michael Frerichs (Treasurer) won the other constitutional offices.

Villa, Mark Walker, Terra Costa Howard, Joyce Mason, Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, Diane Pappas, Bob Morgan, Daniel Didec and Anna Stava-Murray also prevailed. Mary Edly-Allen's and Maggie Trevor's races were too close to call at printing.

At the county level, AFSCME-endorsed candidate Kevin B. Morrison pulled off a remarkable upset in Cook. He knocked out Tim Schneider, chairman of Bruce Rauner's state Republican Party. Several union-backed candidates won in Champaign, Lake (flipped to Democratic control for the first time), Will and DuPage counties, and many more statewide.

Nine AFSCME members and retirees ran for local and state offices. Jay Ferraro (retiree), Beth Musser (Local 3323), Carlos Acosta (Local 2833), Michele Hansen (Local 3693), Danny Williams (Local 29) and Charlene Eads (Local 29) ran for county-level positions. Amy Davis (retiree), Carolyn Blodgett (Local 51) and Gregg Johnson (retiree) made a bid for seats in the General Assembly. Acosta won his race. While the others fell short of election, their efforts put working-family issues on the agenda.

"Voters opted for leaders who want progress to benefit everyone."

Raoul comfortably overcame Rauner's hand-picked candidate, Erica Harold.

In the Illinois Senate, winning candidates supported by AFSCME included incumbents Andy Manar and Tom Cullerton, along with newcomers Christopher Belt, Rachelle Aud Crowe, Ann Gillespie and Suzanne Glowiak. As *On the Move* went to press, Laura Ellman was leading.

In the state House, AFSCME-backed incumbents Jerry Costello and Katie Stuart held their seats, as did appointee Monica Bristow. Newcomers Lance Yednock, Karina

National political shift

ELECTION NIGHT SAW A HUGE shift in the national political landscape. Democrats took control of the US House of Representatives, ensuring a check on anti-worker, discriminatory initiatives by the Trump Administration.

In Illinois, a pair of Congressional seats changed hands in Chicago's west suburbs. AFSCME endorses Sean Casten and Lauren Underwood defeated entrenched, pro-corporate incumbents Peter Roskam and



Top: AFSCME members celebrate GOTV efforts with JB Pritzker. | Bottom: AFSCME member volunteers working on Election Day.

Randy Hultgren, who voted to take health care away from millions of Americans and to give a trillion-dollar tax cut to wealthy people and big corporations, paid for by cutting Social Security and Medicare. Brendan Kelly and Betsy Londrigan also mounted strong challenges.

"Voters rejected candidates willing to do Rauner's and Trump's bidding and to divide our state and country," Lynch said. "They opted instead for leaders who want progress to benefit everyone, not just the wealthy few."

Union shoe leather

AFSCME MEMBERS PLAYED A

key role throughout the election cycle, endorsing dozens of candidates, making sure members were informed and encouraging them to get out and vote.

AFSCME volunteers were an important part of the Illinois AFL-CIO's Labor 2018 effort, making calls and knocking on doors on behalf of union-recommended candidates in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

On Nov. 6 itself, more than 500 active and retired AFSCME members across Illinois took part in the labor coalition's get-out-the-vote efforts.

"I found it imperative to get the message across to voters that their vote is important and needed in order to create change at all levels

of government," said Robert Dybas, a Local 2854 member who volunteered every weekend in the Chicago area. "I am very happy with the voter turnout and the election results."

"We look forward to working with JB Pritzker, Juliana Stratton, Kwame Raoul, Susana Mendoza and every other new officeholder and returning incumbent to put Illinois back on track," AFSCME Council 31 Director Lynch said.

"We won't agree on everything, but these leaders have expressed an understanding that everyone who works for a living deserves family-sustaining wages, affordable health care, retirement with dignity and a strong union voice on the job." 

Jackson County employees refuse to back down

Threat of strike forced county to provide fair wages, health care



AFSCME Local 2464 members rally together at the Jackson County board meeting.

After unanimously authorizing a strike, Jackson County employees won a new union contract with fair pay and affordable health care.

In September, union members were shocked when county administrators walked away from negotiations and declared impasse.

"We were making progress at the table," AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Jeremy Noelle said, "so we felt completely caught off-guard, especially since the county's last, best and final offer was worse for employees than the proposals already under discussion."

The county's demands would have substantially raised

the cost of health care for employees, doubling premiums and increasing co-pays and out-of-pocket expenses.

"We knew that the county's offer meant that some of our people would be going home with less money than they had now," said Robin Crabtree, a member of the bargaining team. "And we didn't want to take that."

Ready to strike

EMPLOYEES COVERED BY

this contract are members of AFSCME Local 2464. They do critically important work for the county, including handling tax collections, property tax exemptions, elections and more.

"The county was trying to fix their budget problems on our back, but without us they have nobody to do these jobs," said Tammy Ehlers, another bargaining team member. "We felt enough was enough. We were nervous about the possibility of a strike, but we couldn't afford not to do it."

Crabtree and Ehlers joined with their fellow bargaining team members Jill Stokes and Samantha Shepherd to put the county's offer to their fellow members. The membership voted unanimously to reject the offer and

authorize a strike for the first time in the local's history.

The day after the union's vote, the county agreed to come back to the table and voted to overrule its impasse decision.

The parties resumed negotiations with the help of a federal mediator and a tentative agreement was reached. Union members ratified the agreement soon after, but the county continued to drag its feet, leaving the contract off the agenda of its next county board meeting.

"The process could have dragged out another month, but we made it clear that if they didn't get this thing finalized, we'd be out on the streets," Noelle said.

The union set a strike date, demanding that the board call a special meeting to vote or they would walk off the job.

The threat of a strike was timed perfectly to have the biggest impact, Crabtree said. "This time of year is election time, tax-bill time, appeal time. This is when they depend on us the most."

The county board arranged a special meeting and—with a strike date looming—approved the agreement unanimously.

Winning together

THE NEW FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT includes three-percent annual pay increases each year and a modest rise in health insurance premiums that's implemented gradually through

the life of the agreement.

Throughout the contract fight, the members of Local 2464 stuck together. They wore green union shirts and bracelets every day. They put green placards on their cars. They made calls to county board members and enlisted friends and family to do the same. And their fellow members stood with them every step of the way.

"The county thought they were in the driver's seat, but the bargaining team was able to flip the script," said Local 2464 President Matt Whelan, an EMS worker for the county. "Through hard work and courage they mobilized to put enormous pressure on their elected officials."

Despite being ready to do whatever it takes, the membership heaved a collective sigh of relief when the contract was finalized.

"Nobody wants to strike," Crabtree said, "and after a long fight, it made us feel appreciated when they saw how important we are."

"This experience showed us that we have power," Ehlers agreed. "We pushed harder than ever before and we were 100% united."

"If we weren't in a union, we would have gone home with less pay, higher health insurance premiums and decreased coverage. But we stuck together and fought to ensure we had decent pay and fair health care coverage. We accomplished that together." 

Union turns to arbitration to address violence in DOC, DJJ

AFCSCME members across the state are working together to help reduce violence between inmates and against staff in Illinois adult and juvenile correctional facilities.

With data showing that assaults on staff have risen dramatically over the past three years, Council 31 has filed a mass health and safety arbitration case—similar to a class action grievance—covering a host of incidents and

issues long raised by local unions.

Many locals are involved in the case, with member witnesses providing testimony on assaults and facility conditions.

"AFSCME members are at

risk of being beaten, of losing their lives, because of severe understaffing, poor facility conditions and lack of staff involvement in policymaking," said Eddie Caumiant, AFSCME Regional Director and liaison to the departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice. "We want to force the state to establish and maintain safe working conditions by working with us."

The union has long sought this objective using every tool at its disposal, including labor-management meetings,

grievances and ongoing discussions at the facility level, and pushing the agencies to participate in a Joint Safety and Security Committee process statewide. Now AFSCME members are trying a new ambitious approach based on the health and safety provision in the state contract.

Caumiant says union members should be at the table where policy decisions are made because they are an integral part of putting those policies into practice.

"The state is woefully

unprepared to deal with our modern correctional system. Instead of reaching out to staff to help solve problems, they are ignoring them," said Caumiant. "The union should be more directly involved in policymaking and implementation and we hope the arbitrator will give us a clear path to do that."

As *On the Move* went to print, the state was putting forth its case, with the union's rebuttal set for December. A decision won't likely come until after January, when new governor JB Pritzker will take over.

"We hope to be able to sit down with the new administration, armed with the results of this arbitration, and be able to work together to address the entire range of problems AFSCME members face in these agencies," Caumiant said. 

Building power through unity

AFSCME members stand strong in face of attacks

When a June 27 US Supreme Court ruling banned fair-share fees, AFSCME was ready. Local union activists had already been organizing and reaching out to members and non-members alike. Now, six months after *Janus v. AFSCME* brought “right to work” to the public sector nationwide, AFSCME Strong—the union’s power-building program—continues to build strength throughout the union.

AFSCME activists’ goal is to talk to every employee represented by their local unions, explaining the benefits of union membership and stressing the importance of solidarity for strength at the bargaining table, in the workplace and beyond.

“One-on-one talks are the best way to reach people,” Local 401 President Sara Holtgrave said. “When you take the time to have those conversations and listen to concerns, employees get all their questions answered and really understand why we have to stay together as a union.”

Holtgrave works as a mental health technician at the state’s Warren G. Murray Developmental Center that was threatened with closure in 2012. Holtgrave said it was solidarity—of the membership, aligned with the parents and broader community—that made the state back off its plan and keep the facility open.

Holtgrave shares that story with new employees to demonstrate the importance of unity. “We formed a lot of bonds during the closure process,” she said. “We realized that we all have each other’s backs.”

Today, the local is stronger than ever. When they face difficulties with management, members know from experience that they can’t afford to be divided.

From fair share to activists

AFSCME MEMBERS ARE FOCUSING their efforts on bringing former fair share fee-payers into the union. Now that paying a fair-share fee is not an option, non-members are joining the union because they don’t feel it’s right to pay nothing while benefiting from union accomplishments made possible through the dues willingly paid by co-workers.

Others realized that the forces behind the Janus

importance of unions from her father, a state employee like herself. But until recently, she didn’t believe that those hard-fought gains could be taken away.

“It was a light-bulb moment,” Ground said. “I realized that if we don’t have a unified membership and the resources we need, we won’t be able to negotiate effectively or to enforce our contract through the grievance procedure and the courts. We would lose what everyone fought so hard to get.”

That realization led Ground to not only join the union but to become a steward. Now she reaches out to other non-members to encourage them to join the union too. She shares her

assistance with my education and affordable health insurance,” Ground said, “and we never would have received the back pay we were owed.”

Ground has also relied on the union contract’s provision allowing flexible work schedules so that she could care for her daughter and ailing father-in-law. Most importantly, though, she realized the value of unity when Rauner tried to impose massive increases in the cost of state employee health insurance.

Moving forward together

AFSCME MEMBERS ARE FEELING positive in spite of the Janus ruling. The key is educating members about what the union is really about and showing solidarity to new employees, said Jim Smyser, president of Local 3821 and a wastewater treatment plant operator at the city of Mattoon.

“We’re not a real big local but we’re all headstrong in the union way,” Smyser said. “We have good conversations amongst ourselves. We let new people know if you pay your

dues, if you’re here for your union, we’re there for you. You’ve got protection.”

Many local unions also utilize a variety of other tools to keep their members informed and engaged with union activity.

Holtgrave said to ensure consistent communication with members working in three different shifts, she and a network of officers and stewards use Facebook and a text-message app called Mobile Text to quickly share information. These technologies can’t replace that regular one-on-one conversation, but they can supplement it.

Every new hire receives a one-hour new-member orientation and the local is developing a committee to ensure continued communication over time.

All their hard work has paid off. Of the 432 employees represented by AFSCME Local 401, 431 are members.

That’s indicative of a statewide trend: Working people are rejecting the deceptive rhetoric from anti-worker forces who want to persuade union members to drop out. Instead of division, iron-clad unity is flourishing in unions across Illinois and across the country. 

case—including outgoing governor Bruce Rauner and the Illinois Policy Institute—don’t care about working people; indeed, these

“One-on-one talks are the best way for employees to understand why we have to stay together as a union.”

forces are actively trying to drive down workers’ standard of living.

Jackie Ground was a fair share fee-payer with AFSCME Local 2600 in Springfield for many years. She knew the historic

personal story and explains why the union has meant so much to her and her family.

“Without the union I would not have received raises over the years, promotions, financial



Council 31 Regional Director Eddie Caumiant and Local 401 members Luberta Lytle, Jennifer Pearson, Josh Meier and Sara Holtgrave at the 2018 International AFSCME Convention.

Cook County AFSCME members ratify new contract

County workers showed unity despite revenue crisis

A FSCME members in Cook County government won a new union contract that ensures economic progress for 5,000 county employees and maintains their affordable health insurance plan.

The 90-person bargaining team representing 14 local unions (1111, 1178, 1276, 1767, 2060, 2226, 3315, 3477, 3486, 3692, 3696, 3835, 3958, and 3969) reached a tentative agreement on September 5. Union members ratified it in a county-wide vote on September 12.

“Cook County faces severe revenue problems, especially after the loss of the sweetened-beverage tax revenue,” AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Helen Thornton said. “The administration came to the table

with a long list of concessionary demands, including big hikes in employee health care contributions and freezing step increases. We were determined to resist those takeaways.”

The county was also looking to cut overtime pay, eliminate a floating holiday and cap the accumulation of sick days. But protecting health care was perhaps the important issue for union members, Local 3447 President Lloyd Marshall said.

“We knew the county was facing a tough economic situation,” Marshall said, “but we

were determined to hold the line on health care costs.”

Stronger together

The bargaining team succeeded, protecting health care coverage and contributions, stopping the county’s proposed step freeze, and winning two-percent raises in each of the final years of the contract, plus a lump-sum bonus for the first year.

“Even when it seemed management would never give any ground, our union stuck together, protected the gains we’ve made over time and made further progress,” Thornton said.

“Protecting our step increases was huge,” Marshall said. “People coming up to steps in their careers were

looking forward to sizeable, hard-earned jumps in pay and now they will get those.”

Marshall has worked for the county for 27 years and is currently a supervising

“We were determined to hold the line on health care costs.”

probation officer at the Cook County juvenile court. In part because of the pop tax repeal, his local and others under the Office of the Chief Judge voted to take furlough days in order to prevent layoffs.

“If we didn’t have the union, management would

have been able to implement whatever they wanted,” Marshall said. “But when we’re united with a common goal at the bargaining table, we’re able to work out a deal that’s best for everyone. That’s what a union is all about.”

AFSCME members who work for Cook County bargained for more than a year, so they were at the table when the Janus Supreme Court decision came down on June 27.

“I’ve negotiated three or four contracts and by far this was the most trying of all of them,” Marshall said. “But when it came to Janus, we were prepared for it. We pushed the AFSCME Strong program and it gave us the opportunity to step up and speak with all our members individually as they re-committed to the union. It actually made us stronger.”



Worried? Overwhelmed? PSP Can Help!

AFSCME’S Personal Support Program (PSP) offers free, professional, confidential assistance to represented employees and their covered dependents.

Call 800.647.8776



AFSCME stands up for fairness

Two AFSCME members were doing the work of a higher job classification without getting the recognition—or wages—they deserved.

Through the union, they advocated for themselves and won restitution.

Both Aurora Rodriguez and Amos Tatekey are AFSCME Local 3696 members at the Cook County Public Defender’s Office. With the help of local stewards Monique Hodges Dugar and Valencia Ross, Tatekey, an administrative assistant, filed his grievance for reclassification in October 2016 and Rodriguez in February 2017.

Rodriguez had been working for years in her division as a stenographer. She gladly took on extra work and stepped up when her co-workers were out of the office. Over time her job responsibilities significantly increased. But when she found out that other divisions had administrative assistants doing the same work at a higher classification and for better pay,

Rodriguez decided to do something about it.

“I consider myself a team player, but it was so frustrating to find out that I had been here for years doing the work and not getting any credit for it,” Rodriguez said. “And I could have kept doing that and nobody would have said anything. So I took it to the union.”

Rodriguez and Tatekey won their grievances at Step 1. But the fight wasn’t quite over. Months after the grievances had been granted, the county refused to honor the grievance resolutions and tried to delay or prevent both employees’ reclassifications by demanding an audit be done first.

“The local knew these cases were important to take on. We argued that the employer must respect the grievance process and cannot

go back on their word,” said Maggie Lorenc, AFSCME legal counsel on the case.

“The fact that the different representatives of the employer could not agree on how to move forward in honoring the grievance resolution was not the fault of Rodriguez and Tatekey and should not have impeded their reclassification.”

AFSCME took that argument to arbitration and the arbitrator agreed. Both union members were granted reclassification and back pay to the date they originally filed their grievances.

For Rodriguez, that meant a year and five months of pay and a priceless sense of stability. She had been in the process of applying for another position that would have increased her commute and time away from her family. Instead she was able to stay in the office she preferred doing work she enjoys.

“The bottom line in this office is helping the clients,” Rodriguez said. “I’ve always liked working with people that need help.”

AFSCME members reach agreement with City of Chicago

City employees building stronger union



AFSCME Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman addresses the city of Chicago bargaining team, which included representatives from six AFSCME local unions: 505, 654, 1215, 1669, 2912 and 2946.

After more than a year of difficult negotiations, AFSCME members who work for the city of Chicago ratified a new union contract on October 3.

Comprised of four bargaining units, the membership encompasses more than 3,500 employees in administrative and clerical, human services, inspection, animal control, professional and library positions.

Led by Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman and including representatives from each of six AFSCME local unions (505, 654, 1215, 1669, 2912 and 2946), the bargaining committee never wavered.

"We were committed to securing a contract that continues to provide access to high-quality, affordable health care and builds on the economic gains and workplace rights achieved in previous contracts," Newman said. "That's exactly what we did."

"I'm very proud of the contract we got in these trying

times," said Susan Littlefield, president of Local 2912 and a member of the bargaining committee. "Everybody

worked hard and diligently to keep what we have and add some important perks."

In addition to proposing an unacceptable economic package, management sought other concessions. The bargaining committee successfully rejected provisions that would have allowed changing work schedules and detailing employees without notice

by declaring an emergency, restricting the use of earned holiday time, refusing professional standards course reimbursement, and cutting weekend overtime pay.

The committee also won several other important changes to benefit members.

Bargaining team member John Rayburn, president of Local 1215, said he's most

employees had to take the days consecutively and immediately, including the day of the funeral service.

Library pages will continue to be paid the living-wage or minimum-wage rate that applies to city contractors and concessionaires, whichever is higher. These rates would not apply to city employees but for the union contract.

The city will make matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to \$250 each year to an employee 401(a) plan starting in 2020. The maximum will grow to \$500 by the end of the contract. Employees will be able to use these funds toward health insurance after retirement.

While employee health insurance premiums will gradually increase by 1.5 percent of salary, this will be the first increase in premiums as a percentage of salary in 12 years. Overall wage increases of 11 percent compounded through the life of the contract more than make up for that modest bump.

Building a stronger union

THROUGHOUT NEGOTIATIONS, the union was able to build its strength though the AFSCME Strong program.

"We took the opportunity to bring in new members while giving bargaining updates," said Littlefield. "We started with more than 100 fee-payers in my local and at the end of negotiations we were down to just 12."

When Janus hit, the payroll department mistakenly refunded every member's union dues. But instead of losing members, local leaders were bombarded by phone calls and emails from members and former fair share fee-payers wanting to pay dues.

"Without question, our unity and strength was a powerful force that helped to achieve this contract," Newman said.

Now AFSCME members are determined to build an even stronger union in the city of Chicago. The new contract includes improvements in policies around new member orientations with that goal in mind. 

"Without question, our unity and strength was a powerful force that helped to achieve this contract."

proud of this win.

"I started as a library page, which is a part-time position," Rayburn said. "To see the day that part-timers can now earn paid sick time is a blessing by itself."

Employees are now able to take paid bereavement leave any time within 60 days following a family member's death. In the old contract,



SOLIDARITY

WORKING PEOPLE FOUGHT RAUNER

Illinois Public Employees Prepare for a Bruising Fight with Bruce Rauner

In These Times, Dec. 3, 2014

“Rauner suggested removing wages, pensions, vacation, fringe benefits and work hours from the list of topics on which unions are allowed to bargain.”

Illinois Issues, Oct. 22, 2015

Rauner crushes prospect of further union negotiations

Chicago Tonight, Feb. 24, 2017

Is Illinois headed for a strike by state union workers?

MyStateline.com, Jan. 12, 2016

Rauner's war on unions brings Illinois to the brink

Chicago Reporter, Dec. 8, 2016

Thousands of Union Members Rally at Illinois Capitol

ABC, May 18, 2016

Appeals court blocks Rauner from forcing contract terms on AFSCME

State Journal-Register, Mar. 3, 2017

Rauner w lawmake cut state health in \$470 mil

Chicago Tribune,

RAUNER'S LOSING LITIGATION

Time and again throughout his term in office, Bruce Rauner took illegal actions that AFSCME went to court to overturn. It happened when he issued an executive order blocking fair-share fees, with his unilateral freeze on step increases and when he unilaterally declared “impasse” in state contract negotiations and tried to impose his demands.

In each of these cases, the Rauner administration used taxpayer funds to hire outside counsel—a private law firm—to represent him, instead of the Attorney General’s office.

According to state records obtained by AFSCME under the Freedom of Information Act, Rauner wasted \$6 million on legal bills to just one management-side law firm. Given that he has continued to fight myriad losing battles since, including the steps and impasse cases, it’s a safe bet that the figure will end up even higher.

Instead of handing it over to high-priced lawyers, Rauner should’ve

put every penny of that \$6 million towards repaying state workers for the wages he unlawfully denied.

More stalling on step increases

Since an appellate court ruled last fall that Rauner acted illegally in freezing state employee step increases, his administration has done everything possible to evade its responsibility to pay employees what they are owed. The appellate court remanded the case back to the Illinois Labor Relations Board to put forth a remedy. In July the board issued a clear statement that employees should be placed on the proper steps and made whole for wages lost.

Rauner immediately offered up reasons why the money couldn’t be paid. The labor board then directed its compliance officer to provide more specific guidance as to how the administration should meet its obligations to employees. The compliance officer set Oct. 1 as a deadline to end the



CTY WINS!

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY TO VICTORY

Rauner vetoes \$15/hour wage for caregivers of developmentally disabled

Chicago Tribune, Aug. 26, 2016

Illinois lawmakers override budget veto, ending two-year stalemate

New York Times, Jul. 6 2017

Rauner's anti-union position prevents an Illinois budget deal

Crain's Chicago Business, Jul. 1, 2017

Janus Decision Didn't Kill Labor Unions

Daily Illini, Oct. 25, 2018

AFSCME declares another victory over Rauner on step increases

Capitol Fax, Jun. 13, 2018

Unions won big on Election Day – a victory for working people

Chicago Sun-Times, Nov. 7, 2018

Unions' help to workers' insurance by million

Feb. 16, 2018

illegal step freeze and place all employees on their proper steps.

Once again the administration defied this legal directive and instead sent an 18-page letter to the compliance officer, claiming that it would take months to calculate step placement and how much employees are owed.

It was all too clear that the administration would continue to evade responsibility so AFSCME filed a motion to compel the labor board to seek a direct court order enforcing compliance. The Rauner-appointed board had yet to consider the union's motion when *On the Move* went to print.

Appellate court rejects Rauner's impasse claim

Rauner made an array of extreme demands of state employees in bargaining, including no pay increase for four years, a 100 percent hike in employee costs for health care that would cost the average worker thousands of dollars a year, and a free hand to privatize public services without oversight.

Then on Jan. 8, 2016, he walked away from negotiations, declaring that the parties were at impasse and asking his labor board to give him

the power to unilaterally impose the terms of his final offer.

AFSCME strongly disputed that the parties were at impasse and repeatedly sought to restart good-faith negotiations, but the labor board complied with Rauner's request. AFSCME went to court and won an order blocking implementation while the union appealed the board's decision.

In October, a unanimous three-judge panel of the Fourth District Appellate Court ruled in AFSCME's favor, finding that the Illinois State Labor Relations Board was "clearly erroneous" and that the parties were not at impasse.

Not surprisingly, the court also found that the Rauner administration had engaged in bad-faith bargaining in violation of labor law.

What's next?

Governor-elect JB Pritzker has said he is prepared to restart negotiations for a new state contract. AFSCME will make it a top priority to undo the wrongs that Rauner has done to state employees over the past four years—and especially to press for swift restoration of step increases. 

“We need a union”

Willowglen DSPs join AFSCME Council 31



“These kids need consistency,” Willowglen DSP Chelsea Kruger said. “We banded together so we can make things better.”

With a desire to improve their lives and ensure consistency for a vulnerable client population, nearly 100 employees of Willowglen Academy in Freeport voted October 17 to form a union with AFSCME Council 31.

Willowglen Academy is a private facility that provides care to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“I really love working with the kids. It’s powerful because you’re really making a difference in people’s lives,” said Chelsea Kruger, who’s been a para-educator and direct support personnel (DSP) at Willowglen for 11 years. “We’re able to get [our clients] to experience and learn new things and have fun doing it. It’s awesome.”

Change needed

WHILE THE STAFF IS DEDICATED to the people they serve, they

feel they aren’t valued by management. That neglect has a negative impact on both the clients and the workers’ own families and lives.

“We needed a union because we need consistency and fairness in the workplace,” said Rosetta Knox, a DSP who works the night shift. She helps clients with their medication, nutrition and hygiene needs.

Knox, who has a disabled adult son, said compassion and respect motivates her to do this work. She wants to be focused on solutions that will improve care at Willowglen.

“We haven’t had a raise in eight years, so people are working 24 to 80 hours of overtime a pay period just to make ends

meet,” Knox said. “This has led to a very high turnover rate, which isn’t good for the people we serve.”

Kruger agreed. “These kids need consistency,” she said. “When you’re short-staffed and people are drained, they aren’t going to do their best. They aren’t going to stay. We banded together so we can make things better.”

Organizing together

THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE spent time talking to fellow employees about changes they wanted and how they felt about getting a union. They worked hard to make sure as many people participated in the union election as possible because they wanted a united front.

The workers were so ready for a voice on the job that the organizing process went quickly. In just two months the employees were ready to vote.

On election day, the

close-knit group came out in force, and a vast majority voted to join AFSCME.

“The union staff let us know our rights and told us what the union could help us achieve,” Knox said. “It was scary, worrying

“Staff morale has already started to go up” since the election, Knox said, and she believes that once members elect representatives to the bargaining committee and determine their priorities for contract nego-

“Our clients need this change as much as we do. A union will be a game-changer for them.”

that the administration would retaliate against us, but I’m proud that in the end we were able to come together so quickly, and that the majority decided that we needed to be heard. We advocated for ourselves.”

“I knew that most people would be on board because so many changes need to happen, but to be there when they counted all those ballots felt phenomenal,” Kruger said. “It sent a message: We’re here, listen to us. It was a huge victory and it felt really good.”

tiations, that trend will only continue.

“A better workplace with higher wages will make people want to come to work and do their jobs well,” she said. “Our clients need this change as much as we do. We care about the individuals we serve, and having a union will be a game-changer for them.”

“We won our union. The first hurdle is done but now we have more to do,” Kruger said. “I’m thrilled and excited to see what we can do together.”

Anti-worker forces tighten grip on Supreme Court

With the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, President Donald Trump and Republicans have stacked the bench.

A far-right, anti-worker majority is poised to reinterpret U.S. law to benefit wealthy people and big corporations for decades to come.

The Kavanaugh appointment was made far more meaningful because it followed last year's elevation of Neil Gorsuch to the high court. Gorsuch wound up in the seat as a result of the brazenly political hijacking of the appointment process by Republican senators who, after the unexpected death of Justice Antonin Scalia in 2016, refused to consider President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland.

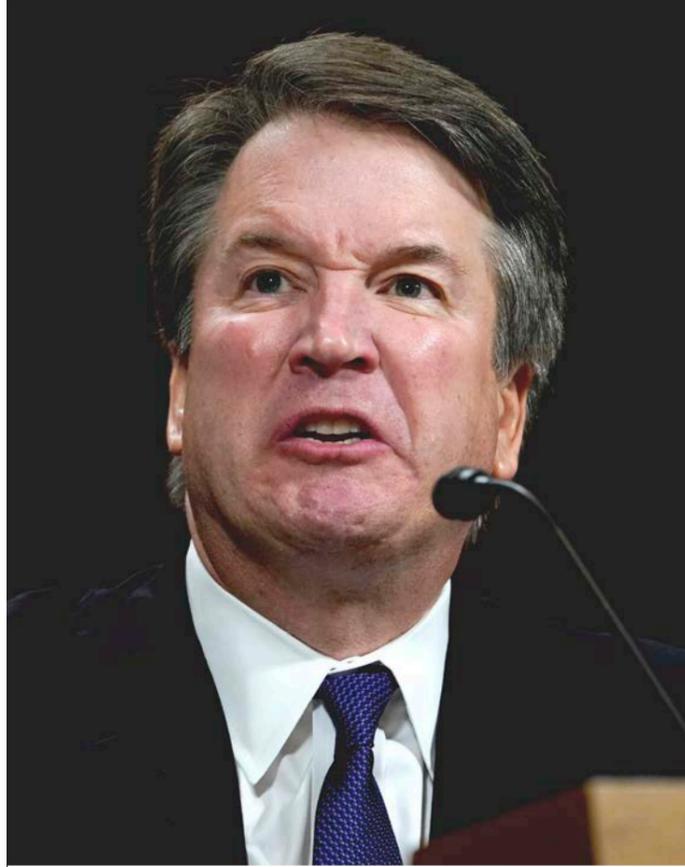
What difference can one seat make? Consider that while Scalia's seat stood empty, the court deadlocked on *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a case that would have banned fair share fees in the public sector, a long-sought objective of well-funded

anti-worker forces.

But after Trump was elected, Gorsuch solidified the 5-4 conservative majority that in June sided with the super-rich and against workers in *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*.

Kavanaugh's nomination was rocked by a slew of accusations of sexual assault and misconduct, as well as serious questions about his character and suitability for the position. The nation watched as Dr. Christine Blasey Ford described specific and credible assault allegations against Kavanaugh, who denied them. The Republican majority quickly approved the nomination and Kavanaugh was sworn in on October 6.

In addition to concerns about his personal character, Kavanaugh has a track record of holding corporate interests above the rights and safety of working people, according to the AFL-CIO. Specifically, "he



New Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh has a pro-corporate, anti-worker record.

has put working people at risk by defending corporations with dangerous and unsafe working conditions."

In a case against SeaWorld where a trainer was killed by an orca whale with a record of aggression toward humans,

Kavanaugh said the worker took that risk and that requiring employers to protect workers from on-the-job dangers was too "paternalistic."

Kavanaugh argued that the Secretary of Defense should be allowed to abolish

collective bargaining at the federal level in his majority ruling in a case involving members of the American Federation of Government Employees at the Department of Defense.

"Kavanaugh has consistently sided with corporate interests" and will "find any interpretation of the law that helps corporations avoid their obligations to working people," said Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

The senator pointed out a dissenting opinion where Kavanaugh argued "that corporations should be allowed to create sham, spin-off companies in order to skirt their responsibility to negotiate with workers and their unions for better wages, working conditions, and benefits."

Kavanaugh will fit right in on a Supreme Court now skewed to favor corporate interests.

Aggressively and strategically pursued by the radical right, lawsuits seeking to overturn other long standing precedents and strip workers and their unions of workplace rights will be that much more difficult to stop for years to come. 

AFSCME grievance clears employee records

A FSCME Local 2226, which represents lieutenants at the Cook County Jail, took a series of grievances for five employees to hearing and won the whole group.

Local president Chuck Luna and chief steward Kieran Mundt drove the process, with AFSCME Council 31 attorney Scott Miller serving as legal counsel in the expedited hearing. Each case concerned a wrongful discipline grievance of a lieutenant with a perfect record.

Instead of using corrective and progressive disciplinary measures, management ignored the employees' side of the story and simply issued suspensions, Miller said.

After several failed attempts to resolve the issues

at the grievance stages and many unproductive labor-management meetings to discuss a fair and just disciplinary process, Luna and Mundt were determined to take a stand.

"We could have settled, but these members didn't do anything wrong," Luna said. "There was no violation of the contract or general orders. We had to pursue it as a matter of principle."

"Management was issuing discipline with a super heavy hand and the environment is very oppressive," Kieran said. "We warned members going in

that it was an uphill battle, but they wanted to take the fight all the way and they knew the union had their back."

"We made a good argument and the burden of proof fell on the sheriff and his team," Luna said. "We prevailed in all five cases."

Luna has been a lieutenant at the county since 2002, before the workers organized a union with AFSCME in 2006. He knows how important it is to have the resources and ability to pursue cases like these.

"Before the union, I was disciplined, and going through that was aggravating and stressful," Luna recalls. "Now we have the right to fight these kinds of things and we don't have to do it alone. We can fight together as a union."



Local 2226 chief steward Kieran Mundt and president Chuck Luna pursued justice.

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



AFSCME Local 1919 members at the village of Schaumburg: Lissa Alonso, Arika Staron, Tom Todd, Lynette Johns, Norma Higgins, Sandy Gollither and Deb Diamond.

Pay, sick time gains in Schaumburg

VILLAGE OF SCHAUMBURG employees' fight for a fair contract has ended with a big win for the members of AFSCME Local 1919. The union bargaining committee tentatively agreed to terms for a new four-year contract in late August, and the unit of 150 employees unanimously ratified it on Sept. 12.

The agreement came after members of the local mobilized over the summer to pack a Village Board meeting and mount an email campaign targeting village leaders.

Under the new contract, AFSCME members achieved one of their top priorities: gaining the right to use accrued sick time to care for their immediate family. The matter was dramatically illustrated in testimony before the Village Board by 23-year employee Norma Higgins, who despite having earned hundreds of hours of sick leave over her career was unable to use it care for her husband when he had cancer.

"Every day, the employees of Schaumburg come to work with one goal in mind: to provide the highest quality municipal service. All we ask for in return is fair compensation and respect on the job," Higgins told the board.

"One can imagine the disappointment and hurt I

"After working years and earning hundreds of hours of sick time, I was told I couldn't use one day."

felt after working years and earning hundreds of hours of sick time when I was told I couldn't use one day of that accumulated time to care for my spouse."

Going forward, sick time can be used to care for parents, spouses and children.

What's more, every employee is due to receive retroactive pay increases dating back nearly a year and a half to May 2017 when the previous contract was slated to expire.

Union members won another family-friendly provision with the added right to

take one or two days of vacation with only a day's notice. Previously two weeks' notice was required to take even a single day off.

"After 15 long months of negotiations, we're very happy with the gains we made in this contract," said Debbie Diamond, an animal control officer and the president of AFSCME Local 1919.

AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Matthew Lange led negotiations with Diamond and bargaining team members Tom Todd, Norma Higgins and Sandy Gollither.

City of Rockford employees reach deal

MORE THAN 200 MEMBERS OF AFSCME Local 1058 and 1058B decided they would have more power at the table if their two bargaining teams joined together for negotiations. As a result, they won a three-year contract with gains in wages and paid time off.

Negotiations took place over several months. Led by retired AFSCME staff representative Jay Ferraro, staff representative Chris Hooser and local president Christina Loudermilk, the bargaining team included Tony Garcia, AJ Indovina, Lisa Kingsavanh, Tracy Pauley, Laura Anderson, Steve Mangruen, Sue Whitley, Julie Michalsen, Ron Reinagle,

Bob Rever, Stephanie Buzzo, Darius Morrow and Amy Sommerfield.

The city and community development units gained power at the table by joining forces instead of negotiating separately, Ferraro said.

Much of the work done at the table was improving contract language, especially around paid time off.

Employees at the 911 call center are now able to use comp time in one-hour increments, will have 12-hour holiday pay (equal to one full shift) instead of eight, and can't be forced to work overtime the day preceding a vacation.

Another important gain for the 911 workers is a period of guaranteed rest between shifts. "These employees have a stressful job and work a number of days in a row," Loudermilk said. "We thought it was important that they have at least 12 full hours of rest between shifts to prevent burnout."

Public works employees who clear ice and snow in the winter months often work on-call for 12 hours at a time and must be available to come to work immediately if required, receiving two hours of pay per "standby" shift.

"But we bargained so that now we can use those two hours as paid time off to spend with our families," Loudermilk said. "This is especially important around the holidays when employees may have to miss family gatherings when they're on-call."

All employees will now have a full holiday on Christmas Eve (formerly a half day), Loudermilk said, and can use sick leave to care for anyone in their family unit, not just a spouse or child.



AFSCME Local 1058 members at the city of Rockford won a new union contract by sticking together at the bargaining table.

The union did agree to a city-limit residency requirement for future hires, a policy that the administration is implementing city-wide.

Every employee received a two percent cost-of-living raise retroactive to Jan. 1, with no increase in health insurance costs. The contract will be reopened in 2019 and 2020 for wages and one additional issue designated by each party.

NIU local building power

A NEW CONTRACT WITH Northern Illinois University didn't come without a fight for the nearly 300 building service, housing and dining employees of AFSCME Local 963. The workers clean and maintain classrooms, buildings and residential halls, and cook and serve the food in the cafeterias.

"After a year of bargaining, they led us to believe we were close to getting a contract," AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Sara Dorner said. "We came to the table expecting to wrap it up and instead they suddenly demanded a massive concession to get rid of the step plan."

After a federal mediator was called in, the union thwarted management's attempt to freeze everyone's wages, winning a five-year contract with three-percent raises in each of the first three years of the contract and a wage reopener for the final two years. The members ratified it overwhelmingly.

The bargaining team also secured wage adjustments for the most underpaid job classifications—some as much as a three-dollars-an-hour increase—by showing how their low pay compared to other universities.

"We fought long and hard to provide a better income for those of us who are struggling and still have to work two jobs to make ends meet," said Manny Diaz, a member of the bargaining committee and building service chapter chair. "It was a long process but we achieved what we set out to do."

Diaz and his co-workers feel a constant threat of outsourcing and don't feel valued or respected for the work they do to contribute to the institution, he said.

"We are looked down on by management yet we are the

people that keep the university running," Diaz said. "We work hard to get the job done well but they'd rather just get somebody else in here and pay them less."

Diaz said he and his co-workers aren't done fighting. The union is still holding the employer to task in enforcing the new contract.

"NIU has continually cancelled labor-management meetings and is dragging their feet on paying all wage increases," Dorner said. "We've filed a class action unfair labor practice charge to get that remedied and have a labor board hearing scheduled for November 20."

In the meantime the union continues to build strength. Part of the contract includes two paid union meetings per month, where members can meet to discuss union business 15 minutes before their shift ends. The members are ready to use this new tool to make their union even stronger.

"We will keep moving forward and making further progress," Diaz said. "We're still fighting and we know we're not alone. We have each other's backs."

The bargaining team included Dorner and Diaz plus Local 963 President Tim Gray, Vice President Patrick Sheridan, Shelly Ruby, Andy Pecarelli, Recording Secretary Adam Harper, Jason Hutchison and Larry Fay.

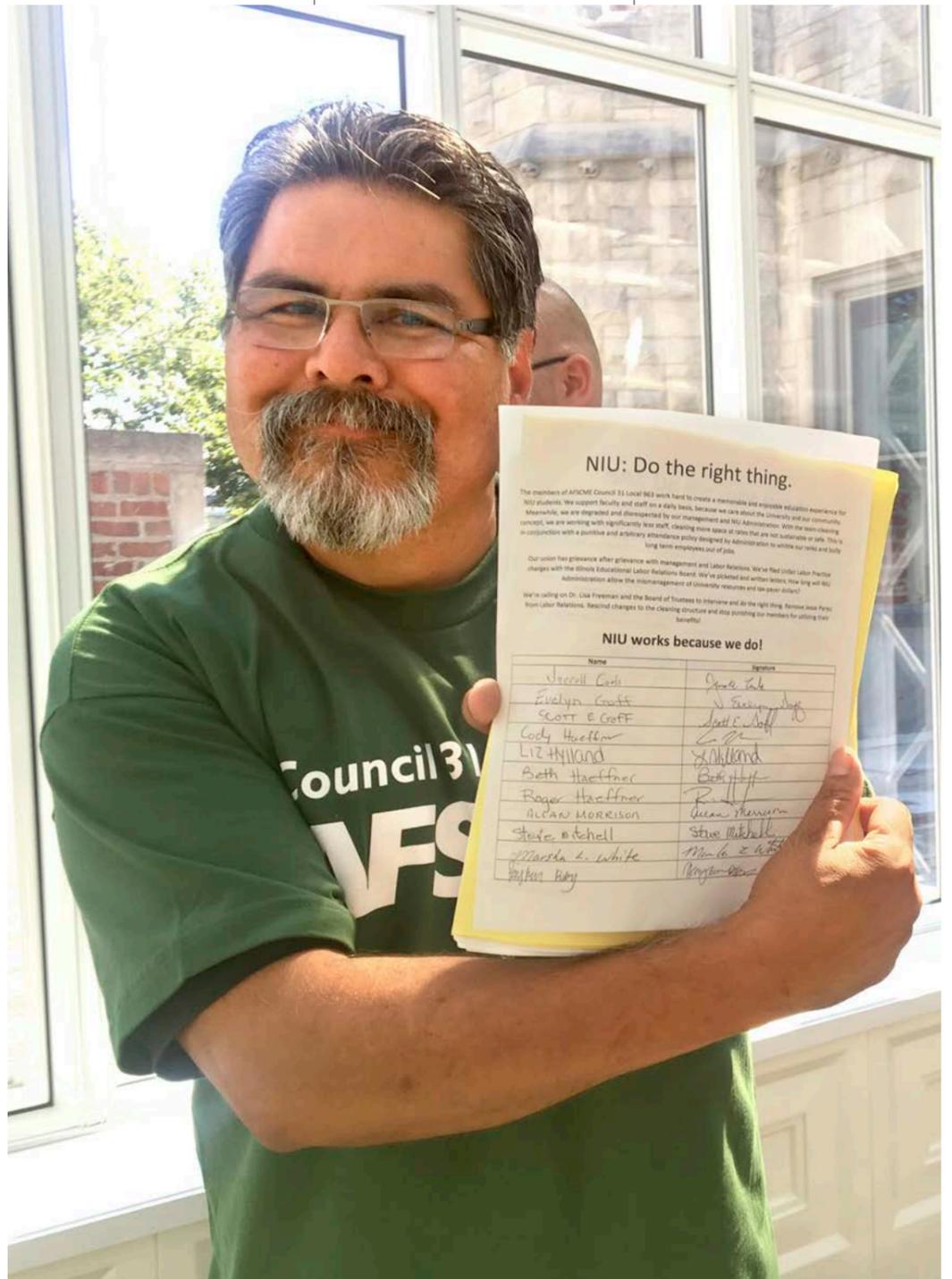
McHenry Clerk's Office wins first contract

EMPLOYEES AT THE MCHENRY County Clerk's Office ratified their first union contract in September, making gains in wages, benefits and workplace protections, all enforceable through a grievance process.

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Colin Theis, the bargaining committee included Meghan Honea, Cheryl Zito and Melissa Massey. These new union leaders learned what can be accomplished at a bargaining table.

"We are very happy about it. We feel much more secure," Massey said.

Indeed, job security is a big reason why she and her co-workers decided to form a union. With the clerk's seat open in the November



Local 963 members, including Manny Diaz, presented a petition to NIU President Dr. Lisa C. Freeman demanding a fair contract.

general election, employees in the office who handle taxes, records, deeds, licenses, elections and more wanted to have a contract they could depend on no matter who was in office.

Their unit is now a chapter of the newly formed AFSCME

members who will be coming on, and we have a wide range of ages, issues and experiences," Massey said. "We made sure the contract was broad enough to encompass an expanding family and address all those different

to their base pay.

For health insurance, members can now switch to the plan of their choosing instead of being forced into a high-deductible plan. The union also got strong language restricting outsourcing.

The contract was ratified in the old county jail, which is now a local restaurant. In 1895, legendary labor leader Eugene V. Debs served a federal prison sentence there following the historic Pullman labor strike.

Now the employees of the McHenry County Clerk's office are part of labor history, too.

"It's a whole new world," Massey said. "We are very excited and very reassured. And that's what the union has given us. It's a unanimous feeling." 

"We were bargaining for ourselves and for new members who will be coming on."

Local 1748, which also represents the county probation department. Employees of the recorder's office will also join the local when that office is merged with the clerk's office two years from now.

"We were bargaining for ourselves and for those new

concerns."

The team won raises of 2.25 percent each year retroactive to Dec. 1, 2017. They consolidated job titles with new, higher pay rates. All employees will also get a lump-sum increase based on their years of experience that will be added

SHORT REPORTS



Taxi drivers and rideshare drivers rally together at Chicago's City Hall.



AFSCME members joined in a rally to support striking hotel workers.

Chicago hotel workers win strike for health care

A SEPTEMBER STRIKE BY UNITE HERE Local 1 members who work in 26 downtown Chicago hotels was the largest action of its kind in the city's history. It ended in wins for workers and their union, including on the strike's central issue, access to health care coverage for hotel employees who are laid off during the slow winter season.

After voting overwhelmingly to authorize a strike when their contracts expired, thousands of hotel housekeepers, door staff and restaurant workers fighting for fair treatment walked off the job on Sept. 7.

Over the years their union has won gains in wages and benefits, but hotels have increasingly been cutting staff and overloading workers. At the same time, Chicago hotels raked in more than \$2 billion last year. The workers knew they had to stand up to demand their share.

"We're tired of being stepped on when these billion-dollar corporations are getting all this money," said Larry Lewis, 39, an 18-year housekeeper at the Palmer House Hilton and a father of five. "They forget that we've made these places five-star, world-wide-class hotels."

Workers kept to the picket lines for weeks until hotel management began settling contracts, one by one or in small clusters. Workers remained on strike at only

groups rallied together for the first time at City Hall to urge common-sense reforms like those adopted by New York last August, including putting a moratorium on new for-hire

Cab Drivers United, Chicago's taxi union, which organized with the help of AFSCME Council 31. "Taxi drivers and rideshare drivers alike strive to provide quality transportation to Chicago residents and visitors and feed our families," he said, "but Chicago's regulations are broken and all drivers are suffering." Although the city's regulatory double-standards have pitted drivers against each other in the past, members of Cab Drivers United and the newly formed Chicago Rideshare Advocates are working together for stronger and more even-handed regulations.

"We are asking the city of Chicago to step in and bring some long overdue regulations," said Lenny Sanchez of Chicago Rideshare Advocates. "We need a fair, safe, transparent system that works for everyone, not just wealthy investors in Uber and Lyft."



United for fair treatment and better regulations, rideshare and taxi drivers join forces.

one hotel—the Cambria Chicago Magnificent Mile—as *On the Move* went to press.

Ride share, taxi drivers join forces

CHICAGO TAXI DRIVERS AND rideshare drivers are uniting to call on the City of Chicago to level the playing field and ensure a living wage for all drivers. On Oct. 31, the two

vehicle licenses.

Over the past three years the number of licensed rideshare vehicles in Chicago has quadrupled to more than 117,000, making it nearly impossible for either rideshare or taxi drivers to earn a living. Rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft have increased the cut they take out of drivers' earnings while the city continues to charge struggling cab drivers the same high fees and taxes.

Nnamdi Uwazie is a veteran taxi driver and leader of

states, where "the lowest-income 20 percent pay up to six times as much of their income in taxes as their wealthy counterparts."

In Illinois, the lower your income, the more you're taxed. Those with incomes in the lowest 20 percent pay an average of 14 percent of their income in state and local taxes while those in the top 1 percent of incomes only pay 7 percent in taxes.

That's why AFSCME has consistently advocated for fair tax reform, including a constitutional amendment to allow for graduated tax rates that require the wealthy to pay their fair share.

"While state and local taxes can't eliminate income inequality, well-designed systems can help lessen the problem," said Meg Wiehe, ITEP's deputy director. "Meanwhile, it's clear that steeply regressive systems only make it worse."

Amending the Illinois Constitution requires a supermajority of the state Senate and House to approve a resolution putting the question on the ballot, then approval by 60 percent of voters at the next statewide election.

In the 2018 legislative session, Republican lawmakers blocked passage of the needed resolution, but with big changes in the composition of both legislative bodies coming out of the November election, advocates point to new opportunities to move forward on this vital issue. 

"Who Pays"? Not the rich

MOST STATE AND LOCAL BODIES tax the rich at much lower rates than households with low to middle incomes. That's according to *Who Pays*, a new analysis of tax systems nationwide by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP).

Illinois is no exception. In fact, it's ranked in the group's "Terrible Ten" most regressive

RETIREE NOTES



AFSCME retirees from Sub-chapter 16 (with US Rep. Robin Kelly) volunteered to get out the vote.



Sub-chapter 86 member Liam McDonnell phone-banking for Labor 2018.

Retiree activism contributes to big election wins

RETIRES FROM ALL CORNERS of the state worked diligently to help labor-friendly candidates in the November general election.

"Chapter 31 members wrote letters, addressed envelopes, walked in parades, knocked on doors, made phone calls and worked on Election Day," Sub-chapter 55 President John Weir said. "We made sure we had boots on the ground across Illinois to protect our retirement security."

The hard work paid off. JB Pritzker ousted Bruce Rauner as governor and AFSCME-endorsed candidates across the state prevailed (see page three for election details).

"I helped plan eight AFSCME Labor walks and we had great attendance," Sub-chapter 87 President David Spinner said. "Retirees also attended endorsement events, giving our members

the opportunities to see and speak with labor-friendly candidates. On the campaign trail, JB Pritzker said that he saw me everywhere. I'm glad our newly elected governor saw how active AFSCME retirees are."

"Our members love volunteering for election work. We had a solid group at every walk and phone bank around Springfield," Sub-chapter 86 President Don Todd said. "We have a dedicated group of retirees

and I am incredibly proud. Our members knew that this year's election would have had dire consequences if we didn't work hard."

"Our livelihood was at stake," Sub-chapter 60 President Mary Jones said. "We worked hard for what we have, but retirees and working families were being attacked for just living our lives. That's why we phone-banked all the way up until the election."

"Retirees could not afford to sit out this election. Everything that we worked for as state employees was threatened," Sub-chapter 163 President Clyde Wilson agreed. "As retirees in Illinois, we were at the mercy of a government that doesn't care about us. We had to make a change."

And change was made. JB Pritzker and Juliana Stratton will take office on January 14.

"We are keeping the union strong so that retirees and workers can continue to live quality lives with dignity," Todd said. "I couldn't be happier that we ran out Rauner's clock."



AFSCME members and retirees from Sub-chapter 87 walking precincts for Labor 2018.



Hearing aids for AFSCME members and retirees

HEARING LOSS DEVELOPS slowly and can go unnoticed for years. But those with untreated hearing loss suffer from poorer physical and emotional wellbeing and can experience extremes of anger, frustration, anxiety, depression and social isolation.

The AFSCME Advantage benefits program includes access to the National Hearing Aid Discount Benefit Plan. Working and retiree AFSCME members and extended family who may need help with hearing loss can register for free annual hearing screenings at a nationwide network of locations.

The program assures that participants are dealing with reputable providers and allows them to purchase hearing aids at discounts of up to 70 percent from several different manufacturers. It includes three years of repair warranty, loss and damage coverage, cleanings, check-ups and free batteries. No-interest financing is an option for many, and those who already have hearing aids can purchase extended warranties.

This AFSCME members-only benefit is provided through Hear in America. Call 1-800-286-6149 to register for a free screening. 



Did you know?

To be an AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 member, you must sign an AFSCME Chapter 31 membership card after you retire!

Retiree dues are only \$3.00 a month and will be deducted directly from your pension check upon your authorization.

By joining AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31, you'll be taking a stand for retiree rights and improved benefits. You've earned your retirement benefits; now join the fight to protect them. Become a member of AFSCME Illinois Retiree Chapter 31 today—it's the best investment a retiree can make!

For more information or to request a membership card, please contact Kate Morthland, AFSCME Council 31 Retiree Coordinator, at 217.788.2800

ON THE JOB

Tell us about your job at SAVE.

I'm a direct care-giver at St. Clair Associated Vocational Enterprises (SAVE), a [state-funded] not-for-profit organization that provides employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. My job is to teach our clients in the vocational programs how to complete tasks involved in the contracts we receive from employers to help them learn the skills they need to work.

I've also been working a lot of overtime lately in our housing program. We go into clients' homes and help them cook and clean, take them to places they need to go like the store, the bank or the beauty shop. We make grocery lists with them and help come up with new, simple meal ideas that they can cook safely.

What's your inspiration to go to work every day?

Our clients motivate me. I've been working here for more than 22 years and they are always so happy to see me. I go to work for them. They are positive about everything, as if they don't have a worry in the world.

Teaching them skills and building trust make my work very meaningful. Their work instills a feeling of their self-worth. They don't care how big their paycheck is, they are just so happy to get one.

I love seeing their excitement.

“Teaching the clients skills and building trust make my work very meaningful. I love seeing their excitement.”

How does your job provide a valuable public service?

Our clients have built motors for furnaces, worked on the state license stickers, rolled up silverware sets for a catering company, compiled screw kits for furniture sets and more.

Our clients' work is benefiting companies in the community because we can help them with their work. And our clients benefit from those jobs. It's a place for them to go every day. It gives them a feeling that they belong somewhere. That they are part of



Paula Johnson

AFSCME Local 1831

ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATED
VOCATIONAL ENTERPRISES (SAVE)

it all—they like having to get up and go to work too.

What have you learned from your career at SAVE?

Working here makes you feel like you don't want to take anything for granted. Some of our clients were in car wrecks or suffered from injuries that changed their life forever. And some have had challenges since birth.

There are little things all the time that make me stop and appreciate what I have. I took a client to a clothing store. She grabbed some clothes and was ready to leave and I said, 'Don't you want to try those on?' I helped her into a fitting room.

On the way back, we were both singing along to a song in the car. After the song ended she turned to me and said, 'Thank you, Paula, I've never done that before.' I said, 'But you have shopped for clothes before.' And she said, 'Yeah, but I've never gotten to try them on first!' She was so thankful.

There are a lot of little stories like that. They appreciate the little stuff and now I do too.

How does your union improve your work?

If we didn't have a union, one person might be able to get by with stuff that someone

else couldn't. If they didn't like you, you might not be there anymore. With a union, there is fairness.

Having a union also gives us the ability to really advocate for our clients. We can go to management if something isn't fair or isn't right for them. If I ever did something else, it would be to become a full-time advocate for people with disabilities. There's so much more we should be doing.

How has your job affected your family?

I've worked here since my oldest son was just a baby. Our clients know my husband, they know my kids, and they love having them here. Throughout the year—and especially during the holidays—we have parties, banquets and dances. Our kids grew up coming to the parties and dances. It's had a huge impact on their lives.

My son is a sports fanatic—he's what you would call a jock. There was a kid at his school who was disabled and he was being teased by other jocks. My son stood up for him. He told his friends to leave him alone, that that's not cool. Being part of SAVE, my son learned that every life is important. 🦅