



ON THE

#179 • OCTOBER 2017

MOVE

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

TOTALITY



Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
AFSCME

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

**AFSCME members
greet the eclipse**
PAGE 8

**What is Janus
v. AFSCME?**
PAGE 7

**Rauner courting
fiscal instability**
PAGE 4

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Unions are about freedom and fairness

Janus v. AFSCME is the latest plot to rig our economy against us



BY
ROBERTA LYNCH

**JANUS V.
AFSCME
BEGAN AS A
POLITICAL
SCHEME BY
GOV. BRUCE
RAUNER**

When working people have the freedom to speak up together through unions, we make progress together that benefits everyone. So today—with a shrinking middle class and a growing gap between the rich and the rest of us—the last thing America needs is an assault on the freedom to form strong unions and speak up for ourselves and our communities. Unfortunately, attacking the freedom of working people to come together is exactly what the *Janus v. AFSCME* lawsuit is all about.

Although fronted by a lone state employee, the case is bankrolled by the National Right to Work Foundation and the Liberty Justice Center—the litigation wing of the Illinois Policy Institute—part of a network funded by billionaires and corporate CEOs who use their massive fortunes to tilt the playing field in their favor.

They're out to eliminate unions from the American economic and political landscape because they want to be able to call all the shots. They don't want working people to have the ability to influence the decisions that affect our lives.

Now these forces have taken their anti-union crusade to the highest court in the land. In January the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to hear the *Janus* case that's intended to strip average Americans of our freedom to come together to achieve things our families need, like a decent wage, retirement security, and affordable health care.

Under current law, every union-represented employee may choose whether or not to join the union—but the union is required to represent all workers whether they join or not. Since all workers benefit from the union's gains—better wages, affordable health care, job safety measures, protection against unfair firing, and a wide range of other rights and benefits—it's only fair that everyone chip in toward the cost.

Forty years ago a unanimous Supreme Court approved this kind of fair cost-sharing arrangement. But today's court—with its pro-corporate majority—is expected to turn that ruling on its head.

This case is an effort by powerful corporate interests to outlaw fair share fees, encouraging workers to contribute nothing toward the cost of union representation. It actually began as a political scheme by Gov. Bruce Rauner, who shortly after taking office issued an executive order and filed a lawsuit trying to ban fair share.

As a candidate, Rauner vowed to take down public employee unions. He clearly saw abolishing fair share fees as a way to drain unions of the resources needed to effectively represent members' interests.

In a recent interview with the right-wing Hoover Institution, Governor Rauner dropped the ruse that his assault on unions is about economic policy, saying it has "nothing to do with any of the budget."

Instead, he said, it's about "chang[ing] the culture and the power structure in Illinois." That means tipping the scales of our economy and our democracy even further against regular people, while amassing more wealth and power for billionaire CEOs like him.

Union members know we only make progress when we come together, not just for

ourselves but to improve the lives of all. We understand that real freedom is about more than making a living; it's also about being able to have time to spend with our families, to care for a sick child, to volunteer in our church or our community.


The wealthy corporate special interests behind this case want to undermine that freedom. They want to take away the power in numbers that working people need to win better lives for ourselves, our families and our communities.

We know it's all too likely that this Supreme Court, like so much of the power structure in our country, is now tilted against us. But no matter how much money the billionaires throw at us, no matter how craven and vicious their attacks, we're not quitters.

We know if we want keep our union strong, we have to stand together. So AFSCME members all across this state are starting right now to recommit to our union through the AFSCME Strong program.

We're signing membership cards again—no matter how long we've been union members—to make clear that we won't let anyone take our union away from us.

We won't quit on each other. And we won't quit on the fight for a better life for all.

When that court ruling on *Janus* comes next spring, we'll be ready—more united and stronger than ever. 



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

State Executive Vice-President
Ralph Portwood, Stateville CC, Local 1866

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 Deirose, Will County, Local 1028

Treasurer

David Morris, Illinois State Employees, Local 805

BOARD MEMBERS

State Conference Board Co-Chairs

Gloria Arseneau (RC-14), Northeastern Illinois State Employees, Local 2794

Gary Ciaccio (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 Opolony, Lombard, Illinois Municipal Employees, Local 89

Yurvette Simmons, United Cerebral Palsy of Will County, Local 3237

Miguel Vazquez, Aurora Sanitary District Employees, Local 3297

REGION III VICE-PRESIDENTS (Central Illinois)

Lori Gladson, Illinois State Employees, Peoria, Local 51

Mark Kerr, McFarland Zone Center, Local 2767

Steve Nordyke, 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

Shaun Dawson, Illinois Department of Corrections Employees, Local 2073

Stephen Howerter, Canton Correctional Center Employees, Local 3585

RETIREE CHAPTER 31 REPRESENTATIVE

Larry Brown

State contract conflict on hold

Previous terms remain in effect during legal challenge

A FSCME members in state government are getting a respite after more than two years of fierce battles with a governor out to knock them down. As a result of the union's legal challenge, Bruce Rauner cannot move forward with his scheme to impose his own extreme contract terms on employees.

Although the state labor board backed up Rauner's claim that bargaining with state employees was at an impasse, AFSCME is now asking an appellate court to overturn that ruling and send the governor back to the bargaining table.

Rauner tried an end-run around the judicial system by pushing for the same health insurance cuts in the FY 18 budget that he had been trying to impose on state employees. But AFSCME helped block that maneuver and the cuts weren't included when legislators finally overrode Rauner's veto and enacted the budget.

"Rauner is trying to find any loophole he can to impose his final offer on state employees," said Tawny Proulx, president of AFSCME Local 172 and member of the state contract bargaining team. "He's not stopping and we're not safe yet."

State employees serve Illinois

PROULX WORKS AT THE JACK Mabley Developmental Center in Dixon. Her husband works for the Department of Corrections. Gov. Rauner's agenda makes her worry for her family, but also for the people she cares for daily.

"There have been so many services lost for children in Illinois and people with disabilities," Proulx said sadly. "Some programs have been totally wiped out. Rauner isn't just trying to inflict damage on AFSCME members, but also the people we serve."

Mabley Developmental Center is a residential program that offers community outreach and job-training programs for people with severe developmental disabilities.

"Despite what Rauner says, we don't make a hundred grand

a year," Proulx said. "We're not greedy people. We work very long hours and we're very dedicated. We just want to be treated fairly. We're not asking for anything more."

Another member of the state contract bargaining committee, Dennis Williams, works nights assisting patients as a mental health technician at the Chicago-Read Mental Health Center.

"What keeps me motivated is seeing the difference we make in their lives," Williams


said of his work. "If I wasn't there, who would help these people get back on track and keep them safe?"

We have to fight now, not later

AS PRESIDENT OF AFSCME Local 1610, Williams tells his fellow members that it's imperative to be engaged in the political arena.

"We have problems that we're dealing with inside these four walls, but you have to look beyond that at the big picture," he said. "Rauner wants to get rid of the union altogether so that he can hire and fire at will, pay whatever he wants, and we don't have a voice."

He said there's no use putting your head in the sand.

"I ask everyone, what are you prepared to do to keep your job and protect your family's future? One thing is for sure: We have to fight now, not later." 

"We're not greedy people. We work very long hours and we're very dedicated. We just want to be treated fairly. We're not asking for anything more."



State Contract Timeline: A Refresher

2014

- Rauner runs for office, vowing to "take a strike and shut down the government" in order to "re-do everybody's contract."

2015

- Rauner takes office, issues unconstitutional executive order to eliminate fair share fees.
- Contract negotiations begin for nearly 40,000 state employees. AFSCME attempts to bargain but Rauner shows no interest in compromise.
- AFSCME supports fair arbitration bill in attempt to reach settlement without a strike.
- Regional rallies show solidarity among state workers across the state.

2016

- Rauner walks out of negotiations on January 6, falsely claims the parties are at impasse and threatens to impose his final offer.
- More than 10,000 members of AFSCME and other unions rally against Rauner's harmful agenda in Springfield.
- Administrative law judge rules no impasse on wages, health care, but Rauner's state labor board rules there is an impasse over subcontracting, opening door for Rauner to impose terms.
- State employees hold Day of Action at worksites across Illinois.
- AFSCME appeals labor board impasse decision and seeks stay. Court halts Rauner's attempts to unilaterally impose terms while the union's appeal is pending.

2017

- Rauner rejects offer of compromise when AFSCME proposes a new settlement framework.
- AFSCME members vote by an overwhelming 81% to authorize strike if necessary.
- Appellate court rules to keep stay in place, blocking Rauner's attempt to immediately impose his terms.
- Rauner tries and fails to include massive cuts to state group health insurance program in the state budget.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- AFSCME's appeal in appellate court. The briefing schedule is likely to stretch at least into late December, followed by oral arguments in 2018.
- Either party could appeal outcome to state Supreme Court. A final decision may not come until late 2018.

Rauner still courting fiscal instability

After budget deal, governor drags his feet



In July the General Assembly gave Illinois its first real budget in two years when it overrode Gov. Rauner's veto of the FY 18 budget plan. But months later, the governor has delayed spending, racked up more debt and threatened additional cuts to critical services.

Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza has repeatedly taken Rauner to task for his lack of action since the budget was enacted. She urged the governor

to issue bonds to pay the state's debt with a lower interest rate, but for months he refused.

"Right now we're paying \$2 million a day for the gover-

nor's inaction," Mendoza said in August. "This is money that will never go toward early education, to our public universities, toward job creation or to our struggling social service providers. Stalling on the bonds is fiscally irresponsible and taxpayers should be outraged.

"Refinancing our debt at a much lower interest rate—just like any sensible homeowner with a high mortgage rate would do—will provide payment for services rendered to thousands of people across the state and save Illinois taxpayers billions of dol-

"A billionaire with nine estates doesn't know what it's like to have to struggle and worry that your child won't receive the help she needs."

lars over the life of the bonds."

Finally the governor buckled and said he would refinance Illinois' now \$16 billion bill backlog. Mendoza said she hoped to work with the Governor's Office of Management and Budget as quickly as possible to bond the debt.

Starved service providers

BONDING IS ONLY ONE AREA where the governor's office has been slow to act.

"When Rauner announced that he would refinance the bill backlog, he menacingly said that he would have to make half a billion dollars in cuts," said AFSCME Council 31 Public Policy Director Anne Irving. "This is after many human service agencies have had to cut programs, turn people away and even close their doors due to the two-year budget stalemate."

What's more, Irving said that many nonprofit agencies that received new or renewed funding in the budget have not yet received their contracts.

When Rauner's office finally said that it would sign contracts with groups who received funding to pay for critical services, like autism and epilepsy programs, they said many services would get five percent less than what the budget promised.

"What a lot of people and agencies don't realize is that the legislature appropriates the money," Irving said, "but the governor's executive powers include the ability to spend or not spend that money. Rauner has decided not to spend it."

Many lawmakers are incensed.


A week after announcing that he was launching a new task force to address the opioid epidemic plaguing the state, Rauner's office indicated that it would not spend more than a million budget dollars allocated for a triage center in the Rockford region that serves victims of the drug crisis.

"We have a heroin epidemic," said State Rep. Litesa Wallace. "I supported the budget because it funded services we need in our area. With a fully funded budget in hand, this is an act of cruelty on the part of Bruce Rauner."

"Rauner shows no sign of stopping his harmful, politically-driven budget games," Irving said. "A billionaire with nine estates doesn't know what it's like to have to struggle and worry that your child won't receive the help she needs."

There are no winners

THE AUTISM PROGRAM OF Illinois has been waiting for funding from the state for more than two years. After Rauner took office, the organization went through two rounds of staff layoffs. Finally it shut down altogether in June.

Promised \$4 million in the new budget, the organization has yet to reopen its doors. 

Rauner rewrites history

Two years ago, Gov. Rauner drastically reduced low-income families' access to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), cutting services for 30,000 children.

In late September, Rauner announced that the Illinois Department of Human Services would broaden access to CCAP, saying that 16,000 more children will now have access to child care each month.

Rauner said he was "proud to stand with families who are working two or three jobs just to make a living."

Child care advocates were quick to set the record straight, saying the damage Rauner inflicted on the families and children who were denied access to child care is irreparable.

"When Gov. Bruce Rauner first implemented the limits to the Child Care Assistance Program, every expert in the field, including the then-director of the program, predicted disaster. And they were right," said SEIU Healthcare Illinois Vice President Brynn Seibert. "[And now] his administration continues to implement back-door cuts."

Fighting layoffs in Cook County

A FSCME members in Cook County were part of a grassroots groundswell that helped block a vote to repeal the county's new tax on sweetened beverages. The repeal motion was sent to committee, but is likely to be back on the County Board calendar soon.

The penny-per-ounce tax on sweetened beverages is essential to fill a gaping hole in the county's budget and prevent hundreds of layoffs of county employees.

"Eight county commissioners along with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle did the right thing in voting for the tax," AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Helen Thornton said. "Now we have to make sure they continue protecting county services and preventing unnecessary layoffs in the face of pressure

and threats from the soda industry."

Commissioner Richard Boykin and others are stoking opposition to the tax, without offering alternative solutions.


AFSCME Local 1111 member Mary Collins, a data entry operator at Cook County Hospital told the County Board at its September 13 meeting: "This issue is not just about our jobs. We need our livelihood that's for sure, but without us, what will happen to the patients?"

The Cook County Board will adopt its FY 19 budget

later this fall. If the pop tax is repealed, there will be a gaping hole to fill, with the threat of layoffs looming large for Cook County employees.

Commissioners who say the pop tax should be repealed have thus far failed to offer any alternative revenue proposals to fill that hole, instead calling for cuts (i.e. layoffs) in county government.

The revenues are all the more critical as union contracts for county employees expire on December 31. AFSCME's bargaining committee, which includes elected representatives from all 15 local unions representing Cook County employees, began negotiating with the county in July. The repeal of the pop tax would make those negotiations all the more challenging.

"Our Bargaining Committee is firm in its demand for a fair contract. We need the new revenues to help us achieve that goal," Thornton said. 

Misleading attacks on city of Chicago workers

The city of Chicago's Inspector General appears to have launched an all-out crusade against city employees in an attempt to pressure Mayor Emanuel to take a tough stance in union contract negotiations.

The OIG and his allies claim that city workers are "hiking" their salaries by working excessive overtime. The fact is that neither workers nor their unions order overtime; management does.

With so many vacancies in city government, managers often order overtime when critical work must be performed. AFSCME has called for adequate staffing to provide better services and reduce overtime costs.

Moreover, the OIG presented an inaccurate picture of employee wage increases in a recent report in which the

increases in the last AFSCME contract were purportedly compared to the rate of inflation. In reality, the report's calculations under-count inflation in that period and over-count the impact of the wage increases.

The OIG report also got it wrong on health care. Rather than costing the city more, union members have reduced costs to taxpayers by instituting a wellness program to provide disease management and coaching in exchange for stable employee health care contributions.

Negotiations for a new

AFSCME contract with the city of Chicago got underway in July, but have been moving slowly because of staff changes on the city's negotiating team. The AFSCME Bargaining Committee includes elected representatives from the six AFSCME local unions representing city employees.

AFSCME called for adequate staffing to reduce overtime costs.

"We're determined to get these negotiations moving again and to reach a settlement as quickly as possible," said Mike Newman, Council 31 deputy director and the union's chief negotiator. 

PENSION ELECTIONS

Vote Kevin Ochalla for Cook County Pension Fund Trustee

AFSCME Council 31 recommends Kevin Ochalla for the open trustee seat representing Cook County employees in this month's pension fund election.

Kevin Ochalla has been a Cook County employee for more than 14 years, serving as an Assistant Public Defender in the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender. He is the president of AFSCME Local 3315, which represents employees in the Public Defender's Office.

Cook County employees can vote by mail or in person. To vote by mail, return the mail ballot request form found in your election packet to the Pension Fund right away. You will then be sent a ballot in the mail. When your ballot arrives, mark it for Kevin Ochalla and mail it back to the fund. Mail ballots must be received by October 25.

In-person voting will take place Wednesday, Oct. 25 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Room 885 of the Cook County Building (118 N. Clark Street) in Chicago.

Vote Verna Thompson for City of Chicago MEABF Trustee

The 2017 Trustee Election for the Municipal Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund of Chicago is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 27. AFSCME Council 31 is recommending Verna Thompson for the open seat representing employees.

Verna Thompson has been a Chicago Traffic Management Authority employee for 12 years. She is a member of SEIU Local 73, which represents over 7,000 employees in the Chicago Public Schools, as well as some 2,000 city of Chicago employees. Verna Thompson has served as a union steward at SEIU for 11 years and has been a member of her union's contract bargaining team.

Voting is only done in-person on Friday, Oct. 27 from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at 321 N. Clark Street (24th Floor Conference Center) in Chicago.

The AFSCME Local 416 picket at IYC–St. Charles on August 28 drew widespread media attention. These are the stories told there by three employees.

Andrew Pieske Juvenile Justice Specialist

In January I was assaulted by a youth. I was punched repeatedly so hard I suffered a concussion.

Criminal justice was my major in college so this is the field I wanted to go into. But on the job we are not adequately trained to deal with assaults. If we push back because we fear for our safety or our lives, we will be out of a job.

I was off work for three months because of headaches, neck and back pain. The union referred me to a counselor because I wanted to go back being comfortable in the work environment and in control of my emotions and reactions. I put in a lot of effort to recover, but I am never going to feel the same way on the job.

There were consequences for me but it seems like there were no consequences for the youth.

It's almost like the Department of Juvenile Justice sets us up. They don't give the youth consequences that will make them think twice before assaulting staff. It's like management doesn't care about staff safety.

Ashley Landrus Juvenile Justice Specialist

Last year I was working with a nurse who was dispensing medication to the youths. I turned the key to one youth's door. He was waiting to attack.

He started punching me in the face, neck and head. He hit me so hard he punched me to the ground and was still punching me.

The nurse who was with me was screaming. There was one other staff person on the unit, who tackled the youth off of me and radioed for additional help, and then together we restrained the youth.

I was taken to the ER. I had torn the AC tendons in my right shoulder and had to complete physical therapy and work conditioning. I was off work for six months.

But there are no consequences for youths who commit assaults.

Maria Johnson Becker Educator

I have been a teacher for 10 years, and have always focused on at-risk youth. Because I love working with that population, I took a job at IYC–St. Charles as a special education teacher.

I have a good rapport with my students. But there are real problems with youth who assault staff.

I have been off work since I experienced my second serious assault earlier this summer.

That day I stepped out of the classroom and as I turned to go back into the room, one of the new youths came at me and punched me right out. I was punched in the face three times to my understanding, but after the first punch I fell straight back and hit my head so I only remember the first punch.

I am still off work because I still have pain and swelling in my face and neck, and headaches. I have post-concussion syndrome which can last up to a year. The state's workers comp system is so slow I am still waiting for physical therapy to start. I'm seeing a psychologist for PTSD for both this assault and a sexual assault I experienced in January, when a youth in my classroom grabbed me in between my legs so hard I had contusions.

I am the insurance provider for my family, so it is imperative I go back to work. And I do love serving these youth. But it makes me mad that the administration is not taking appropriate measures to protect staff.

Because of my assault—and many others—teachers are leaving and we already have too few educators on staff.

DJJ must act to stop these assaults.



Members of AFSCME Local 416 protest unsafe working conditions at Illinois Youth Center at St. Charles on August 28.

“We’re not safe”

Violence escalates in Illinois correctional facilities

A FSCME is demanding action in response to rising violence and staff assaults at Illinois correctional facilities throughout the state. Reports of attacks are near constant.

In one weekend in September, three staff members were assaulted at Western Illinois Correctional Center and an officer was badly injured at East Moline Correctional Center.

At EMCC, in a violent middle-of-the-night attack, an inmate repeatedly struck a correctional officer in the head with a rock. The officer was working alone on the unit and struggled to call for help on a faulty radio. When assistance finally arrived, the officer was on the ground and bleeding badly. She was rushed to a hospital for six staples to close her head wound.

At Western, an inmate punched two officers, knocking one to the ground and causing

injuries to both.

At many adult correctional facilities, the implementation of the “Rasho” court settlement regarding inmates with mental illness has led to a significant relaxation of essential security measures. As a result, over the past two years, incidents of inmate assaults on employees have jumped by 45 percent.

Employees at juvenile facilities are seeing the same kind of lax rule enforcement. Earlier this summer, juvenile justice specialists, educators and other frontline staff held a picket outside the Illinois Youth Center at St. Charles to call attention to a rash of staff assaults and youth-on-youth violence that has gone unaddressed by management.

Both the departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice have been shockingly resistant to address the increased violence. Although local unions at the facilities have made their concerns very clear, management has done little to fix the problems and people continue to get hurt.

AFSCME will keep pushing for improved staffing levels, better equipment, more training, and employee input on policies and procedures to ensure the safety of both employees and offenders at both adult and juvenile facilities.

“I started six years ago,” said Cody Dornes, a correctional officer who is president of AFSCME Local 46 at EMCC. “Since then, it seems like everything has changed about the inmates at East Moline—there’s more of them, and they’re more dangerous—but nothing has changed to make us safer. We need more staff, better training, and functional equipment to help prevent the next attack and to respond more quickly if and when it comes.”



Wealthy attack worker freedom

Newest Supreme Court case could ban fair share fees

Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 is a lawsuit that aims to take away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions to speak up for themselves and their communities. The billionaires and corporate special interests funding this case view unions as a threat to their power, so they are trying to get the U.S. Supreme Court to rig the system even more in favor of those already at the top.

What is this case really about?

This case is really about taking away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions to improve our lives and sustain our families. Real freedom is about more than making a living; it's also about safety on the job, affordable health benefits, having time to care for a loved one who's ill and dignity in retirement. The wealthy corporate special interests behind this case want to take away our freedom to join together in a union because they simply do not believe that working people should have the same freedoms as they do to negotiate a fair return on our work.

Who is behind this case?

Bruce Rauner originated this case in a lawsuit he filed against AFSCME Council 31 to try to weaken our union by banning Fair Share fees in state government. When the federal court said Rauner didn't have standing to bring such a suit, he found a lone state employee—Mark Janus—to allow the legal challenge to proceed in his name.

The suit is backed by the Liberty Justice Center (an arm of the Illinois Policy Institute) and the National Right to Work Foundation which is part of a network funded by corporate billionaires to use the U.S. legal system to rig the rules against the rights of everyday working people. For decades, the super-rich have used their massive fortunes to gain outsized influence in politics, chipping away at the progress people in unions have won for all working families. Now they want the highest court in the land to take away our freedom to come together to protect things our families need, like a living wage, retirement security, health benefits and the ability to care for loved ones.

What are fair share fees?

When employees in a legally defined bargaining unit at a particular workplace have chosen to be represented by a union, the union becomes the legal representative for collective bargaining matters. The union is required by law to represent and negotiate on behalf

of all of these workers—and all the workers receive the wage increases, benefits and workplace rights that the union is able to achieve.

Some workers may not want to be a member of the union—and they are not required to do so—but all workers are required to contribute to the cost of representation, whether through membership dues or a “fair share” fee. Because all the workers enjoy the benefits, job security and other protections that the union negotiates, it's only fair that everyone chip in for the cost of that representation.

Is anyone ever forced to join a union or pay dues or fees that go to political candidates?

No. The simple truth is that no one is required to join a union and no one is required to pay any fees that go to political candidates. A bargaining unit employee who does not want to be a union member or does not want to contribute toward electing candidates who support working families can choose to be a fair share feepayer—and pay a fee that is calculated to exclude any political expenditures. This is already the law of the land—and nothing in this case will change that.

What is the real impact of the Janus case?

By outlawing fair share fees, employees who refuse to join the union can still benefit from the gains that the union makes but will not pay anything toward the cost of union representation. The wealthy elite behind this case want to drain unions of resources so that working people will not have a powerful voice. When working people have the freedom to speak up together through unions, we make progress together that benefits everyone. We are a nation of people that stand up for our rights, but if the billionaires and corporate CEOs behind this case get their way, they will take away the freedom of working people to come together in a strong union and build power to fight for a better future for ourselves, our families, our communities and our country. 🏹

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE PARK

On Monday, August 21, the moon moved between the sun and Earth, blocking the sun's light and casting its shadow below.

A total solar eclipse is only visible from a small area of the planet, but this one made Southern Illinois a prime viewing destination. AFSCME members working for the region's parks, universities and local governments welcomed excited eclipse watchers from across the state, the country and even the world.

Preparing for the darkness

Giant City State Park sits on 4,000 acres in Jackson and Union counties—and right in the path of totality.

Chris Treece, a member of AFSCME Local 1048, has been a site technician there for seven years. Using the Upward Mobility program, he transferred to the park after 12 years in forensics at Choate Mental Health Center.

The change of pace suits him very well and as one of only two site techs at the popular park, Treece is a very busy man. He does everything from maintenance, construction and road repair to writing camping permits, assisting hunters and helping people who are lost or overheated. He also tends food plots for wildlife, doing a bit of farming and a lot of forestry work.

He never knows where his days will lead, Treece said: "You may have a plan, but the park will change it."

The staff at Giant City worked and planned for the eclipse for more than a year.

"And it was a good thing we did," Treece said. "Every single campsite in all three grounds, all the cabins, every picnic area and viewing area were completely full. By visitor count, that was the most people that have been in the park at any given time all at once."

"Our major concern leading up to it was safety," said Jennifer Randolph-Bollinger, the park's resident nature expert. "We didn't want visitors getting overheated or people who aren't familiar with the grounds wandering off any of the bluffs, but there were no problems whatsoever."

Both Treece and Randolph-Bollinger were astounded. On busy weekends, hunting groups can get rowdy or hikers get lost. But on the day of the eclipse and in the busy week leading up to it not one thing went wrong.

"We had different agencies set up, including a global viewing system to monitor the eclipse and medical teams stationed with helipads on both sides of the park in case of gridlock or a medical emergency," Treece said. "We had mobile command posts for the police and DNR law enforcement at the park and up at the highway. If something were to go wrong, we were ready, and that preparation paid off."

A happy crowd

Randolph-Bollinger, also a Local 1048 member, has worked on staff at Giant City for four years. Her enthusiasm for nature and for the park is contagious.

"As the natural resources coordinator, I get to do all the fun stuff," Randolph-Bollinger said. "I'm the park nature nerd. I lead visitors on wildlife walks, give special presentations and coordinate the volunteer program."

"I'm still pinching myself because this is my dream job. I absolutely love it."

The staff wasn't sure exactly what to expect as they anticipated the big day, Randolph-Bollinger said, so they prepared for anything and everything.

"Being a part of the union offers a wonderful support system of employees who are dedicated to getting the job done," she said.



"We had a planning committee that met once a month and a great group of 30 volunteers. Everything was extremely organized and we thought of every detail to help people enjoy the park safely."

Some of the tasks took months. Volunteers made hundreds of signs with messages like "No Parking" and "This Way" arrows to direct traffic. Employees developed new publications to show people around the grounds and educate them on the park's attractions.

"The whole thing went off without a hitch. It was fabulous," Randolph-Bollinger said. "I think what made it so successful was the people. I spoke with guests from Canada, France, England, Spain, from all over the world and all over the United States. Everybody was happy and inquisitive and thrilled to be here."

"Amazing"

Shortly after one o'clock in the afternoon, the park went dark.

"It was totality," Treece said. "There was a shining wedding ring around the sun, with the moon in front of it. It was so dark. But what struck me most was the people hooting and hollering and cheering. I stopped looking at the eclipse to look at the crowd. It was something else. It was quite a day."

"It's funny. I have a tendency to appreciate things that are on the ground, flora and fauna, and I wasn't that excited," Randolph-Bollinger confessed. "But it was amazing. I was looking up at the total eclipse and right then a Mississippi kite, a rare bird that nests in the park, flew directly over me as I was watching."

"The temperature changed, the way everything looked was so surreal. When the first burst of the sun came out from the shadow everybody cheered and it just gave you goose bumps. We were strangers, but all the oohs and ahs, all the reactions, were the same."


Visitors welcome

The park shocks visitors from central and northern Illinois who know their home state as flat and filled with cornfields, Randolph-Bollinger said.

"It's a really interesting ecosystem," she said, turning into the nature guide she loves to be. "More than 150,000 years ago—give or take—the Illinois glacier came through and stopped just north of Makanda. That's how we have these amazing sandstone bluffs, and swamps that you'd expect to find in Louisiana and Florida."

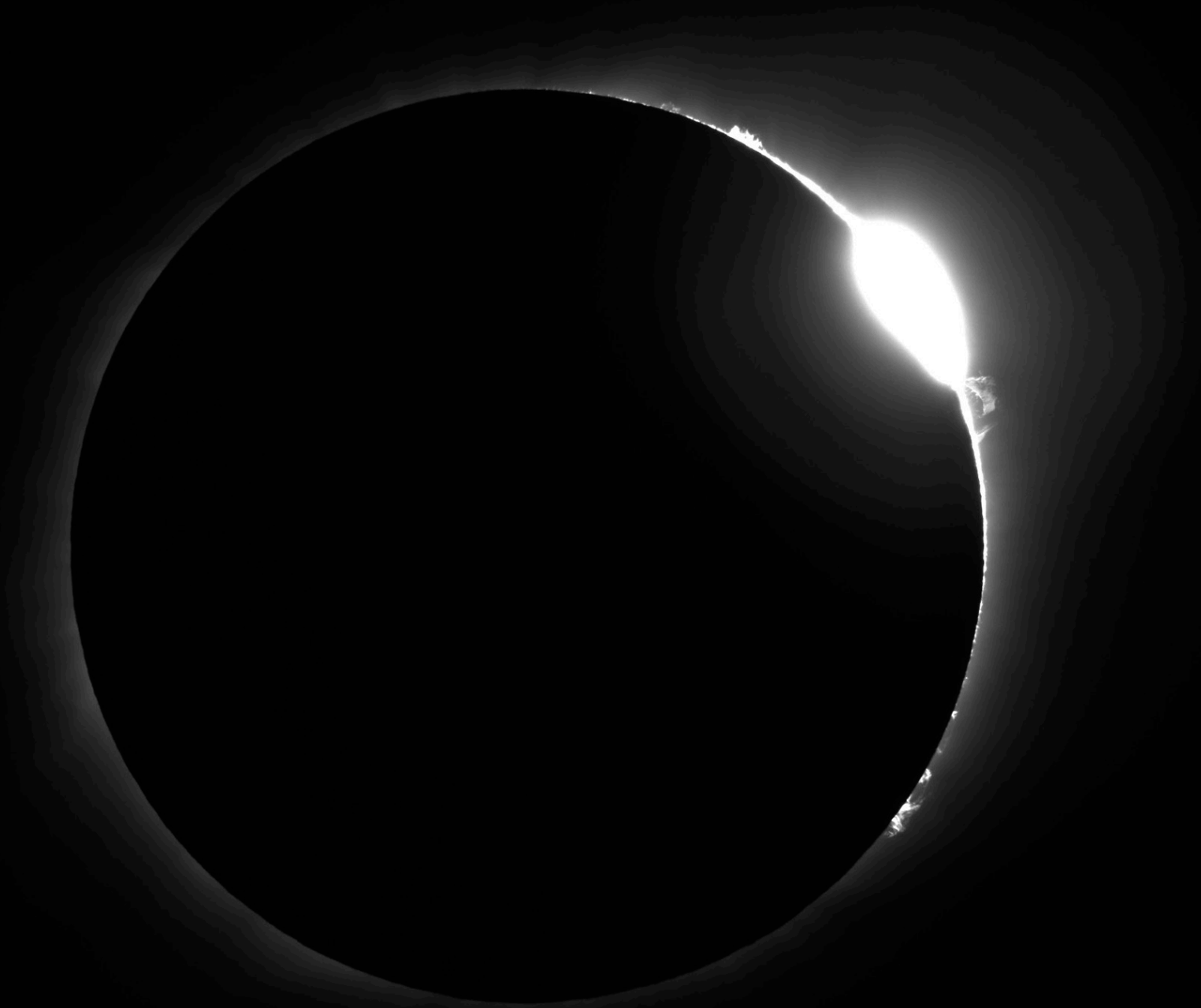
She said people who visited were astounded that the park was free to the public. They told her they would be back—and this time with their families and their kayaks.

In fact, October is the perfect time to visit, Randolph-Bollinger said, as the leaves change beautiful colors and the temperature cools.

"Come down soon and bring your family," she said. "I'll show you around." 

AFSCME members at Giant City State Park welcomed thousands for the Great American Solar Eclipse, the first total solar eclipse visible across North America in nearly a century.

RR



"The temperature changed,
the way everything looked was
so surreal. When the first burst
of the sun came out from the
shadow everybody cheered and
it just gave you goose bumps."



A group of volunteers helped Giant City State Park employees make the eclipse safe and exciting for visitors.

SHORT REPORTS

Union members block right-to-work in Missouri

MORE THAN 300,000 MISSOURIANS signed petitions demanding a public vote to repeal a new state right-to-work-for-less law, effectively blocking its implementation.

Proponents of so-called right-to-work (RTW) laws simply want to drain unions of resources so that working people don't have a powerful voice. For decades, Republicans have tried to turn Missouri into an RTW state, which means workers can avoid paying dues while still benefiting from union representation.

"When working people have the freedom to speak up together through unions, we make progress together that benefits everyone," said AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch. "We are a nation of people that fight for our rights and that's just what these Missouri workers are doing."

Making membership dues an option instead of an obligation weakens unions' power and depresses wages and benefits in states that have RTW laws. In these states, workers are paid \$6,109 less annually than workers in states that uphold the right to organize. Workers in RTW states have lower rates of health care coverage and pay larger shares of their health insurance premiums.

"This is our living," said Tamara Maxwell, a union member who works at Kansas City's Ford assembly plant. She joined hundreds of other workers rallying at the Missouri Capitol the day they delivered the petitions to block the law. "We should be in control of that, not one person just signing it away."

Kentucky pensions under fire

KENTUCKY'S REPUBLICAN governor Matt Bevin has called a special legislative session on public employee pensions. Teachers and state employees are deeply concerned that he

will push to eliminate their pension plans and switch to a 401(k)-style system.

Bevin attacked public pensions while he campaigned for governor in 2015, saying, "We have to move to a defined-contribution plan, period."

In order to advance his agenda, he commissioned a financial consulting group called PFM to review Kentucky's pension system in a series of reports. Unsurprisingly, the firm's reports conclude with a recommendation for the state to close the pension system, place new hires in a 401(k) plan and make other big changes like increasing the retirement age for employees.

Similar to Illinois, Kentucky's public pension funds are troubled due to decades of underfunding by elected officials. Public employees are contributing to their retirement with every paycheck but rather than address the state's deficit with steady payments, Kentucky has kicked the can down the road to the point of crisis.

Moving employees into defined-contribution plans shifts the risk onto workers who no longer have the protection of a low-risk group fund.

Pension experts say that closing tax loopholes for wealthy individuals and corporations while establishing a pension stabilization fund would be a smarter move.

National policy resource center Good Jobs First found that Kentucky gives away as much in tax loopholes and economic development subsidies as it is required to pay into public pensions annually.

Convention bound

HUNDREDS OF AFSCME MEMBERS will gather at the union's biennial convention in Springfield from October 19 to 21. Local union delegates will vote on resolutions that will guide Council 31's work and vision for the next two years and attend workshops and plenary panels with guest speakers to include International President Lee Saunders and Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza.

This year's convention will be especially critical in laying the groundwork for Election



Missouri workers marching at the state Capitol after successfully blocking an anti-worker "Right to Work" law.

2018. Attendees will grapple with big questions: With Illinois at a crossroads, what kind of state do we want to be and how do we work to make it happen?

Gov. Rauner is up for reelection. He wants to strip public employees of their union rights, double employee health care costs and freeze wages, and open the door to zero-accountability privatization.

AFSCME's vision for Illinois is a state where working people have the freedom to form strong unions and public employees are supported as they provide the vital services that our communities rely on. Illinois should be a state in

which the tax system ensures that the wealthy pay their share, helping foster prosperity that's shared by all.


Knowledge is power: The AFSCME Family Scholarship

LOOKING FOR FINANCIAL support for college? Each year the AFSCME Family Scholarship Program provides selected high school students with \$2,000 scholarships renewable for up to four years if recipients remain enrolled in a full-time course of study. The scholarship may be used for any field

of study.

Graduating high school seniors whose parent, legal guardian or financially responsible grandparent is a full dues-paying AFSCME member are eligible.

At the time the scholarship is awarded, eligible candidates must be enrolled in a full-time degree program either at an accredited four-year institution or at a two-year institution that will transfer credits to a four-year institution, and have taken the SAT or the ACT.

You can find more information about the 2018 AFSCME Family Scholarship at afscme.org/members/scholarships. The deadline to apply is December 31. 

Direct service providers win larger paychecks

State finally implements hard-won raises for community disability workers

Two months after the Illinois General Assembly overrode Governor Rauner's veto to enact a state budget that includes a 75-cents-an-hour wage increase for direct service providers (DSPs) who work with individuals with disabilities, there is finally movement towards implementation.

The Illinois Department of Human Services in September published an information bulletin explaining to employers the details of the rate changes intended to comport with the law and enact the raises.

Community disability agencies have gone nine years without any increase in state funding, creating a near catastrophic workforce crisis. DSPs are paid poverty wages, which has resulted in rapid turnover and dangerously high levels of vacancies.

Coalition pushes for implementation

AFSCME HELPED BUILD A COALITION of employees, employers and advocates to press legislators for a \$15 per hour base

AFSCME helped build a coalition that successfully secured funding for DSP pay raises in the state budget.

wage for disability workers. Despite a tight budget that cuts many programs, a lobbying effort forged by union members won funding for DSP pay raises in the spending plan adopted in July.

It was a big win for workers and their ongoing fight for a living wage—but the Rauner Administration refused to take the necessary steps to assure disability agencies that the funds were coming. That kept agencies from implementing the raises.

So AFSCME and coalition partners went into action, contacting state agencies and the news media and engaging key lawmakers.

It worked.

The DHS advisory bulletin to community disability employers explained how their rates will be adjusted for the wage increase and fringe benefit costs.

Negotiations underway

DHS DOESN'T REQUIRE PROVIDERS to certify how they spent the new money, expecting each agency to allocate funding in the best way to benefit staff and the individuals they support. Employees in community agencies who don't have union representation have no say in how their employers apportion the funding.

But in the 20 community disability agencies where employees are represented by AFSCME, local unions can negotiate with management to make sure the state funding for raises is distributed fairly.

Staff may still need to wait weeks or even months to see the increase in their paychecks. But whenever the raises are given, they will be retroactive to hours worked since August 1.

Fight for fair wages continues

"A RAISE OF 75 CENTS IS NOT the pay increase that frontline disability workers deserve for their difficult work, and it's not enough to adequately support their own families," AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Joe Bella said. "But it is the first increase in state reimbursement in nine years, and a particularly remarkable



Legislators overrode Gov. Rauner's veto and enacted a state budget that includes a 75-cent wage increase for DSPs.

achievement in a budget that made deep cuts to many other important programs."

AFSCME members won't

stop now, Bella said. Along with the coalition they have built, DSPs will continue to campaign in the next legis-

lative session to pass a bill requiring a base salary of \$15 an hour for their critical work. 🦋

DCFS investigator brutally beaten on the job

A DCFS CHILD PROTECTIVE investigator in the Sterling office was sent out at the end of the day on Friday, September 29 to check on the welfare of a child. When the investigator arrived, the child's father, Andrew Sucher, viciously attacked her, knocking her to the ground and repeatedly assaulting her about the head.

The DCFS investigator sustained very serious brain injuries as a result of the attack. She was airlifted to a hospital in Rockford where she underwent two surgeries. She

remained in a coma as On the Move went to press.

Out of concern for the family, the union is not releasing the employee's name at this time. AFSCME Local 448 President Kathy Lane requested prayers for this DCFS employee and fellow AFSCME member who was so gravely injured while protecting an endangered child.

Lane was with the family at the hospital throughout the night after the attack. An AFSCME Personal Support Program counselor was also

there to provide support and assistance.

"This brutal attack is a horrific reminder of the dangers that DCFS employees confront every day on the job," said AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch. "There must be a thorough review of agency policies, as well as a commitment to assure staffing levels that can protect at-risk children and the employees we count on to safeguard them."

The assailant was arrested, charged with aggravated battery and held on \$200,000 bond. 🦋

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



Michelle Smith, Christina Scott, Aaron Wallenfang, Regina Ziegler-Murray and Grace Brownfox are members of AFSCME Local 3716.



AFSCME Local 1372 members Scott Wilson and Larry Zink at work in Fulton County.

Progress for Peoria school bus drivers

MORE THAN 200 PEORIA school bus drivers in AFSCME Local 3716 won a new contract with raises, increased paid time off and other improved benefits.

Dawn Hoyle is the local's vice president. She has been transporting Peoria students to and from school for 24 years.

"I love my job. I love these children," she said. "But I want the district to treat us right and do what they should."

That's where the union comes in.

The bargaining team of Hoyle, President Bettina Williams, Treasurer Randy Shaw, Secretary Lynette Lee, executive board members Shonda Faulkner, Brian Russell, and Regina Ziegler Murray, and Staff Representative Tim Lavelle negotiated changes that

will put bus drivers' benefits more on par with other district employees.

"I'm proud because we acquired things that have existed in the district for more than 20 years in other departments, but that we weren't able to

"I love my job. I love these children. But I want the district to treat us right and do what they should."

get in previous negotiations," Hoyle said. "Now we have things we've never had before."

Things like personal days. Bettina Williams, president of

the local, said she's most proud of this win. "A lot of people have business to take care of and now they can do it," she said. She's been a school bus driver at the district for 16 years. A lot of the kids call her Miss B.

Hoyle agrees that this was important to Local 3716 members, saying it's a matter of respect. Before, employees had sick days but no personal days. Employees needing time off for something other than illness had no way to address it. Now the members have 10 sick days and two personal days to use throughout the school year.

"That's a big deal for us," Hoyle said. "We also got a decent increase in wages and acquired employer-paid life insurance. The district now pays for a \$25,000 policy for each employee."

"It's been a long road getting to where we are now and there are still things that could be better in the next contract,"

Hoyle said. "But I know we will get there with our union and the teamwork we put into it."

Fulton County Highway Department stands strong

AFSCME LOCAL 1372A IS small but mighty. In recent contract talks, they prevented a massive hike in insurance premiums by negotiating a much smaller bump and a significant pay raise.

Larry Zink has worked for Fulton County for nearly 30 years, but this was his first time on the bargaining committee. "We had a lot of guys retiring and I thought I needed to step up," Zink said.

Understanding that with the retirements will come turnover, Zink encouraged a younger member of the unit,

"The union gets you fair treatment, decent raises and good benefits so you're able to raise your family."

Scott Wilson, to join the bargaining team with him. Wilson and Zink teamed with Samuel Swickard and AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Randy Lynch.

Zink knows the importance of unions because he worked for the county for some time before he became part of the bargaining unit.

"I had two young boys

Continued on next page

Finally, fairness for Illinois schools

Law attempts to reduce longtime disparities between districts

Illinois has long had the most inequitable school funding system in the country, with schools relying heavily on local property taxes. Since 1997, schools received a flat rate from the state per student regardless of the needs of the student body or the resources of the community.

This unfair formula created deep disparities between wealthy and less-well-off communities throughout the state.

Now, thanks to years of work by legislative champions like Senator Andy Manar and Representative Will Davis, Illinois has a new funding formula that allows the state to prioritize school districts that need the help most, based upon student needs.

Familiar demands

THE ORIGINAL LEGISLATION TO enact this new funding formula, Senate Bill 1, was passed at the end of May. The General Assembly held the bill until the budget was settled to ensure Gov. Rauner's full attention.

Rauner immediately said he would veto the bill unless changes were made.

"It should be no surprise

to anyone that one of Rauner's demands was to limit collective bargaining rights for school district employees," AFSCME Council 31 Legislative Director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said.

Rauner also wanted to change the school privatization law that requires districts to meet accountability stan-

dards—including paying a comparable wage and benefit package—before they can outsource work done by public employees.

"The governor also wanted broad 'mandate relief' for school districts so they could, in effect, pick and choose which laws to abide by," Webb-Gauvin said.

When his demands weren't met, Rauner amendatorily vetoed the bill, creating a host of controversies.

Rauner forced to compromise

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, legislative leaders began their own negotiations and shaped a new bill—SB 1947—that was very similar to the original SB

1. Under growing public pressure, Rauner agreed to sign it, even though he got little of what he wanted.

There were no changes to collective bargaining. Rauner's goal of removing restrictions on privatization altogether was thwarted, but schools were allowed to privatize driver's education. There were also changes that weakened the state's physical education mandate, that had been designed to combat obesity.

The bill's major problem is a new tax credit for donations to private school scholarship funds. The law provides for \$75 million in tax cuts—75 cents for every dollar donated. Many see this as a back-door form of privatization


Manar said that he and

other Democrats put certain rules in place to ensure the plan is true to its goal of providing opportunities to needy students. They put a five-year cap on the tax credit and specified that it can only be used in lower-funded districts.

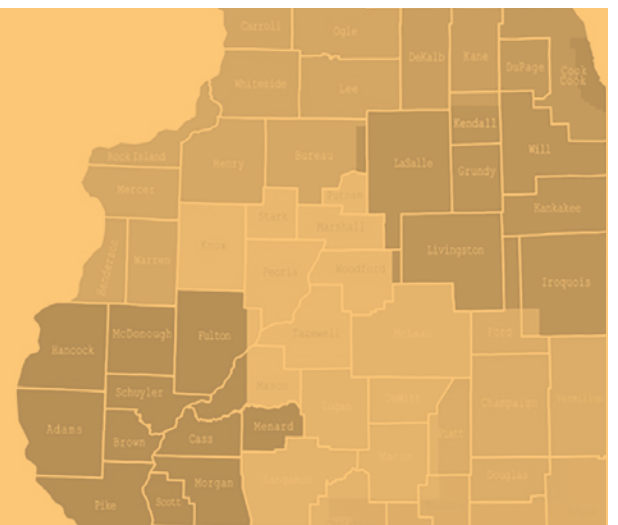
Phony baloney

AFTER THE LAW PASSED, RAUNER visited schools in a victory lap where he claimed credit for the compromise.

But Senator Manar expressed doubt that many would give much credit to Rauner, who was a major stumbling block to getting the measure passed.

"Voters know phony baloney when they see it," Manar said. 

Illinois has a new school funding formula that allows the state to prioritize districts that need help most, based upon student needs.



ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

Continued from previous page

and I saw the union members getting raises that I just wasn't getting," Zink said. "After I came under the union contract, I got a wage increase of about \$2.40 an hour. I have a lot of respect and understand what our union does for us because I've lived it. The union gets you fair treatment, decent raises and good benefits so you're able to raise your family."

Zink is a truck driver and laborer for the county. He repairs and maintains roads, replaces drainage pipes and does other work that's essential to the farming community: "If the farmers can't get their product to market, we're all going to be in trouble in this county."

Negotiations got off to a pretty rough start.

The eight members of the local had been paying a flat 28 percent of their health insurance premiums and the county picked up the rest.

"At our first negotiating meeting they wanted 50 percent, which we couldn't allow," Zink said. "That would have set us back too far."

The county was also offering raises of just 1.5 and 1.75 percent for two years. AFSCME members wanted a four-year deal with 4-percent wage increases.

"We were going back and forth and not getting anywhere," Zink said. Eventually the union called in a federal mediator who helped move both parties from the standstill.

"He was a good go-between," Zink said. "He presented both sides in a way that I think helped us all think a little deeper about the concerns of both parties."

In the end, the county offered a 3.5-percent raise for both years of a two-year agreement if the employees agreed to pay 33 percent of the health premiums, plus a \$500 signing bonus. The deal was made.

"I work for the taxpayer," Zink said. "And I want to do a good job for them. But I also want to make a living."

Southwood Interventions makes progress

AFSCME LOCAL 1537 MEMBERS at Southwood Interventions won wage increases and

a signing bonus in their recent contract negotiations, significantly boosting the income of members on the lower end of the wage scale.

The income boost will mean a world of difference.

The contract covers about 60 members who work and serve clients in the substance abuse treatment center on the south side of Chicago.


Half the bargaining unit will see their wages go up as much as 25 percent over three years. The income boost will mean a world of difference to those AFSCME members who

were previously making very low wages.

Craig Porter, the local president, said negotiations were fairly smooth, but did get a little heated at points.

"We managed to come up with a contract and won 2-percent raises for each of the three years," Porter said. "We'd like to see that percent come up next time around and we are going to continue to fight the fight."

Porter is in his 22nd year as a counselor for substance abuse and mental health. He also helps get clients admitted into treatment.

"My favorite part of my job is helping people start the process of changing their lives, providing a path for them to start making changes for themselves and their families," Porter said. "But ultimately they have to make the choice to get help for themselves." 

Election season getting underway

Candidates for statewide office are already gearing up for the November 2018 election. Many first face a tough primary election on March 20.

The Democratic candidates for governor have all chosen their running mates. State Representative Litesa Wallace will join Senator Daniel Biss' ticket. Chris Kennedy chose Chicago nonprofit leader Ra Joy. Chicago Alderman Ameya Pawar's running mate is Cairo mayor Tyrone Coleman.

J.B. Pritzker announced that State Representative Juliana Stratton would join his campaign and run for

lieutenant governor. Stratton was elected to office in 2016, ousting Gov. Rauner's ally Ken Dunkin in a heated primary that AFSCME members helped her win.

Once union members have had a chance to learn about the candidates, AFSCME Council 31's decision to make an endorsement in the Democratic primary will be made by rank-and-file leaders of local unions statewide. Regional PEOPLE

meetings will be held in December or early January.

Rauner is poised to fight

RAUNER IS READY FOR WHO-ever he will face in the general election. Thanks to his personal fortune and millionaire friends, the governor's campaign fund is massive.

Rauner has made it clear that his objective is to drive down wage and benefit standards for public employees and wipe out their unions through any means possible.

That's why the AFSCME Council 31 Executive Board has voted to get an early start in the effort to defeat Bruce Rauner in 2018. Volunteers will receive special training to knock on


doors, make phone calls and have one-on-one conversations with friends and family.

This election will mean the difference between four more years of Bruce Rauner's hateful, anti-union onslaught and the possibility of better days for working people and their families.

McCann will face challenger

REPUBLICAN SENATOR SAM McCann will face a primary opponent this March. A Rauner-recruited candidate recently announced that he was circulating petitions to get on the ballot and people are making phone calls to precinct committeemen at the behest of the governor.

This election could mean better days for working people.

"There are plenty of Republicans who don't agree with the governor's direction for the state, but Sam is the only one who will stand up to Rauner," said AFSCME Council 31 Legislative Director Joanna Webb-Gauvin. "Rauner is targeting McCann because he isn't afraid to put the needs of his constituents first." 

Universities suffer deep damage

Public universities in Illinois have been starving for resources for more than two years. The good news is that they were finally given funding for this fiscal year. The bad news is that because of Gov. Rauner's budget blockade, a lot of damage has already been done.

"Illinois public universities and community colleges are a \$16.1 billion economic engine that supports nearly 124,000 jobs and serves nearly 800,000 students every year," said University of Illinois Professor Robert Bruno.

"Faced with a \$660 million cut in state support, many institutions exhausted their financial reserves, raised tuition, experienced credit downgrades, cut programs, laid off workers, and reduced enrollment," he said. "Even with most funding now restored, damage has been done that will have a lasting impact on the state's economy."

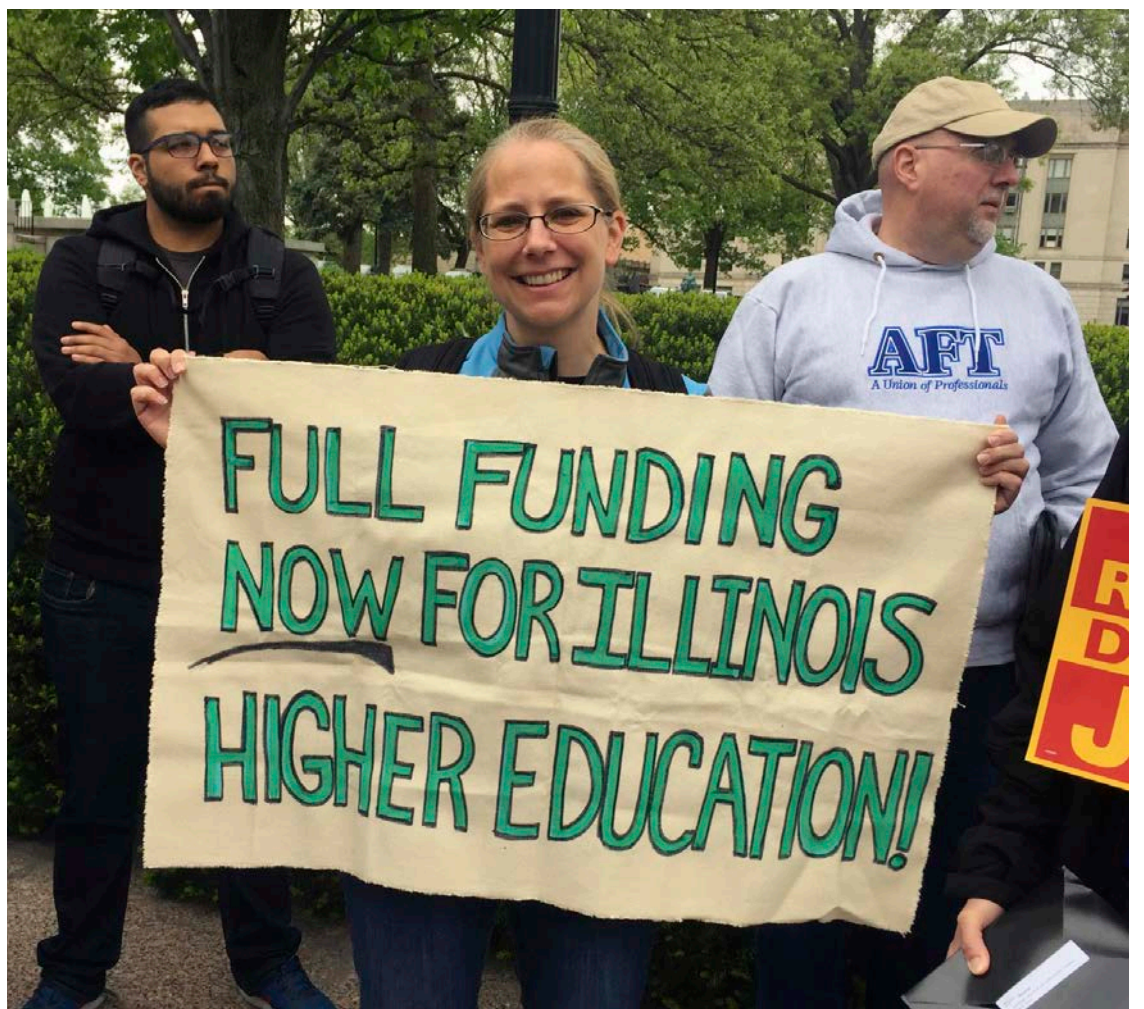
Bruno is the co-author of the study, "High-Impact Higher Education: Understanding the Costs of the Recent Budget Impasse in Illinois," conducted by the Illinois Eco-

nomics Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Because of the two-year budget impasse, the study found, Illinois' public higher education system saw enrollment drop by more than 72,000 students. Nearly 7,500 jobs were lost and the state's economy lost out on roughly \$1 billion per year in revenue.

The University of Illinois used to be ranked 44th among universities nationwide by U.S. News, but slipped to number 52 this year.

Enrollment has dropped in every region of the state. Officials at Southern Illinois University/Carbondale said their enrollment for the fall was down almost nine percent from last year, with a nearly 20 percent drop in their fresh-




Cris Joe, a member of AFSCME Local 1989 at Northeastern Illinois University, protests cuts to Illinois' public higher education system.

man class.

At the same time, in-state tuition and fees at public universities have gone up by an average of seven percent and as

much as 14 percent since Rauner took office.

While these schools are finally getting their money for the current fiscal year, they are

still owed funding from fiscal year 2017 and it's not clear when or if they're going to get paid. 

RETIREE NOTES

Retirement security at risk

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S federal budget proposal includes serious threats to retirement security.

Trump would end Medicare as we know it, turning the program into a voucher system. In addition to cutting Medicare by \$487 billion and hiking participant premiums by 25 percent, the budget ends Medicare's guaranteed benefits. This means that beneficiaries would receive vouchers to purchase insurance, but those vouchers would not be sufficient to cover premiums, deductibles or co-pays. Once the voucher is spent, seniors will have to pay 100 percent of their medical costs until the next voucher is distributed.

Trump's budget also guts Medicaid, which provides health insurance for the elderly, the poor and people with disabilities, making \$1 trillion in cuts.

Social Security is slashed by \$5.4 billion and any disabled individual who attempts to work part-time in order to supplement their income is penalized.

The budget also guts non-defense discretionary spending by \$893 billion, cutting programs vital to seniors such as Meals on Wheels, job training, senior centers and caregiver support.

One thing Trump's budget doesn't do is close corporate tax loopholes or require the wealthy to pay their fair share in taxes.

In early September, federal lawmakers passed a continuing resolution that would keep the government open until December. The U.S. House of Representatives passed their own spending package with cuts that aren't quite as steep as the president's proposals, but would still cause irreparable harm to retirees.

AFSCME says the budget shouldn't be balanced on the backs of retirees and working families.

Call your legislators. Tell them to do the right thing and kill this heartless budget.

Celebrating Labor Day

RETIREES TOOK TO THE street this Labor Day to walk for labor rights across the state. AFSCME retirees honored the social and economic achievements of American workers and the tradition of hard work by attending Labor Day celebrations and parades.

"Labor Day is about the future," said AFSCME Retirees Sub-Chapter 59 President Dorothy Asbury, who has walked in the Alton Labor Day Parade for 15 years. "We need to reflect on our past while working toward a strong future. That's why I walk."

Other steadfast parade walkers include members of AFSCME Retirees Sub-Chapter 86, who decorate a truck every year for the Springfield Labor



AFSCME Retirees Sub-Chapter 59 President Dorothy Asbury on Labor Day.

Day Parade.

"Labor Day honors the people who fought and earned the workplace rights we have today," Sub-Chapter President Don Todd said. "Labor activists dedicated their entire lives to protect their brothers and sisters in the workplace, and I am honored to honor them this day."

If you are interested in getting active with AFSCME retirees, visit afscme31.org/retirees for information on sub-chapter meetings in your area.



Members of AFSCME Retirees Sub-Chapter 93 meet in Marion.


Retiree Convention in Springfield

THE 16TH BIENNIAL AFSCME Illinois Retirees Chapter 31 Convention is fast approaching and members from across the state are gearing up for the meeting. This year, retirees will gather and share ideas

from October 17 through 19 in Springfield.

Retirees will elect their Chapter 31 Executive Board and attend informative workshops about member involvement, effective activism and more. Participants will also listen to motivating speakers who will discuss the future of labor and how AFSCME plans to fight for retirement secu-

rity.

"It always amazes me how many people from all over the state come for our convention," John Tilden, Sub-Chapter 66 president, said. "There are so many people from so many different backgrounds, and they are all extremely enthusiastic about the labor movement and AFSCME. Convention is a huge motivator." 



Retiring Soon?

Don't Just Sit Back...

Join AFSCME Chapter 31 Retirees!

You worked hard to earn a decent retirement—but the fight for retirement security isn't over. Pensions, Medicare, Social Security—they're all under attack by the wealthy and powerful.

Retirees Chapter 31 is helping to lead the battle to protect retirement security. Be part of that fight! Dues are just \$2.10 per month and will be deducted directly from your pension check.

Visit afscme31.org/retirees/join for more information.



AFSCME members protect public health, environment

Proper wastewater treatment prevents disease and pollution



As chief operator at the Village of Fox Lake’s Northwest Regional Water Reclamation Facility, AFSCME Local 3909 member John Thompson helps oversee the treatment of 12 million gallons of wastewater every day—keeping the lakes and rivers of northwest Lake County clean and safe.

In his 24 years at the facility, that’s 105 billion gallons of clean wastewater.

Wastewater treatment facilities are designed to ensure that wastewater from toilets, showers, washing machines and sinks is treated before being released into the local environment. Failure to treat wastewater can result in dangerous levels of pollution in lakes and rivers.

The northwest Lake County area began treating its wastewater in 1979 in response to high levels of pollution in the surrounding lakes. Today the facility meets the requirements established by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and serves the communities of Fox Lake, Hainesville, Lake Villa, Round Lake, Round Lake Beach, Round

Lake Heights, Round Lake Park, Volo and the County of Lake.

Ensuring clean water

Thompson is certified by the IEPA as a Class 1 Waste Water Treatment Works Operator. He said he’s proud of his long tenure at the plant and enjoys his work.

“I like the changing technology,” Thompson said. “I like being outside. I like the camaraderie when we’re all doing projects together.”

And there is plenty to do at this sprawling regional facility that when pushed to its max can treat up to 30

“We are basically recycling water in a way that keeps us all safe and healthy.”

million gallons of water in one day. The facility was expanded in 2013 to address nutrient removal, improve energy efficiency and increase capacity so that it would be equipped to handle anticipated development over the next two decades.

Water is piped through several treatment processes, in distinct buildings and areas of the facility, that break down and remove bacteria, hair, paper, stones, sand, eggshells, seeds and other materials.

After about 24 hours, it comes out clean on the other side, keeping drinking

water safe and protecting wildlife and humans from bacteria like E. coli.

“We clean the water so that there’s no disease threatening the public,” Thompson said. “We keep the environment clean: the fish, the lakes and the river. We are basically recycling water in a way that keeps us all safe and healthy.”

Uniting for fairness

“We first formed a union because we had a hard time bargaining with the county board members many years ago,” Thompson said.

“We knew we had to value ourselves because without our work, toilets won’t flush. Disease would be spreading throughout our communities and there would be huge algae blooms in the water with dead fish floating to the surface,” Thompson said.

“Being a part of a union means we have more power and we have the ability to research, checking the reports and the village’s money to ensure that we’re getting a fair deal.”

Thompson feels that too many people are unaware of what’s done at the wastewater treatment plant every day and how important the work is to public health.

“A lot of people don’t know what we do. They don’t understand,” Thompson said.

“It’s amazing to me that most people in the community have no idea that without us, they would be getting sick and their lakes and rivers would be really dangerous.”