



2020 Legislative Agenda

Support responsible budget and adequate revenues for state and local governments

After a decade of fiscal struggles, Illinois is finally seeing a measure of fiscal stability. But our state is still facing enormous challenges, primarily due to its longstanding reliance on antiquated tax policy that creates structural deficits, thereby depriving vital public services of necessary resources. The state's chronic budget shortfalls have had 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. The potential to enact a Fair Tax system by winning passage of a constitutional amendment this fall could significantly improve our state's fiscal prospects. At the same time, AFSCME will continue to advocate for actions in the General Assembly that will strengthen public services, protect good jobs, and foster growth, including:

- Support efforts to close corporate tax loopholes and oppose efforts to expand such unfair giveaways.
- Support revenue-raising measures that would address the state's budget shortfall, while opposing measures that would reduce income to the state.
- Oppose any cutback to vital state services, facility closures, or layoff of state employees.
- 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.

Protect and expand workers' rights

Despite great progress in developing a framework of laws that seek to foster strong union rights, fairer policies, and safe working conditions for Illinois workers, many problems remain. Moreover, the corporate elite and right-wing forces have launched a massive and sophisticated nationwide campaign to drive down wages and destroy unions. Led in our state by the Illinois Policy Institute, these forces continue to press to weaken all laws that protect workers, whether in the private or public sector.

AFSCME will:

- Support all measures that improve workplace safety and reduce dangers that employees face on the job.
- Support efforts to ensure that state funds are not used to block workers' efforts to form unions.
- 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.

- Support efforts to expand collective bargaining rights to uncovered public employees while opposing any attempts to strip away collective bargaining rights from employees currently covered by the Illinois Public Employee Labor Relations Act or the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act.
- Oppose any efforts to diminish workers' compensation or unemployment insurance benefits.
- Support legislation requiring paid family leave for all employees.
- Support efforts to stop sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Work to defeat any effort to pass "right to work" legislation in Illinois.

Support adequate funding for state universities

Despite receiving funding increases in the current the fiscal year, state universities are still struggling to recover from decades of inadequate state funding which has resulted in substantial cutbacks at many campuses. Such cuts have 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.
- 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 for pay parity between state university employees and state employees doing comparable work.
- Seek reforms to the State University Civil Service System to ensure fair treatment of university employees.

Fight privatization of public services and assets

As the State of Illinois, public universities and local governments struggle to balance their budgets, all too often public officials are looking to privatize 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.
- Oppose efforts to expand charter schools and press to ensure that available educational funding is devoted to public education.

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. Last year AFSCME helped win the third straight funding increase to help improve wages for direct support personnel in community agencies in three years. Previously these workers went almost 10 years without any kind of wage increase. AFSCME will:

- Support passage of legislation providing for a \$2.00 per hour wage increase for direct support personnel.
- Press for adequate state funding to ensure fair wages for frontline workers in providing services in other human services agencies, such as those serving at-risk youth and the mentally ill.

Fight the misclassification of employees

Misclassification as “independent contractors” is undercutting the fundamental rights of millions of workers. Despite having no control over the terms of their employment, these workers are denied fundamental protections due to the legal fiction that they are self-employed. This is happening not just with giant companies like Uber and Lyft, but with local governments and private sector human service agencies. AFSCME will work with others in the labor movement to establish common sense standards in state law regarding who is and who is not an employee.

Stabilize pension funds and oppose cuts to retirement benefits

AFSCME Council 31, along with our union partners in the We Are One Illinois coalition, has successfully beaten back all efforts to slash the pension benefits earned by union members at the state, university and local government levels. Now, corporate forces are pushing for the most radical change of all – amending the Illinois Constitution to remove the pension non-diminishment clause. AFSCME will:

- Oppose any effort to amend the Illinois Constitution to remove protections against pension diminishments.
- 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.
- Support legislation to address inadequacies and inequities in the pension systems.

Fight for affordable prescription drugs

Prescription drug prices continue to climb at inexplicable rates, forcing working families and retirees to choose between food, housing and life-sustaining medications. The cost of prescription drugs is not correlated to the actual cost of research, development or production by pharmaceutical companies and does not reflect the public subsidies, tax breaks, or taxpayer funds for research and development provided to these companies by government agencies. AFSCME will fight for the passage of legislation to address prescription drug affordability issues to the greatest extent allowable by the Illinois and U.S. constitutions.