

ON THE

#172 • JULY-AUGUST 2016

MOVE

Illinois Council 31—American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—AFL-CIO



FIGHTING FOR Our Families



Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
AFSCME

AFSCME Council 31
205 N. Michigan Ave.
21st Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Labor Day's real meaning

Struggles of the past echo today



BY
ROBERTA LYNCH

**"WE CAN'T
IGNORE THE RISE
OF THOSE WHO
WANT TO WIPE
OUT UNIONS"**

Get the grills going! Stock up on beer and burgers! Labor Day is here and most of us will be heading out to picnic with friends and family. We'll salute the passing of another summer and note, however grudgingly, the onset of fall. But how many of us will pause to recall, even briefly, the origins and meaning of this national holiday?

LABOR DAY WAS, IN FACT, FOUNDED BY AMERICA'S EARLIEST LABOR UNIONS AS A TRIBUTE to the working people who built our country. The first Labor Day parade was held in New York City in 1882, organized by the city's Central Labor Union to demonstrate "the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations."

Workers then had no legal right to form unions and few protections on the job. Twelve-hour work days and seven-day work weeks were the norm, child labor was commonplace, and workplace fatalities were a daily occurrence.

Yet it was an era known as the Gilded Age because its merchant class grew ever wealthier, with vast fortunes to squander on untold luxuries.

That gaping inequity between the moneyed few and the millions who struggled just to survive soon sparked widespread rebellion. Workers began to stand up for themselves, to develop unions as an organized counterweight to the power of employers, to challenge the harsh working conditions that cut short so many lives.

The reaction was swift and fierce. Employers harassed, fired, beat, and even killed workers who dared to press for dignity and fairness on the job.

It was in the midst of these fierce battles that New York's labor unions decided to stake their claim to public space and recognition. Though billed only as a parade, that first Labor Day celebration was a bold affirmation of workers' growing power. It required participants to defy their employers by not reporting to work that day.

At first it seemed few were willing to take that risk. Only a small number of workers had assembled at the parade's

start. But as the bands began to play and the first marchers stepped off, more and more groups joined in. Before long some 10,000 working men and women, proud and strong, jammed the city streets.

Labor groups in other states quickly followed suit—and some states even passed laws making it official. But it took more than a decade and one of the great battles of American labor history to formally add Labor Day to the roster of U.S. holidays.

In May 1894, some 4,000 workers at the Pullman rail car manufacturing plant on Chicago's South Side walked off the job in response to wage cuts of 25 percent. Having barely begun to form a union, they faced daunting odds.

"We do not expect the company to concede to our demands," one worker said. "We do know that we are working for less wages than will maintain ourselves and our families ... and on that proposition we absolutely refuse to work any longer."

The strike spread to other cities, eventually involving more than 100,000 workers. The American Railway Union pressed the railroad industry to agree to arbitration of the dispute. When employers refused, a boycott of rail transport shut down most of the nation's rail lines.

In response, President Grover Cleveland sent in federal troops to break the strike. The ensuing battles were bloody and brutal, with 13 workers killed and more than 50 seriously wounded in Chicago alone.

Working people nationwide were outraged. With an election looming, Cleveland tried to appease their anger by championing Labor Day as a new feder-

al holiday and Congress quickly gave its stamp of approval in June 1894.

But that gesture did not suffice. Cleveland was defeated for reelection.

And the raw memory of the Pullman strike became the engine that powered a renewed labor organizing effort all across the country.

By the early part of the 20th century America's workers had built strong unions in every major industry. In the ensuing years, unions reshaped the nation's workplaces through contracts and laws that established 40-hour weeks and overtime pay, provided for holidays and vacations, raised wages, improved safety and ensured that workers were treated with a measure of respect and fairness.

I will never forget speaking on a panel years ago with a man then in his eighties. His personal history went back to the days when the labor movement was just emerging—and he summed up the changes it had wrought in the starkest of statements: "Before the union," he said simply, "they treated us like dogs."

This year as we gather for Labor Day, we can't ignore the rise of those forces who want to wipe out unions in our country—to go back to the days when employers had all the power and workers were at their mercy. Our own governor, Bruce Rauner, is a prime example of this ferocious anti-unionism.

So let's also take the opportunity to recall the dedication of those American workers who came before us, who refused to bow down or be walked on, who took risks to uphold their basic rights, who built strong unions not just for themselves but for all of those—like us—who came after. Let's honor their courage and carry it on.



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
Dolores Wilber, Designer
Cover photo: Brian Poulter

COUNCIL 31 EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

State Executive Vice-President
Ralph Portwood, Stateville CC, Local 1866
City/County Executive Vice-President
Carmin Willis-Goodloe, Cook County Hospital, Local 1111
Private Sector Executive Vice President
Yolanda Woods, Hope Institute Local 2481
University Executive Vice-President
Dorinda Miller, U of I Clericals, Local 3700
Secretary
Dave Delrose, Will County, Local 1028
Treasurer
Rob Fanti, Sheridan CC, Local 472

BOARD MEMBERS

State Conference Board Co-Chairs
Gloria Arseneau, (RC-14), Northeastern Illinois State Employees, Local 2794
Gary Ciacchio (RC-9), Shapiro, DC Local 29
Kathy Lane, (RC-63), Northwestern Illinois State Employees, Local 448

REGION I VICE-PRESIDENTS (Cook and Lake Counties)

Safiya Felters, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Local 2854
Ellen Larrimore, Northeastern Illinois University, Local 1989
Stephen Mittons, Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2081
John Rayburn, Chicago Public Library, Local 1215
Kobie Robinson, Cook County Assessor's Office, Local 3835
Crosby Smith, Ludeman Developmental Center, Local 2645

REGION II VICE-PRESIDENTS (Northern Illinois)

Garry Cacciapaglia, City of Rockford, Local 1058
Carlene Erno, Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2615
Tom Minick, Moline Schools, Local 672
Ruby Robinson, Collar Counties State Employees, Local 2833
Yurvette Simmons, United Cerebral Palsy of Will County, Local 3237

REGION III VICE-PRESIDENTS (Central Illinois)

Mark Kerr, McFarland Zone Center, Local 2767
Gary Kroeschel, Sangamon County State Employees, Local 2224
Matt Lukow, Springfield Area State Employees, Local 1964
David Morris, Illinois State Employees, Local 805
Steve Nurdyke, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Local 2600
Trudy Williams, Fulton County Sheriff's Dept. & Courthouse, Local 3433

REGION IV VICE-PRESIDENTS (Southern Illinois)

Chris Milton, Madison County, Local 799
Cary Quick, Choate MH/DC, Local 141
Mike Turner, Southern Illinois Department of Corrections, Local 415
Tim Worker, Vandalia CC, Local 993

TRUSTEES

Stephen Howerter, Canton Correctional Center Employees, Local 3585
Miguel Vazquez, Aurora Sanitary District, Local 3297

RETIREE CHAPTER 31 REPRESENTATIVE

Larry Brown

State contract negotiations: Courtroom drama without the courtroom

Illinois Labor Board hears testimony from AFSCME, Rauner Administration

Representatives of AFSCME and the Rauner Administration made their case to administrative law judge Sarah Kerley this May during an accelerated hearing on charges from both sides of bad-faith bargaining in state contract negotiations.

UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE GOVERNOR, THE INTENSITY OF THE HEARING WAS UNPRECEDENTED, with 25 days of testimony over a six-week period.

The hearing, which ended June 9, took place in a courtroom setting with the judge at the head table, a witness seat and two opposing sides of counsel. Witnesses testified and were cross-examined.

But this is not a court case and the judge's decision here is actually a recommendation to the Illinois Labor Relations Board.

Rauner seeks to bypass judge

DESPITE AFSCME'S CLEAR willingness to continue negotiations—and union members' shock when the state walked away in the midst of discussions—in a bizarre twist, Rauner is accusing AFSCME of bargaining in bad faith because the union won't agree that negotiations are at impasse.

AFSCME responded with its own charges of bad-faith bargaining. Both sets of charges were consolidated into a joint hearing before the Labor Board.

Typically a final decision would not be reached for six months to a year, but in another unprecedented move, the Rauner Administration requested that the board ignore the judge's recommendation and rule directly in the case.

Speedup denied

AT A SPECIAL MEETING ON JULY 7, the Labor Board denied Rauner's request to bypass the judge's recommendation.

The Labor Board's general counsel explained that if the board granted the motion to expedite the process, it would have faced a "staggering if not

impossible" task in trying to meet its own rules and requirements. Those rules would require at least three board members to read the entire hearing transcript—which is more than 5,000 pages long.

Judge Kerley indicated that she would likely issue her recommended decision in late August or early September. After time is allowed for both parties to file written exceptions, the full Labor Board is expected to take final action in November.



PHOTO: DAVID KREISMAN

Key witness: AFSCME Deputy Director Mike Newman

After weeks of grueling testimony, AFSCME's Mike Newman shares the inside story



Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman

What's this hearing all about?

THE RAUNER ADMINISTRATION is actually charging us with refusing to agree that we're at impasse. There is no precedent in the law or in labor board

hearings for that to be an unfair labor practice.

It is clear why the governor is taking this approach. Our tolling agreement allows extension of our current contract until the labor board finds that bargaining is at impasse. So Rauner is asking the labor board to declare impasse, which would open the door to his scheme to impose his last offer on state employees.

What kind of evidence did AFSCME present?

WE HAVE A VERY STRONG CASE. We itemized all the instances in which the union asked for information from the governor's office that we needed for bargaining and did not get it. We also gave examples of the governor issuing public statements that were false and disruptive

to negotiations.

We recounted that day in January when—out of the blue—the Rauner administration issued its 'last, best and final offer' and refused to negotiate further, while state employees remained committed to settling the contract at the bargaining table.

The union's case seems hard to beat. What can we expect from the final ruling?

RAUNER APPOINTS THE LABOR board. He has put tremendous pressure on the body to issue a decision faster than ever before, and they have been moving along at a very rapid pace. We have to be prepared for the worst.

If the board declares impasse, Rauner will move to

immediately impose his terms.

The governor's scheme would eliminate all safeguards against privatization of state services.

Insurance costs for state employees would double while they would also face a four-year pay freeze and four years without any step or longevity increases. Rauner would reduce overtime and holiday pay, and eliminate layoff rights and mandatory overtime protections.

It's draconian. That's why AFSCME members in state government are considering the very serious question of whether to go out on strike. Many feel strongly that we have to stand up to this bully governor.

One thing I know for sure is that our union never quits. We will not stop fighting for what is right and what is best for the people of this state.

Budget Update

Rauner blinks, stopgap budget passes

As the 2016 fiscal year came to a close in June, Illinois was on the brink of chaos. In a nail-biting finish, Gov. Rauner finally put aside his Turnaround Agenda and signed a temporary budget without any of his harmful poison-pill demands.



THE STOPGAP BUDGET PROVIDES A PORTION OF NECESSARY FUNDING FOR SPENDING NOT COVERED by court order for fiscal year 2016 and the first six months of fiscal year 2017.

The budget ensures that public elementary and secondary schools and state universities and colleges will open this fall. It also provides some funding for the myriad human services agencies that have been devastated by the state's year long budget standoff.

While this measure allows the state to continue limping along temporarily, without additional revenue, Illinois faces an \$8 billion deficit. And irreparable damage is being inflicted on students, families and social

service agencies by more than a year of Rauner's hostage-taking.

Heavy lifting still ahead

EVEN THOUGH GOV. RAUNER put aside his anti-worker demands to get the stopgap budget passed, he has made it clear that he has not dropped them for good. The governor resumed leveling attacks against Democrats even before the budget was signed.

In the General Assembly, the budget compromise clearly demonstrates what Democrats have said all along: They are prepared to work in good faith



with the governor if he puts aside his personal demands that are unrelated to the budget and solely aimed at harming working families.

When the stopgap bill final-

ly passed, legislative sponsors clearly indicated that the budget is not intended to result in layoffs or closures of any part of state operations. Any cuts that might need to be made would

only be the result of Rauner's failure to compromise with the legislature on adequate revenue solutions in January.

State Gov Update

Kewanee becomes adult facility

THE ILLINOIS YOUTH CENTER at Kewanee officially became an adult Department of Corrections facility on August 1. All youth were moved to other placements by that date and the facility awaits the transfer of adult inmates.

In early May, the Department of Juvenile Justice announced that it would move forward with Gov. Rauner's plan to close the youth center, despite rejection of the plan by the bipartisan legislative Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

AFSCME called on the state to freeze all vacancies in the Departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice and negotiated an agreement that enables Kewanee employees to

either move into correctional officer positions or transfer to one of the five remaining juvenile facilities.

Rauner aims to privatize corrections

WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH state lawmakers, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) are pushing forward a plan to privatize education in Illinois Youth Centers with little buy-in or stakeholder input. AFSCME is alerting legislators to this back-door privatization scheme and urging them to speak out against it.

Schools in youth centers are currently staffed by AFSCME-represented educators. Dedicated teachers help youth work toward high school credits and take GED courses.

Social workers, psychologists, and therapists provide social-emotional support.

The state agencies' privatization proposal, which was presented at ISBE's May board meeting, includes working with the Illinois Network of Charter Schools to identify charter operators who can privatize the schools and set up boarding schools for youth on aftercare release.

At the same time, the Illinois Department of Corrections is still contemplating plans to privatize all remaining health and medical positions, including members of both the Illinois Nurses Association and AFSCME, by expanding its contract with Wexford, a private "correctional health care company."

During the spring legislative session, AFSCME Council 31

successfully lobbied for passage of legislation, House Bill 5104, that would halt the Rauner Administration's plans to further privatize health care services. Sponsored by Sen. Andy Manar and Rep. Greg Harris, the bill awaits Gov. Rauner's action.

Upward Mobility Program

THE UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAM (UMP) has been a vital means for state employees to improve their educational and promotional opportunities. But when the state budget impasse effectively froze state spending, the Rauner Administration acted unilaterally to halt tuition payments and all new admissions to the program.

The administration has continued using UMP promotional lists and ultimately agreed to a partial restoration of program operations. There are still no funds available for college tuition, but employees

enrolled in UMP who are willing to pay for college classes will still be eligible for time off to attend class without loss of pay.

Because the number of full-time UMP counseling staff has been reduced by half, field counselors will not be available to visit worksites to meet face-to-face. All counseling will now be done by phone.

Employees who have questions regarding the enrollment process or any other issues can call AFSCME UMP Coordinator Chris Goodman at (217) 788-2800.

Illinois State Museum reopens

FOR NINE MONTHS THE DOORS of the Illinois State Museum in Springfield were closed to the public. On Saturday, July 2, the 139-year-old museum reopened as a result of pressure from the community and AFSCME members.

Crisis ripples out

Caregivers step up fight for \$15

COMMUNITY DISABILITY SERVICES are in crisis as employee turnover escalates and vacancies become ever harder to fill. It's widely recognized that low wages are the cause.

At the end of the legislative session in May, the General Assembly passed AFSCME-backed House Bill 5931, which sets a progression toward a \$15 base wage for direct support personnel (DSPs) who care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

AFSCME members are putting pressure on Rauner to sign the bill.

DSPs across the state have joined forces with agencies and families to hold coordinated call-in days, send emails and write postcards urging Rauner to support caregivers, build a stable workforce and preserve quality of services for people with disabilities.

"Everybody was calling at once and the governor's phone was jammed up," Tim Olaosebikan said of his local's call-in day. Olaosebikan serves as president of Local 3492 and has worked as a DSP at Ray Graham Association for more than 17 years. He feels the grassroots campaign for fair wages has been more collaborative and effective than ever before.

"It makes a huge difference when legislators are talking to their constituents face to face," he said. "Members were crying when they told their story. They take care of others at work but

they can't afford to take care of themselves and their families at home."

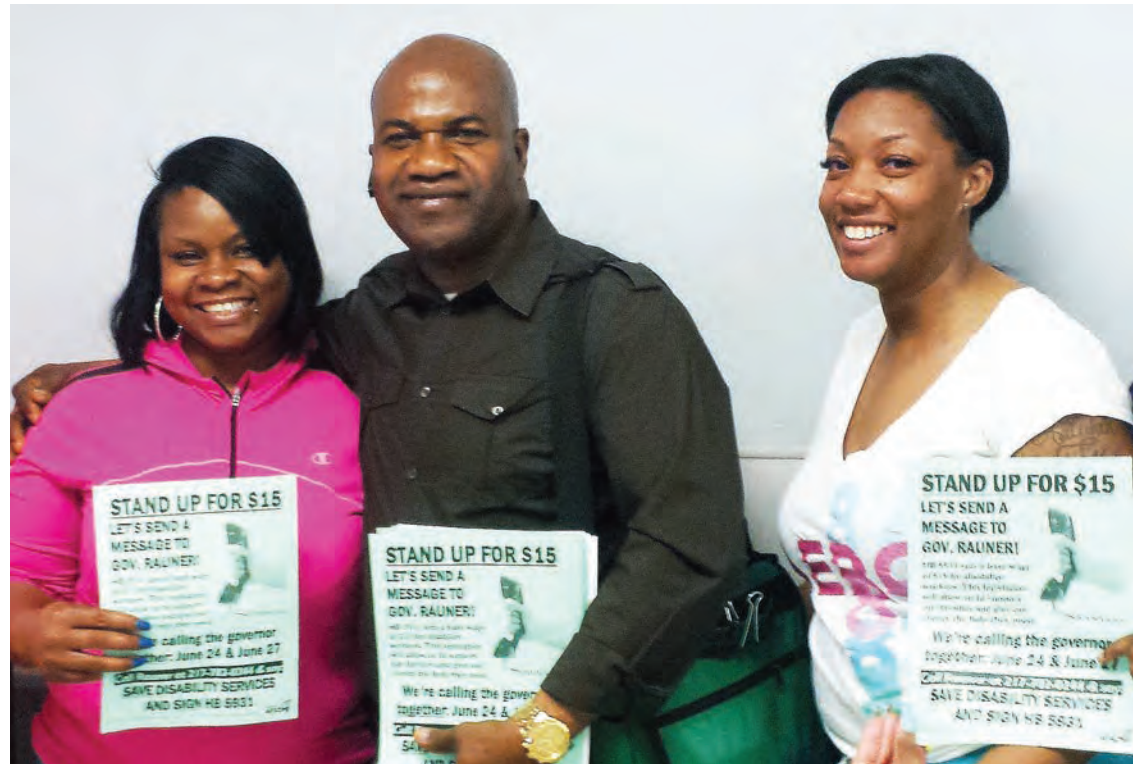
Working in coalition with agencies and client families builds a better future for everyone involved, especially the vulnerable clients that DSPs serve every day. Contract negotiations are improving along with labor-management relationships, Olaosebikan said.

"This grassroots campaign solidifies that with the union, we can all win," he said. "Management, members, clients, we are all in this together."

The fight for \$15 is still an uphill battle and no one believes the governor's signature will come easily. But the state's policy of paying poverty wages to caregivers has Illinois out of compliance with a court order to ensure access to community care.

Something must be done and AFSCME members are determined to keep fighting for what's right.

"This grassroots campaign solidifies that with the union, we can all win. We're all in this together."



Members of AFSCME Local 3492 call on Gov. Rauner to support fair wages for caregivers and a stable workforce for their clients.

Illinois higher education crisis at tipping point

AFTER A YEAR OPERATING WITH less than a third of expected state funds, Illinois' public higher-education institutions have resorted to layoffs, furloughs and program cuts. The stopgap budget ensured that public colleges and universities could open their doors this fall, but with only six months of funding.

AFSCME members who work in higher education are battling to restore urgently needed state funding on campuses and in statewide coalitions.

At a June 28 news conference, Joe McLean—a laid-off office manager and AFSCME member from Eastern Illinois University—told reporters of the devastating impact of Gov. Rauner's refusal to develop and sign a budget. McLean's statements shed light on the vast economic ramifications of underfunding the state's higher education system.

"Just a few years ago, life seemed perfect when we purchased a home near EIU," he said. "But now I have lost my job, and my two girls and I live in fear that my wife could soon also be laid off from EIU. When you consider that I am only one of hundreds of public university employees to be laid off, it is

easy to see what a damaging effect this budget impasse is having on our state."

Illinois' higher education crisis has gained national attention and the blame is being pinned right where it belongs—directly on the governor.

Earlier this summer, an instructor from UIUC wrote a widely read op-ed column in the New York Times that said bluntly, "Higher education in Illinois is dying." And a June letter to the editor headlined "Rauner is driving faculty, students from Illinois" was

published in the Chicago Sun-Times.

In the letter, more than 260 faculty from universities statewide told Gov. Rauner: "All public servants, whether employed at the university or in state government, have a responsibility to fulfill. We cannot fulfill ours unless you fulfill yours. However we arrived at the current economic crisis, it cannot be bettered when compromise is only viewed as failure, and when precious state resources are used to further a political agenda."



Joe McLean, a laid-off office manager and AFSCME member from Eastern Illinois University, speaks to reporters about the devastating impact of Gov. Rauner's budget games on families and communities.

Illinois State Museum reopens continued from page 4

Rauner closed the Springfield museum and its satellite facilities last September despite public protest. AFSCME joined with concerned citizens to pass legislation to reopen the sites, but Rauner refused to sign any such bill unless it included new policies, such as charging admission to the public and instituting a private board to operate the museum.

Sen. Andy Manar and Rep. Sue Scherer helped restore the historic museum and prevent privatization of its functions.

However, museum patrons now must pay a \$5 admission fee. Children under 18, seniors and veterans are exempt.

Because of the governor's misguided political maneuverings, the museum nearly lost its accreditation and the public was denied access to the facility for almost a year. And while AFSCME prevented layoffs, the museum's primary Springfield site lost about half of its staff as employees found positions elsewhere.

Privatization threat looms

Illinois will join race to the bottom if Rauner gets his way

Over the last several decades, public assets and services have been increasingly privatized by elected officials, a policy shift marked by the loss of family-sustaining—and often union-represented—public jobs.

WHEN PRIVATE EQUITY EXECUTIVE BRUCE RAUNER BECAME GOVERNOR, HE CALLED FOR the state to be run like a business. That should be no surprise to anyone familiar with private equity firms, or “corporate raiders” as they are often called.

Rauner pushed hard for a partial privatization of the state’s economic development agency so that it could operate without any public scrutiny. He will continue the failed strategy

of a privatized Illinois Lottery.

But perhaps the strongest indicator of where Rauner wants to take state government is his insistence on removing any protections against irresponsible privatization from the state’s contract with its employees—a key element of the ongoing fight over a new contract.

Rauner isn’t alone in his penchant for privatization. AFSCME members in Illinois have seen the threat arise time

and again—though often union members have been able to prevent it. It’s a long-running national trend. But while it purports to be the secret to cost-cutting and efficiency, privatization has actually proven to be a bad bet for taxpayers, working people and communities.

Cash-strapped Chicago misses out on \$156 M

PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST famous bad bets on privatization was made in Chicago. Last year alone, the city’s parking-meter system and garages brought in \$156 million—but the city won’t get a dime of that public revenue.

Former mayor Richard M. Daley peddled the city-owned parking meters and garages to private investors in a nearly century-long lease in 2008.

Now the city is left to watch decades of revenue go to corporations and banks instead of its own neighborhoods, schools and working families. What’s more, parking rates downtown have spiked since the deal was cut, making parking far less affordable for Chicagoans and visitors alike.

State of Illinois backtracks on bad deal

DUE TO A SHORTAGE OF STAFF in the Department of Health and Family Services and the Department of Human Services in 2012, the State of Illinois fell behind in making eligibility redeterminations for Medicaid recipients. Instead of hiring

union demonstrated that the Maximus contract was causing significant inefficiencies and duplication of work.

In fact, AFSCME showed that the state would save \$18 million a year simply by hiring bargaining-unit employees. As a result of the arbitration, the contract was phased out and the work brought back in-house.

“Privatization is a big loss for everyone. Good jobs and quality services make our community safer and keep our families stronger.”

— Cherone Gladney-Morris

While it purports to be the secret to cost-cutting and efficiency, privatization has actually proven to be a bad bet for taxpayers, working people and communities.

Standing up for good jobs, services

CONCERNED TAXPAYERS should play an active role in their government’s decisions to hire a contractor to provide public services or sell revenue-producing infrastructure or assets to a third party. These decisions can have a weighty impact on generations of workers and their communities.

Privatization results in lower wages, reduced benefits and fewer union jobs for working families. And because these workers no longer have a voice, they are unable to defend the public good.

The lack of accountability to the public for the spending and investment of their own tax dollars leaves the door wide open to corruption, cut corners and degradation of public services and assets. Profit-focused deals often lead to higher, and hidden, costs to communities.

AFSCME members who are fighting for a fair contract with the Rauner Administration are not just protecting their own jobs. Evidence shows that public workers play a critical role in safeguarding the quality of services for their communities.

Private contractors are more interested in covering up problems—and because their employees seldom have the protection of a union contract, they’re often afraid to speak up when quality is jeopardized or public safety put at risk.



AFSCME members tell the real story of privatization



Monique Jones

Family Self-Sufficiency Specialist at the Rockford Housing Authority | Secretary, AFSCME Local 1058

“Privatization is a negative no matter how you look at it. If you’re looking to revitalize your economy you have to have living-wage jobs. Families need benefits and people need fair and reasonable working conditions. The union helps provide for those things and create better outcomes for the employees, which creates better outcomes for the community.

“I don’t know how we can see a balance between the haves and the have-nots without workers in unions. Without us, it’s all at risk because everything is up to the employer and their bottom line.

“Right now our economy is way off-kilter and our communities suffer from it. We need to have a fair distribution of wealth, but because of greed it’s not happening. Instead, just a few get so much more than the others. The result is escalation in poverty and crime, and deficits in education.”



Arnie McCollum

Water Pollution Control Operations Technician at the City of Moline | President, AFSCME Local 1132

“Our local union contract requires a minimum number of employees. Otherwise, the city would hire nonunion workers and use private contractors to replace us.

“We usually have a pretty good battle on our hands when it comes to negotiations because our goal is to keep everybody working. We have to hold the line.

“The city knows it’s better for everyone if we do the work. They contracted out some janitorial services, and our public spaces were looking shabby. The public complained and we got those jobs back.

“We always get a lot of positive feedback about how good our city looks. Just because they get a better price from a private firm doesn’t mean they get a better result in the end. We take a lot of pride in our work.”



Cherone Gladney-Morris

Senior Personnel Assistant, City of Chicago Department of Public Health | President, AFSCME Local 505

“Privatization is a big loss for everyone.

“The City of Chicago has been chopping at our numbers for years. They want to get rid of union employees so they can pay their workforce less.

“The most vulnerable, hard-to-serve populations in the city depend on us to provide services to them.

“And it’s not just about the workers or the people we serve. Privatization is a loss for the public who expect their tax dollars to be put to work for them. Good jobs and quality services make our community safer and keep our families stronger. Unfortunately, the city seems to be moving away from what public service really is.”

AFSCME members beat back privatization of Champaign nursing home



Members of AFSCME Local 900C helped stop privatization of the Champaign County Nursing Home. Activists Evelyn Thomas, Angie Broughton, and Tracy Rhone took leadership roles (pictured left to right with staff representative Michael Wilmore).

The Champaign County Nursing Home is struggling financially. As a result, there have been ongoing discussions and moves toward privatization of the home among county officials.

In May, the nursing home board of directors held a meeting to vote on whether to put forward a ballot measure that would allow the county to sell or lease the home.

AFSCME members who work at the nursing home, which currently serves about 200 residents, and the local activist community organized an unprecedented showing at the usually sleepy board meeting. The room was packed shoulder to shoulder, and person after person stepped to the podium in defense of keeping the nursing home public.

Community members testified that their loved ones were well cared for by the caregivers and staff at the home, including 184 members of AFSCME Local 900.

“Unlike other health care providers, the Champaign County Nursing Home does not put a price tag on caring for the elderly.”

“The nursing home has served low-income individuals who could not afford care elsewhere,” wrote Champaign resident Evelyn Reynolds in a letter to the editor of the News-Gazette on June 3. “Unlike other health care providers, they have not put a price tag on caring for the elderly. I walked away from the meeting charged with fighting for this nursing home. I also came away with renewed faith in the goodness of people.”

The exceptional community support for the home resulted in the board voting down the proposal to privatize the Champaign County Nursing Home—a victory for the residents of the home, its staff members and the community.

WHATEVER

State employees speak out about their fight for **GOOD JOBS**, the **PUBLIC INTEREST** and their **FAMILIES**

A FSCME members who work for the State of Illinois have made it very clear that they want to continue negotiating for a fair contract with the Rauner Administration. But Gov. Rauner is refusing to bargain with them. And he vetoed legislation to allow an independent arbitrator to help resolve the contract dispute.

Instead, the governor is forging ahead with his effort to get a green light from the Illinois Labor Relations Board to impose his own extreme terms on state employees, including:

- Four-year pay freeze;
- Four-year step/longevity freeze;
- 100% increase in health care premiums or drastically higher co-pays and deductibles;
- Elimination of all safeguards against irresponsible privatization of state services; and
- Reductions in overtime pay, holiday pay, layoff protections, mandatory overtime limits and other workplace rights.

AFSCME members have done everything possible to avert a strike because they know that citizens all across the state depend on the services they provide. But they also know that it's essential to be prepared for any possibility.

In the end, it will be up to every union member in state government to decide—by democratic vote—whether to go out on strike.

For now, state employees all across the state are talking with their co-workers about what is at stake in this battle for a fair contract.

The AFSCME State Bargaining Committee—made up of over 200 local union leaders—has been leading the fight for a fair contract. Here some Bargaining Committee members and activists talk about their families and what inspires them to carry on in this struggle.



Julie Yana

Contract Manager, Choate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Center | AFSCME Local 141

I serve as a liaison between the state and community mental health service providers. These agencies are barely hanging on right now because they're billing for their services but getting nothing in return. As a result, they are cutting services and even closing. There's just a skeleton of services available for the people who need them.

People in crisis are clogging up emergency rooms and jails because there's nowhere for them to go. It affects everything.

For me, the outcome of this fight will impact every level of my life, from the education of my children to where or if they are going to have a home. My husband also works for the state. We have three growing kids and one of our children has special needs. They need health care. They need their mom and dad to have a job.

My oldest daughter just graduated eighth grade. Her teacher told me that she stood up and told her classmates what a union is and why it's important to fight for your rights on the job. This struggle is not just about my finances, my house, my little part of the world. It's also about instilling what's right and wrong in our kids. We are teaching them.



Arnold Black

Child Protection Advanced Specialist, Department of Children and Family Services | AFSCME Local 2971

This is a fight not only for us but for the people who came before us, who fought for our rights, and the people who will come after us.

Set aside the wage freeze and the doubled health care costs. If Governor Rauner gets his way, on any day and at any moment, your job could be privatized. It won't matter how much you love and care for your job. It won't matter how many years you've served the state.

Rauner has a plan on how to break up the state to bring his buddies in to make money. He did that with his nursing homes. And what happened? People were neglected. People died.

My co-workers and I help make sure kids are safe in their homes or foster care placements, free of abuse and neglect. We not only protect the children, but we provide peace of mind for those who care about a child—teachers, neighbors, family members—but cannot intervene.

Public service workers sacrifice our family time to ensure that every other family gets what they need. I'm fighting for the well-being of all children, but I'm also fighting for my 17-year-old daughter.

By being active and engaged in my union, I hope to teach my daughter that you have to stand up for what you believe in. You can't be afraid.

R IT TAKES!



Crosby Smith

Mental Health Technician, Elizabeth Ludeman Center | AFSCME Local 2645

I take care of developmentally disabled and mentally ill individuals. Families depend on us because they can't provide the level of care for their loved ones that we can provide. When you see you're making life better for somebody who needs you, that's rewarding.

Bruce Rauner doesn't care about the havoc he's wreaking on people around the state. He doesn't care about schoolchildren, women, working families. It's disappointing that someone who is a public official could be that heartless and uncaring, not just about us the employees, but the people who receive our services.

When the Rauner Administration walked away from negotiations with state employees, it became very obvious what he is doing. He's lying to the public, lying to employees. Instead of spending his time trying to come to an agreement with us, he spent that time trying to deceive and pry us apart from each other.

Nobody wants the worst-case scenario, a strike. But for us to avoid that, we all have to show some courage. The more courage you show a bully, the fewer times you have to fight the bully. If we're not united, he's going to take everything that we have.



Cara Dillabough

Correctional Leisure Activities Specialist, Dixon Correctional Center | AFSCME Local 817

My job is to coordinate activities for the inmates. By keeping them active, I'm helping improve their mood and their outlook. When inmates exert energy in a positive way, it cuts down on negative incidents in the prison and beyond.

If Rauner wins this fight, then the labor movement goes back to square one. People have sacrificed their lives and worked until their fingers bled to get what we take for granted right now. Our health care, vacations, lunch breaks, weekends off—these things could all be washed away.

I got pregnant in the middle of contract negotiations and that made everything so much more real to me. I thought, 'Wow. This is going to directly affect my daughter's life. If we don't win this fight against Rauner, what will that mean for her?'

I want my daughter to be able to have a union job. I want her to be able to provide her children with what they need with one good job instead of working two to three jobs to pay the bills because we're a Turnaround Agenda state and country.

I want to fight for her until my absolute last breath.



Glenn Sago

Evidence Technician, Illinois State Police | AFSCME Local 448

As state employees, we work for the public and we are taxpayers. We are part of the system on both sides. We are impacted by the cuts in services. And at the same time we are making our community better, helping our neighbors, people we went to school with ... it's personal.

Governor Rauner's true agenda is not to help us as state employees or be fair with us or make things better. It's just the opposite; it's to create tension and to separate us.

If we don't have a union, we won't have a say. If it's that important for him to take away our voice, it must be as important to us to fight to keep it.

He's not going to give up. So we can't give up either.

The union is a positive, motivating force in Illinois and in our nation. Any rights that we have, we fought for together. That's what solidarity does.

Regardless of your position, your title, how much money you make, where you work—we all have one common goal. If we come together in solidarity we'll win. We can't do it without each other.



Jack Matthews

Geographic Information Specialist, Illinois State Police | AFSCME Local 1964

I produce mapping data that helps reduce and prevent fatal crashes on the interstate highway. This is the kind of critical work that we state employees do.

The big sticking points in negotiations are wages, health care and privatization. To me, privatization is the piece we should be most concerned about. The governor has deep-pocketed friends, companies he wants to give our work to.

I have four little girls. I feel my children deserve the best health care that's out there. If our health care costs double, that will hurt. But if my job is privatized that will hurt my family even more. That's not fair to the families who work for the state of Illinois.

Rauner has shown that he's committed to chipping away until he gets what he wants. Staying united and standing firm is the only way we're going to prevail.

A clear choice for President

November election is critical moment for the nation's future

Hillary Clinton knows the vital importance of unions to a fair and balanced economy. “I believe when unions are strong, America is strong,” she said at the AFSCME International Convention in July. “Unions helped build the strongest middle class in the history of the world.”

AFTER A CLOSE RACE IN THE PRIMARY ELECTION, CLINTON WAS NOMINATED AS THE DEMOCRATIC presidential candidate at the party's July convention in Cleveland. She is the first woman to achieve that position in United States history. AFSCME endorsed the former senator and secretary of state for president.

Her platform includes a robust plan to strengthen

working families: reining in Wall Street excesses, creating good jobs in this country, a higher minimum wage, equal pay, paid family leave, fair schedules and affordable child care.

Clinton is opposed to the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement because she does not believe that it protects good jobs. She wants to enhance Social Security, not

cut it, and will push back against any effort to undermine retirement security.

Trump favors anti-worker policies

THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE, Donald Trump, is anything but union-friendly.

For more than a year, he's been battling the efforts of 500 maids, bartenders and bellhops at the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas as they try to organize for better pay and working conditions.

“Mr. Trump says he wants to ‘Make America Great Again.’ But that's just a big lie, because he doesn't want to give his own employees what we deserve,” Trump Hotel worker Miguel Funes told reporters this summer. Funes and his co-workers complain of unpaid lunch breaks, unfair wages and no job security.

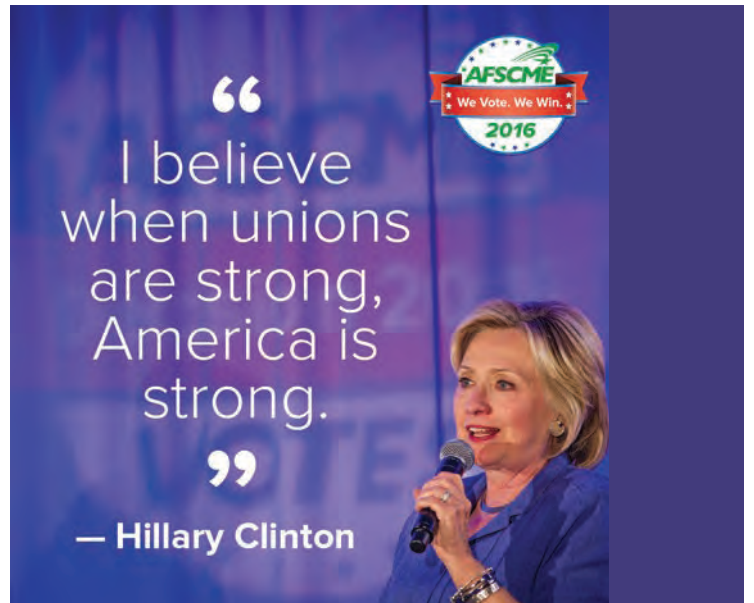
A series of National Labor Relations Board complaints allege that Trump's hotel has threatened, fired and intimidated workers who are trying to organize.

This story should not surprise American voters since Trump has made no secret of his aversion to good union jobs. Regarding so-called “Right to Work” laws, part of the corporate elite's strategy to weaken unions, Trump has said: “I like it better because ... [i]t gives great flexibility to the companies.”

In fact, Trump's platform is similar to that of Illinois' Bruce Rauner. Chicago Tribune reporters compared the two wealthy Republicans: “Both are my-way-or-the-highway businessmen campaigning on a message that their private-sector experience can help turn around the economy and remake government.”

Like Rauner, Trump is not interested in a balanced economy where everyone thrives and everyone pays their fair share. He thinks workers' wages are already “too high,” and says the minimum wage shouldn't be greater than \$10 per hour.

Trump's tax plan would provide new tax breaks for big corporations and the very wealthy. Unlike every presidential nominee since Nixon, Trump is refusing to release his



— Hillary Clinton

own tax returns, admitting that he fights “very hard to pay as little tax as possible” because he doesn't want to throw his money “down the drain.”

Despite his populist rhetoric, there's little doubt that Trump is not on the side

of working people. He's already pledged to appoint a Supreme Court justice in the mold of the recently-deceased Justice Antonin Scalia, a strongly anti-union, pro-big business voice on the court.

“Mr. Trump says he wants to ‘Make America Great Again.’ But that's just a big lie, because he doesn't want to give his own employees what we deserve.”



Epic battle for Illinois General Assembly

AFSCME members know the critical importance of making their voices heard, not only in the workplace but at the polling place as well. That's why public service workers are coming together to stop the Rauner takeover of the Illinois General Assembly.

Gov. Bruce Rauner and his rich friends are already pouring millions of dollars into targeted races. Rauner wants to take over the General Assembly with candidates who will enact his extreme agenda to drive down wages and strip the rights of all working people.

Organized people can beat organized money. That's what happened in the spring primary election, when Rauner's forces vastly outspent their opponents but AFSCME members and their allies were still able to re-elect legislators like Sen. Sam McCann who stood up to stop Rauner, and to defeat those like Rep. Ken Dunkin who abetted the governor's attacks.

Leaders of AFSCME local unions throughout Illinois will come together at the PEOPLE Conference in Springfield on August 27 to develop plans to maximize member involvement in the November elections.

To help elect candidates who fight for working families and a fair economy, volunteer through your local union.

AFSCME members 'Never Quit'

Thousands come together at 42nd International Convention

Labor unions in our country today are fending off the fiercest attacks in generations even while continuing to lead the fight for economic justice—not just for union members but for all working people. We never quit.

“NEVER QUIT” WAS THE THEME of this year’s 42nd AFSCME International Convention. Like the public service workers AFSCME represents, our union is on the job every day, never failing to take on the challenges before us.

More than 300 AFSCME Council 31 convention delegates and alternates—and thousands more from across the country—gathered in Las Vegas this July to make crucial decisions about the union’s vision and direction.

Over several days, delegates debated and voted on key resolutions on topics including the crisis in higher education, protecting the right to vote, preventing workplace violence, opposing private prisons, paid parental leave, increased cooperation with SEIU, and dozens more.

Convention delegates also voted to re-elect AFSCME International President Lee Saunders and Secretary-Treasurer Laura Reyes along with international vice presidents. Illinois Vice Presidents Roberta Lynch and Mike Newman were re-elected by acclamation.

Democratic presidential

nominee Hillary Clinton lit up the Las Vegas Convention Center with an inspiring address.

She wore green in solidarity with AFSCME members who she said are critical to the fight for economic justice and opportunity in this country—and to winning the high-stakes election in November.

On one excruciatingly hot Las Vegas afternoon, convention participants took time out from the proceedings to rally in solidarity with culinary workers who are fighting for good jobs and fair treatment at the Trump International Hotel. Donald Trump refuses to negotiate with workers at his Las Vegas property and AFSCME let him know that you don’t make America great by busting unions and attacking working people.

Support for Illinois AFSCME members

DELEGATES FROM ACROSS the country overwhelmingly approved a resolution to “stand in solidarity with AFSCME Council 31 members in state government who are directly confronting one of the most fiercely anti-union governors



in the country today.”

Speaking in support of the resolution, Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch stressed that the fight in Illinois is vitally important to union members all across the country—as Bruce Rauner’s efforts to destroy unions in Illinois will become a model for other right-wing governors if he succeeds.

International President Lee Saunders also spoke in favor of the resolution, citing the song “Lean on Me” to let Illinois members know they can lean on the whole union for support.

Showing their unity with Illinois AFSCME members, convention delegates representing more than 1 million AFSCME members nationwide pledged to “make every effort to provide assistance, whether with financial contributions, staff support, or other forms of solidarity.”



AFSCME Council 31 was recognized for having the highest percentage of PEOPLE MVP contributors in the country. Local 1274 President Kyle Spencer accepted the award on the council’s behalf.



Angela Fry of AFSCME Local 29 addresses the convention on the importance of building a strong union of committed members through the AFSCME Strong plan.



Ralph Portwood of AFSCME Local 1866 (Stateville Correctional Center) addresses the convention on how an effective law enforcement community is critical in the struggle for racial and economic justice.

Visit 2016.afscme.org to see convention highlights and photos of AFSCME delegates at work.

RETIREE NOTES

A cross-generational family

Charlie Hogan organizes fellow AFSCME retiree activists

CHARLIE HOGAN WORKED FOR THE CITY OF EVANSTON FOR 20 YEARS AS AN AIR CONDITIONING technician and a member of AFSCME Local 1891. "I kept 96 heat pumps running that were not only obsolete, they didn't even make them anymore," Hogan laughed. "I basically had to rebuild them over the years."

Soon after retiring in 2007, Hogan was approached by AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31 to help found a new retiree sub-chapter in the northern suburbs of Chicago. Today, AFSCME Retiree Sub-Chapter 161 has more than 850 members and a solid core of activists. Hogan's goal as president is to expand that core.

"We are all connected—our union is a cross-generational family," he said. "When we're organized, retirees can be a force in politics and in our union."

Organizing for change

HOGAN HAS BEEN WORKING to make a difference with his sub-chapter and other area organizations like ONE Northside, the Jane Addams Senior Caucus and the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans. His focus right now is building public awareness of Gov. Rauner's budget blockade and increasing public pressure to pass a fair budget with adequate revenues.

"While leafletting at a Citizen Action/Illinois event, I met a mother who used to get subsidies for her son's day care. Now she's trying to do it all out of her own pocket. I call it silent misery. You don't necessarily know who is impacted by the governor's actions until you get out there and talk to people."

And that's what Hogan

loves to do. He reaches out to fellow retirees and has one-on-one conversations about getting active.

"It's basic organizing. I listen to their stories and I share our vision at AFSCME. I tell them, if you're frustrated and willing to dip your toe in the water, there's no shortage of work to be done."

As a conversation starter, he brings a recent copy of *On the Move* with him on visits with retirees. "Our union paper lays out the situation in a depth that's not covered in the media. Retirees who know the honest story will be ready to act when we're called on to help."

Solidarity is a core AFSCME value

SOLIDARITY IS WHAT SPURRED Hogan to become a union activ-



Charlie Hogan (left) shares passion for organizing, vision for future with fellow retirees.

ist years ago when a former supervisor attempted to fire him and his co-workers.

"Until then my union contract was in my desk drawer. But that experience made me truly see the value of my union. Between solidarity and a union contract, I kept my job."

Hogan has advice for the active union members of AFSCME: "Reach out to your retiree group. We care. We have a stake in this fight. What's been there for me, I want there for you. I want it there for my daughter."

Top Trump advisors push cuts to Social Security and Medicare

DURING HIS CAMPAIGN LAUNCH last summer, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump made a familiar promise to "save Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security."

But the people closely advising Trump on national policy have different ideas.

Trump's national co-chair and senior policy advisor, Sam Clovis, told the *Des Moines Register* that he is "a strong believer in bringing private models to both Medicare and Social Security." Privatization of Social Security and Medicare would replace the current system with a "voucher program" that does not guarantee full coverage.

Clovis has also been trying to walk back Trump's initial support for retirement benefits. At a Fiscal Summit, Clovis stated that "after the [Trump] administration has been in place, then we will start to take

a look at all of the programs, including entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare."

Trump's Policy Director, John Mashburn, has similarly dangerous views.

Mashburn views Social Security Disability as a "substitute welfare program" and has advocated for "block-granting" the Medicaid program, which would allow states to cut funding to seniors living in

nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Public pension funding levels on the rise

EVEN THOUGH OPPONENTS OF retirement benefits continue to claim that hard-earned pensions are "unsustainable," funding levels for pensions nationwide continue to rise.

Boston College researchers found that the average public

pension trust fund increased its funding ratio by one percent in the last year, and average pension funding is nearing pre-2008 recession levels.

Why then are Illinois' pension funds not rebounding as quickly? For decades Illinois politicians shorted the pension fund to cover infrastructure projects without enacting a tax increase. Since 60-70 percent of pension fund assets come from investments, Illinois has had

difficulty keeping up with rising market performance.

Governor Rauner has continued this practice. In November 2015 the state skipped a \$560 million pension payment. Furthermore, a bill introduced this past session by Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno (R-Lemont), SB 2789, seeks to give the governor unilateral authority to cut pension payments even further.

CHICAGO-AREA RETIREES EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH STATE EMPLOYEES



SHORT REPORTS

Aurora Public Library employees stop layoffs, fight cuts

AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY employees, patrons, kids and families are fighting back against proposed cuts to library hours and services. The group of advocates successfully prevented some layoffs of AFSCME Local 2283 members after a series of community actions, including a “read-in” in the lobby of City Hall. They also delivered hundreds of petition signatures opposing the cuts.

But the fight is not over yet. By sharply limiting public access to the libraries through hour reductions and a branch closure, the proposed cuts would reduce programming and services for community patrons.

“The patrons of the library and the employees have been dealt a mean blow here because of the irresponsibility of the library board,” said Bonnie Bogden, president of Local 2283 and a 16-year library employee. “The cuts would negatively impact the students, seniors and community members who come to our facility for services, programs, and even shelter from extreme weather.”

AFSCME members and allies will continue to pressure the board to do the right thing for the Aurora community.

Investigators vital to police accountability

THE CITY OF CHICAGO’S LAW enforcement practices are under intense scrutiny after fallout from the shooting of Laquan McDonald, for which a police officer was charged with murder.

Instituted to recommend policy changes in response to public outcry, Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s Police Accountability Task Force released a report that included criticisms of the city’s primary police oversight agency, the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA).

The task force identified significant issues with the agency’s past performance and leadership, and recommended that it be replaced by a civilian police investigative agency.

However, the report did not fault IPRA investigators who are members of AFSCME Local



Bonnie Bogden, president of AFSCME Local 2283 and a 16-year library employee, read stories to children at a “read-in” at Aurora City Hall in July.

654. In fact, IPRA investigators are highly trained professionals whose efforts have been circumscribed by managerial edicts, legal restrictions and inadequate resources.

In noting the low number of findings against police officers, the accountability task force’s report uncovered “allegations that IPRA maintained a highly problematic policy of permitting the Chief Administrator to order investigators to change findings without creating a record of the disagreement.” Mayor Emanuel has pledged to replace IPRA with a new civilian agency as recommended by the task force as the police department faces an impending Justice Department investigation.

AFSCME is arguing that any reforms to improve police accountability must include the current IPRA frontline staff who were found to have the experience, knowledge and integrity to ensure effective investigations and transparent

process. AFSCME submitted a report based on in-depth investigator interviews to provide information to members of the Chicago City Council on the importance of having experienced and qualified investigators in the new agency.

Chicago’s big pension hole

THE CITY OF CHICAGO’S PUBLIC pension system is severely underfunded. Each of the five major funds—police, fire, laborers, municipal and teachers—is in danger of being unable to meet future obligations to tens of thousands of current city employees.

AFSCME members in Chicago city government belong to the municipal fund, known as MEABF, which is now just under 33 percent funded and projected to become insolvent within the next 10 years.

For too many years the city failed to make an adequate employer contribution, even as

employees faithfully paid their share. Now the shortfall has reached potentially catastrophic proportions.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel said he is determined to get the funds back on track by ensuring that the city makes its contribution each year going forward. But the Emanuel Administration’s original plan to fix the MEABF, enacted last year by the General Assembly as Senate Bill 1922, placed far too heavy a burden on current and retired city employees. By reducing annual cost-of-living adjustments, it would have drastically cut the value of pension benefits over the course of an employee’s retirement years.

Because this scheme so clearly violated the Illinois Constitution’s prohibition against diminishing pension benefits,

AFSCME and other unions challenged SB 1922 in court, ultimately prevailing when the Illinois Supreme Court ruled unanimously last year that it was unconstitutional.

That ruling means that pensions really are a promise, and ensures that City of Chicago employees cannot be stripped of their promised benefits.

But the big question still remains: How will the city pension funds meet their obligations to all participants?

To bolster pension funds, Mayor Rahm Emanuel increased property taxes for city homeowners last year, and in August the mayor proposed a utility tax increase on water and sewer bills. AFSCME is supporting efforts to pass this tax in the Chicago City Council.

Unions work... for ALL of us

Unions make a better future, not just for their members but for all working families. A recent study by the Center for American Progress Action Fund shows unions help the middle class “no matter the measure.”

Unions...

- Help to set a standard that raises wages for all workers
- Support higher economic mobility for the next generation
- Reduce wage inequality, limiting runaway incomes at the top and expanding the middle class’s share
- Reduce poverty by helping those who need it most
- Increase well-being, especially health and life satisfaction

Read the full study:

AmericanProgressAction.org

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

Moline local protects good jobs

TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC employee jobs stay public at the City of Moline, the AFSCME Local 1132 bargaining team struck a four-year deal that included a no-layoff clause along with compensation increases.

"One of our goals is to keep everybody working," said Arnie McCollum, a water pollution control operations technician at the sewer plant. McCollum has worked for the city for 18 years and has served as Local 1132 president for the last eight.

"The city has often issued requests for proposals to outsource our work to private contractors, so we negotiated to keep language in our contract that ensures a minimum number of full-time, union employees," McCollum explained. "We're unique in that aspect of our contract and we usually have a pretty good battle on our hands to protect it."

"To keep our numbers and prevent layoffs, we agreed to freeze the bottom and top of the wage scales while securing annual lump-sum payments for longevity and anniversaries," said Greg Van Voltenburg, a crew leader in the street department. "We felt that having a no-layoff clause to keep everyone working was worth it."

The local represents 911, water plant, streets, fleet, engineering, sewer plant, parks and finance department staff. The bargaining team negotiated for six months and won annual 2.5 percent wage increases for most members and bonuses for those at the top of the scale.

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Miguel Morga and McCollum, the team included Dave Mallum, Dan DeShane, Randi Haley, Greg Van Voltenberg, Margo Blaser, Dave Bizarri and Casey Lukowicz.

Van Voltenburg said the bargaining team listened to all perspectives and worked well as a group. He has worked for the city for 32 years. "I'm at an age where I could retire, but I still enjoy coming to work and I'm thankful to have a new challenge and meet new people every day."

Local 1132 members know



AFSCME Local 1132 member James Gordon jetting a sewer line in Moline.

the battle to prevent privatization isn't over but they stand ready to keep fighting. "We know from experience that it's in the public's best interest for AFSCME members to be doing public service work rather than part-time, seasonal employees who work for private companies," McCollum said.

"The bargaining team had a lot of people thanking us for protecting our jobs. That feels pretty good."

Rockford Housing Authority local blocks privatization

AFTER PROLONGED NEGOTIATIONS, members of AFSCME Local 1058A successfully fended off the city's attempts to privatize critical social service positions at the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA).

"Initially, our whole

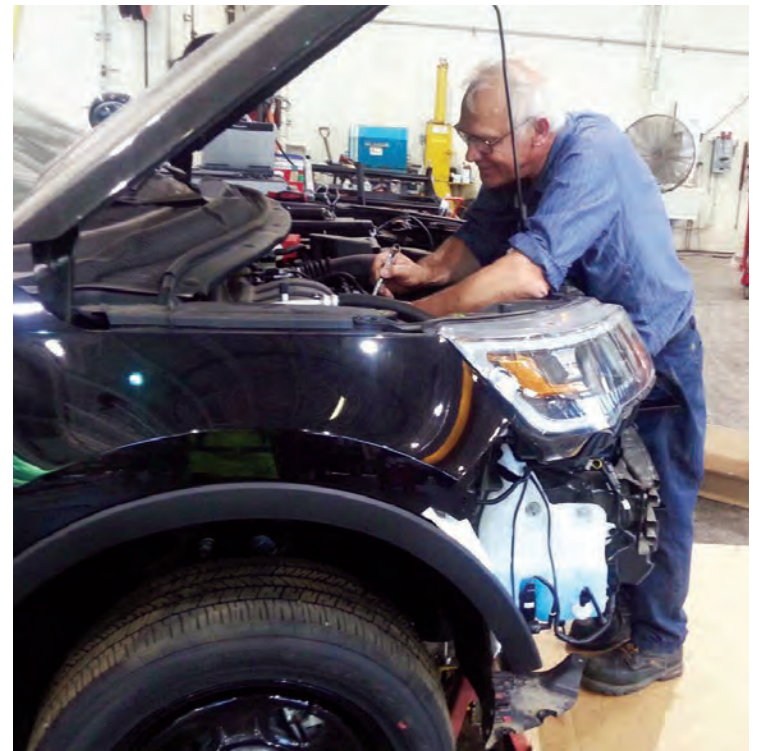
department was on the chopping block," said Monique Jones, a family self-sufficiency specialist and secretary of the local. As a first-time negotiator, that news was an "eye-opener" for Jones.

"In the end we worked with the employer to come to a reasonable resolution, but I still believe the city's strategy to privatize services hasn't changed," said Jones.

RHA employees in the residential services team help public housing tenants and their families become self-sufficient, so privatization is a real concern for both employees and residents.

"They wanted to take resident services out of the union, but we saved those six jobs in negotiations," said Elias Soria, the local chapter chair for RHA and a family self-sufficiency specialist for 18 years.

"While we are concerned



AFSCME Local 1132 member Dave Mallum on the job as a City of Moline mechanic.

about improving our contract, we are also concerned about ensuring the city focuses on the human and social components of public housing and not just the real estate development."

Public housing is a big issue in Rockford, as the city grapples with the best way to provide this critical public service and develop new sites. "Social services staff was supposed to be a part of the planning process, but we haven't been at the table," Soria said. "That's not helping anyone."

All members of Local 1058 stand united to fight for improvements in their workplace, but also to be a voice for the public good.

"Not only are union jobs good for our local economy,

we union members are the gatekeepers of what is fair and reasonable for the people we serve," said Jones. "We present the other side of the story and help improve the city's public services."

The Local 1058A bargaining team won annual wage increases, a new longevity step and significant improvements in contract language.

Joining Soria and Jones on the bargaining team were President Garry Cacciapaglia, Christina Loudermilk, Lynn Feirn, William Thompson, Linda Lander and Council 31 Staff Representative Ed Sadlowski. Members ratified the two-year contract earlier this summer.

Award-winning Wauconda team

MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 2904 have been busy winning awards and breaking records.

The men and women who staff the Village of Wauconda's Public Works department were recently presented with the 2016 Illinois Operations Award from the Central States Water Environment Association. The award is given to one wastewater treatment plant operator and staff each year in recognition of outstanding performance and professionalism.

"We play a pivotal role in the health and safety of our community and our environment," said

"While we are concerned about improving our contract, we are also concerned about ensuring the city focuses on the human and social components of public housing."



The Wauconda Public Works team, members of AFSCME Local 2904, received the 2016 Illinois Operations Award from the Central States Water Environment Association. From left to right: Village of Wauconda Trustee Lincoln Knight, AFSCME members Humberto Reyes and Jacob Mann, Director of Public Works Brad Fink, and AFSCME members Anna Kootstra and Luke Markko (with proud daughter).

Jacob Mann, president of Local 2904. Mann has worked for the village for nearly 20 years and serves as utilities foreman.

Wauconda Mayor Frank Bart congratulated the team: "Our treatment plant staff is continuously investigating different processes within the plant to achieve greater efficiencies resulting in reduced operational cost but still maintaining the same high

quality effluent."

The award-winning treatment plant team includes Mann, Luke Markko, Anna Kootstra and Berto Reyes.

"It's a collaborative effort," Mann said. "There are no egos. We're always spitballing different ideas and building upon those. We work together."

Two more members of Local 2904 won a very different competition this summer. Bart

Romero and Dave Schiff competed in the American Water Works Association Hydrant Hysteria competition, in which a two-person team assembles a fire hydrant as quickly as they can.

Romero and Schiff won first place in the Illinois competition before becoming national champions this June. This speedy team of AFSCME members now holds the fastest hydrant assembly time in competition history: a record-breaking one minute and 19 seconds.

Will County correctional officers close the wage gap

AFSCME MEMBERS WHO WORK as correctional officers in Will County are on the same page with new sheriff Mike Kelley: Good wages ensure trained and experienced correctional officers, creating better outcomes for public safety and cash-strapped local budgets.

After years of working for wages that were much lower than comparable counties, Will County correctional officers with AFSCME Local 1028 won significant wage increases in their latest contract, putting their salary scales on par with surrounding counties.

"We got behind in the

last two contracts because the former administration wasn't interested in paying us fair, competitive wages," Mike Harkins said. Harkins is the local's executive board representative for the sheriff's department and has served as a correctional officer in Will County for 13 years.

"As correctional officers, we keep the inmates and the public safe."

"As correctional officers, we keep the inmates and the public safe," Harkins said. "It's challenging and often thankless. With one officer for every 56 inmates, all in one room, things could go bad quickly. But the professionalism of our officers prevents that from happening."

Retroactive to 2013, the four-year contract shortens the step plan by three steps so that officer salaries increase more rapidly at the beginning of a career. The bargaining team was also able to negotiate a \$10,000 bump in the starting pay for new officers.

"We were having problems with retention and recruiting—it was almost a revolving door of new employees," Harkins said. "We were hoping for a big change with the new administration and we got that."

Harkins was joined on the bargaining committee by local president Dave Delrose, Rick Breen, Alonzo Rodriguez, Carlos Garcia, Chris Sprys, Jim Frank, Matt Mantia, Mike Boudreau, Rick Bayus, Ron Adams Tom Hannigan and Ed Cassello. AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Jeff Dexter led the team, which will go back to the table at the end of this year.

Direct care providers build better future

MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 486 who provide direct care for individuals with disabilities at two different agencies, the Bellwood Developmental Center and ASPIRE of Illinois, won significant gains in their most recent contract negotiations.

Both Bellwood and ASPIRE depend on state funding to provide care and services for

individuals with developmental disabilities in Chicago-area suburbs.

"Management saw a lot of good people leaving to go to different companies and they weren't getting any new hires because the pay rate was so low," said Marlon Thomas, president of Local 486. "They knew they needed to do something."

As an employee at ASPIRE for 10 years, Thomas saw his paycheck stay the same as the cost of living kept going up. "Some of us leave here after a hard eight-hour day to go to another job just to make ends meet."

Thomas said as part of their campaign for a fair contract, members told their personal stories of struggle to management and shared research about the detriments of high turnover. They also organized worksite actions and wore stickers in solidarity.

"Some of us leave here after a hard eight-hour day to go to another job just to make ends meet."

Their efforts brought results: The starting wage for direct service personnel at Aspire went from less than \$9 an hour to \$10.50, with a dollar raise after one year of service. And Bellwood employees won three percent annual raises for the next three years. Both ratification votes were unanimous.

"When we finally let the members know what we won, everybody came up to say we did a good job," said Thomas. "They thanked us for standing our ground. It was the proudest moment of my time here. Seeing my co-workers so happy, that's what makes all the hard work worthwhile."

AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative David Marlow led the two bargaining teams. Thomas was joined by ASPIRE employees Pat Shines, Debora Buchanan and Janet Hardnett; Kerwin Ross and Raymond Dowell bargained on behalf of the Bellwood employees.



AFSCME Local 2904 members Dave Schiff and Bart Romero (left and right, respectively, with Mark Gedde at center) broke the national record for fastest hydrant assembly.

Sanitation worker's story goes

V·I·R·A·L

A little girl and an AFSCME Local 699 member

teach the world a lesson in kindness



“We get so busy in this world that I just hope people are inspired to take your time, slow down and recognize others for who they are.”

PHOTO: DAVID PROEBER, THE PANTAGRAPH

When the special friendship between a three-year-old girl and a sanitation worker who is a member of AFSCME Local 699 in Bloomington, Ill., went viral, the world got a lesson in kindness—not to mention the humanity of the working men and women we rely on to provide public services every day.

Every Thursday morning for the past year, Delvar Dopson would drive his garbage truck down little Brooklyn Andracke's street. Dopson would honk his horn and flash his headlights, and the toddler would smile and wave.

“It was really cute,” Delvar says. “I would tell my wife about it every week.”

One day in April after Brooklyn's birthday, Dopson arrived to find Brooklyn and her mom waiting on the curb. Turns out the little girl wanted to share one of her birthday cupcakes with her friend.

“I pulled over and got out of my vehicle,” Delvar says. “She was looking at me like I was Superman. Her mom said, ‘I just want to thank you for what you do every Thursday. You make my daughter's day.’ I told her the feeling is mutual. I don't have children of my own, so it means a lot to me to put a smile on her face.”

The resulting photo became a global Internet sensation. In the weeks that followed, Dopson appeared on Good Morning America and Inside Edition, was interviewed by reporters as far away as Japan, and got notes and tweets from celebrities, athletes and politicians. Everyone wanted to share the heartwarming connection between the little girl and the garbage man.

“It's cool because it's not about me, it's about being kind and generous and humble,” Dopson says. “We get so busy in this world that I just hope people are inspired to take your time, slow down and recognize others for who they are. If stories like this can be shared, these interactions between people will happen more often.”

Of course, public service workers are frequently overlooked and their service is taken for granted. That's never truer than for the men and women who handle all the things we throw away.

“Sanitation is one of those things people don't think about,” Dopson points out. “To them it's like magic, you just take it out to the curb and when they get home, they expect it to be dumped. There's no thought process as to how that gets done or the people that make it happen. But I believe that America was really built on folks like us who work with our hands and do the jobs that people don't think about. I think my story shows that even the garbage man is valuable as a person.”

Delvar Dopson hopes his connection with little Brooklyn offers a lesson in how we all can better get along.

“I have to say it: I'm a black man, I'm 6 foot 3 and I have dreads. I might be unapproachable to some white people, but this is a family that's teaching their little girl not to see any barriers, of class, race, gender or anything. I want to lift up that parenting as an example, more than anything I've done.”