



ON THE

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MOVE

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



Bargaining battles... and wins

**Throughout the state, AFSCME members
are standing up for fair contracts**

See pages 5, 6, 12

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rauner all wrong for working families

A new – and dangerous – brand of Republican



BY
HENRY BAYER

RAUNER WANTS TO BRING ANTI-UNION POLICIES TO ILLINOIS AND HE WANTS TO HELP HIMSELF AND HIS RICH FRIENDS IN THE PROCESS.

“We need to stop demonizing unions. You can disagree with AFSCME, you can disagree with the teachers, you can disagree with other public employee unions without demonizing unions as some who want to be governor are wont to do.”

IF YOU THINK THOSE ARE THE WORDS OF SOME PROGRESSIVE, PRO-UNION DEMOCRAT, GUESS AGAIN.

They're the words of Republican Jim Thompson, who occupied the Illinois governor's office from 1977 until 1991.

Thompson didn't make that statement because he was seeking the vote of union members. He made it in 2013, long after he left public office.

Then why did Thompson make that statement? His reasoning, again in his words:

“Without the public employees we wouldn't enjoy the life we do in the state of Illinois. We would not have the education of our children and grandchildren in the state of Illinois. We would not have a decent business climate in the state of Illinois without good, honest, hard-working public employees.”

When Thompson was inaugurated, there was no collective bargaining law for public employees in our state. There was an executive order, signed by his predecessor Dan Walker, a Democrat, which granted limited bargaining rights to state employees.

Thompson said he would honor the executive order and the contracts associated with it, and he did. And when a public employee collective bargaining bill was passed by the General Assembly, Governor Thompson signed it into law—and fully complied with it.

How far has the current Republican candidate for governor, Bruce Rauner, travelled from the legacy of his Republican Party predecessors?

Light years. Rauner has made the centerpiece of his

campaign an attack on public employees and their unions. He calls union contributions to politicians “bribes” that have “bought” exorbitant salaries and benefits for public workers.

Rauner identifies with a different wing of the Republican Party. He sings the praises of former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, citing him as a “model.”

Daniels, like Thompson, was greeted by a collective bargaining executive order when he became governor. But unlike Thompson, Daniels rescinded that order on his first day in office, eliminating bargaining rights for tens of thousands of state employees with the stroke of a pen.

After pledging that he wouldn't support a so-called right-to-work law, Daniels reneged on his promise and signed legislation that requires unions to provide representation to employees but doesn't allow the unions to collect a fee for that representation.

Rauner wants to bring these same anti-union policies to Illinois – and he wants to help himself and his rich friends in the process.

When Rauner opposed the pension bills that gutted our benefits, it wasn't because he wanted to protect our retirement security. It's because the bills didn't go far enough – he'd like to place all public employees in risky 401(k)-style plans that guarantee no benefits to retirees, but do guarantee Rauner's money manager pals a fixed percentage of every dollar invested.

In the nearly four decades I've been with the union we had 26 years of Republican

governors followed by 14 years of Democrats.

We had our ups and downs with all of them. We endorsed members of both parties – and sometimes endorsed no one at all.

We fought with one or the other of them over wages, pensions, facility closures, budgets and a range of other issues.

Rauner too wants to cut our wages, slash our pensions, increase our insurance costs and reduce benefits for injured workers. He even wants to cut the minimum wage.

But he's not planning to be fighting our union over these issues – he wants to make sure we don't exist to make that fight.

In Bruce Rauner's ideal world, there will be no union to negotiate pay increases. Employees will be paid whatever the employer decides. If the legislature considers pension cuts, there'll be no union to lobby against it or to sue if an unconstitutional law is passed.

Can't happen here? Ask the state employees in Indiana who lost their bargaining rights, or in Wisconsin where, as a result of another of Rauner's “model” governors, Scott Walker, public employees at every level of government no longer have the right to collectively bargain over wages and benefits.

Mitch Daniels and Scott Walker waited until the polls closed to unveil their agendas, but Bruce Rauner's not waiting. He's made no secret of the fact that he wants to extinguish labor unions.

If we wake up with Bruce Rauner in the governor's mansion, we won't be able to say we didn't know what was coming.

We do know. The question is what will we do about it?

If union members don't spread the word about Rauner to their friends and neighbors and throughout their communities, who will?

If we as a union don't do it now, we won't be around to do it later.

On the Move

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Rauner won't discuss plans, but record speaks volumes

Bruce Rauner says he wants to run Illinois like a business – but what does that mean?

DON'T ASK HIM: RAUNER, THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE FOR GOVERNOR, HAS MADE A REGULAR habit of dodging questions about anything remotely controversial – including his past. He prefers to stick to vague talking points about “shaking up Springfield” and attacking public employee unions.

Fortunately, Rauner's shady business practices have left a long paper trail that makes it clear how he'd run Illinois – and how much the state would suffer under his watch.

Bad for the public, bad for employees

“THIS IS A GUY WHO'S GOT A LOT of money,” Council 31 Executive Director Henry Bayer said. “If you look at how he made it, you see it's been through unethical business practices.”

Many voters already know about Rauner's connection to Trans Healthcare (THI), which was created by Rauner's private equity firm, GTCR, and owned more than 200 nursing homes. THI imposed steep staffing cuts

and slashed operating costs, putting profits over the welfare of the elderly.

The results were tragic. In one home, a Florida woman died after falling 17 times, and a jury awarded her son \$1.2 billion. The family of a 92-year-old woman was awarded \$200 million after she fell to her death in a wheelchair at another THI facility.

Not as well-known is Rauner's connection to Cardinal Logistics, a trucking company owned by GTCR. The company's drivers sued after the Rauner-owned firm reclassified them as independent contractors in order to avoid paying into Social Security, unemployment and worker's compensation insurance and reimbursements for supplies, uniforms, and equipment – costs that would then be shouldered by drivers.

Ultimately, GTCR agreed to pay \$3.75 million in claims to settle the case out of court.

Bringing these practices to state government would mean inadequate services for the state's most vulnerable residents and attempts to deny public employees the benefits they earn and deserve.

“Bruce Rauner's firm ran nursing homes into the ground and dumped them. His firm bought a trucking company, dumped the employees, and



Anti-Rauner protesters stage a mock “Billionaires for Bruce” rally to draw attention to Rauner's ties to the corporate elite.

was successfully sued,” Bayer said. “It gives us a sense of what kind of governor he would be in terms of the services the state provides and the employees who provide them.”

Spreading the truth

RAUNER HAS PLEDGED TO CUT the pay of public employees and end defined-benefit pensions. Even as many states and cities are raising their minimum wage, Rauner wants Illinois to reduce its minimum wage by \$1 an hour.

Rauner's agenda is extreme, but it's also no secret –

unlike Scott Walker in Wisconsin, Rauner's made his contempt for public employees and our unions clear from day one.

In addition to praising Walker's actions in Wisconsin, Rauner has heaped praise on former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, who took away public employees' bargaining rights with the stroke of a pen.

“Mitch Daniels implemented widespread privatization of state services in Indiana,” Council 31 Deputy Director Roberta Lynch said. “When Bruce Rauner says he wants to follow in Mitch Daniels' footsteps, he's talking about bringing more

“If members still want a strong union a year from now, they need to take action now.”
— Roberta Lynch

privatization to Illinois.”

AFSCME is gearing up to spread the truth about Rauner, launching an unprecedented grassroots outreach effort to educate all the union's members about Rauner's real agenda and to spread that message to communities across Illinois.

“We aren't going to wait until September – that won't work this time around,” Lynch said. “We have to start right now.”

The union will be spreading the word about Rauner through union meetings, work-site presentations, flyers, e-mails and social media. But ultimately, the success of the effort will come down to union members reaching out into their neighborhoods and communities.

“If members still want to have a strong union a year from now, they need to take action now,” Lynch said. “Bruce Rauner doesn't want to destroy just the labor movement. He wants to destroy the economic security and job rights that are essential to the economic progress working people have made in our state.”

Pension battle fought on multiple fronts

When the General Assembly was considering cuts to SERS, SURS, and TRS pensions, some predicted that making such changes in defiance of the state constitution would open the door to attacks on other pension systems.

AS THE LEGISLATURE'S SPRING SESSION SHOWED, THAT PREDICTION HAS BEEN PROVEN ALL TOO accurate.

In the final weeks of the session, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel succeeded in pushing through steep cuts to Municipal and Laborers pension funds and Cook County Board president, Toni Preckwinkle, came close to making even more massive cuts in the county pension fund.

“We were very pleased to be able to put the brakes on Cook County's pension-cutting scheme, but we know they'll be trying again in the fall. And we expect Mayor Emanuel to be

back then to take aim at other city pension systems that cover police, fire and teachers,” said Council 31 Deputy Director Roberta Lynch. “The corporate elites and their political allies are determined to try to put the burden of government's fiscal woes on the backs of public employees and retirees.”

Chicago pension cuts headed to court

IN APRIL, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY passed legislation (SB 1922), heavily backed by Emanuel, that would not only cut pension benefits for both active and

retired City of Chicago employees but also increase employee contributions and raise the retirement age for some workers.

As soon as the bill was signed into law, the We Are One Chicago union coalition, of which AFSCME is a leading member, announced it would sue to have the bill overturned.

“This is no victory for the mayor, but a huge, missed opportunity to find a truly fair, constitutional solution,” the coalition said in a statement. “Our coalition has presented numerous alternatives that would rebalance our tax

code and ask those who can most afford it – the wealthiest among us – to pay their fair share. Unfortunately, some elected officials have chosen to ignore the constitution and these fairer revenue alternatives.”

The bill would significantly reduce the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) that allows retirees to keep up with inflation. It also would implement COLA freezes in 2017, 2019 and 2025.

The cuts in SB 1922 would reduce the value of a pension for many city workers by 30 percent over two decades. The cuts

Continued on page 6

SIU medical school employees repel scheme to remove members from union



Nearly 240 members of AFSCME Local 370 – which represents employees at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine – can now breathe a sigh of relief, knowing their membership in the union is secure.

THEY HAVE THEMSELVES – AND THEIR UNION BROTHERS AND SISTERS – TO THANK. AFTER UNILATERALLY removing more than 100 employees from the bargaining unit, the university ultimately reversed course in the face of union legal action and grassroots protests.

“This was all due to membership involvement,” Council 31 staff representative Michael Dillion said. “They did some phenomenal work. Now, every member who had their representation rights unilaterally taken away by management will have them restored.”

The university’s attempt to remove members came after 10 months of negotiations over a new contract that required the intervention of an independent mediator. That agreement, ratified in February, increased wages by 2.25 percent in the first year followed by increases of at least 1.25 percent in each of the following three years – a big improvement over what management had proposed.

“They wanted basically four years of no guaranteed raises and they wanted some takeaways,” Council 31 staff representative Erik Hostetter said. “We were successful in fighting off the takeaways and

were able to guarantee some raises.”

But the victory was short-lived. The university tried to take advantage of a technical

error in the printed contract that left out nine titles from the list of those covered by the agreement, even though those titles were specifically addressed during bargaining.

In most such instances, the union and management would simply clarify the issue through a memorandum of understanding. Medical school administrators, however, saw it as a way to weaken the union.

“It was union-busting,” Local 370 President Lisa Hensley said. “We thought we were going to have to battle this thing out in court. People were very upset with the school.”

Gearing up

AFTER THE UNIVERSITY announced it would no longer recognize the titles as being in the bargaining unit, it refused to collect dues from people in those positions and claimed their bargaining rights had been revoked.

The local responded by forming a group of people in the affected titles, along with executive board members, called the “Don’t Panic, Fight Back” committee. The group organized several actions, including an informational picket that drew attention from local media.

“I was very frustrated and very angry,” said Peggy Netznik, a certified medical assistant and one of the people the school tried to remove from the union. “I was very vocal anytime anyone stopped me and wanted to know what this is about. We just tried to get everybody on board with this.”

Netznik, who is also on her local’s executive board, said the positions the university targeted are those that ensure the medical school’s

day-to-day operations run smoothly.

“It affects all of those people who make the least, but if it wasn’t for us, this university wouldn’t keep running,” she said. “They’ve tried a lot of crooked stuff before but never this bad.”

The union filed an unfair labor practice charge against the university and asked the state labor board to petition for an injunction that would reinstate the members removed from the bargaining unit until a permanent solution was reached.

A day before a hearing to consider the injunction – and after seeing employees weren’t backing down – the university reached out to the union, signaling it wanted to resolve the issue.

“We had a mediation session that lasted for eight or nine hours and worked out the basic framework of the settlement,” Dillion said.

After fighting for years for a union, 10 months for a contract and now winning a fight to preserve the integrity of their bargaining unit, SIU School of Medicine employees have learned a lot, Hensley said.

“Our membership is starting to understand what solidarity means,” Hensley said. “We’re going to fight like hell and we’re going to win. We just have to hang in there.”

Mosaic direct-support employees choose AFSCME

Employees at Mosaic, a community disability services agency in Rockford, are looking forward to addressing several longstanding issues after overwhelmingly voting in April to form a union with AFSCME.

CHIEF AMONG THEM IS IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AGENCY’S MANAGEMENT, WHICH

had often treated staff with indifference and disrespect despite the hard work they perform helping individuals with developmental disabilities.

“You could look someone in management in the eye and they’d just turn away from you,” said Debbie Parrish, a direct support aide. “We want to be treated like adults.”

Management’s attitude toward employees – especially with regard to communication between the main office and the agency’s group homes – was a driving force behind the organizing effort, Council 31 organizer Dave Bloede said.

“There was no communica-

tion between the main office and the houses,” he said. “Often you wouldn’t know about a new policy until you were written up for violating it. Management would blame employees for not knowing what had changed.”

Management’s practices were pushing away qualified employees, Bloede said, which wasn’t good for the individuals in Mosaic’s homes.

“The individuals form strong relationships with these workers, and then they end up leaving to take a better job,” he said. “Continuity of care was a really important issue.”

Low wages have also made

it difficult for Mosaic to hold on to employees – something that will definitely be addressed at the bargaining table.

“In seven years that I’ve been here, I’m still making less than \$10 an hour,” said LaToya Johnson, a direct-support aide. “It took me a year to get a raise and even then I got the run-around – they didn’t want to give raises.”

Solidarity spreading

LOW WAGES MEANT MANY STAFF members were working two jobs. Some also worked at Milestone, another direct-support

Continued on page 10

City of Chicago AFSCME members win a new contract

As On the Move went to press, City of Chicago employees in six AFSCME locals were voting on a proposed contract that would increase wages each year, hold the line on health insurance costs and establish greater restrictions on the privatization of jobs and services.

THE FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT – REACHED AFTER TWO YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS – IS A SIGNIFICANT

improvement over what Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration had initially proposed: wage freezes, longer work hours and continuing license to privatize city services.

"This agreement is the product of the bargaining committee's unyielding determination and the grassroots activism of AFSCME members," said Council 31 associ-

ate director Mike Newman, who was the union's lead negotiator. "At a time when the city is experiencing serious budget and revenue

have worked since the last contract expired. The proposed contract would raise wages by 10 percent over five



Council 31 associate director Mike Newman and regional director Nefertiti Smith shake hands with City of Chicago negotiators after reaching a tentative agreement on a new contract.

issues, this agreement represents real progress."

A key issue in negotiations – on which the union prevailed – was retroactive pay increases covering the two years city employees

years, averaging two percent a year, and includes retroactivity for those first two years.

"Retroactive pay was a sticking point throughout, but when we got down to it, the city knew that if they were ever going to finish with an agreement, they'd have to agree with us on that," said Local 505 President Laverne Walker, a member of the bargaining committee. "The committee wasn't going to back down on that."

The new contract also provides paid parental leave: Employees who give birth will receive up to six weeks of paid leave. Employees can receive up to two weeks' paid leave if their spouse or domestic part-

Continued on page 7

Cook County employees ramp up fight for a fair contract

After 18 months without a contract – and 18 months of snail's-pace progress at the bargaining table – Cook County employees are taking direct action to win fair wages and affordable health care.

ON JUNE 10, SOME 1,000 COOK COUNTY EMPLOYEES JOINED INFORMATIONAL PICKETS TO show they aren't going to let County Board President Toni Preckwinkle force a pay cut on them.

"We're out here dedicating our time to a fair contract," said Terri Griffin, a supervising probation officer. "We need a better contract and we deserve one. We work hard and deserve fair medical costs and better pay. Our work is important to the community."

The pickets came after more than a year of negotiations between the Preckwinkle administration and the 15 AFSCME locals representing



Cook County employees picket outside Stroger Hospital.

county employees.

While the county's latest proposal includes wage increases adding up to 4.5 percent, it also would increase employee health care costs by 6 percent – ultimately cutting employee take-home pay by 1.5 percent. In addition, Preckwinkle-backed pension legislation would require county employees to pay an additional 2 percent of their salary into the pension fund, cutting even deeper into employee paychecks.

Moreover, the county's proposal offers no wage increase retroactive to the expiration of the last contract,

meaning employees are being asked to accept an 18-month pay freeze.

"We're not about to let the county balance its budget on the backs of employees who work hard and provide essential services," Council 31 associate director Mike Newman said. "After 18 months, it was time to show the county that employees are ready to take direct action to win a fair agreement."

A matter of respect

MANY OF THE AFSCME MEMBERS on the picket lines said they felt disrespected by the

county – even abandoned.

"We've been seeing the county hire non-union employees and bring in private contractors instead of filling our vacancies," Local 1111 President Carmin Willis-Goodloe said. "We're getting stretched thin and that means services are going to suffer."

Dolores Chambliss, a caseworker who has worked for the county for 51 years, said the current treatment of employees is the worst she's seen during her lengthy tenure.

"I'm looking toward retirement, but I had to be out here to help the younger workers," Chambliss said as she walked a picket line outside Stroger Hospital. "The county used to encourage employees and support them. Now you're on your own."

Double threat

COUNTY EMPLOYEES ARE ALSO upset that the Preckwinkle administration continues to aggressively pursue cuts to employee pensions that would increase contributions but also reduce benefits by 30 per-

cent over time.

"Meanwhile they're doing nothing at the bargaining table," said Jordanette Mathews, a supervising probation officer.

That could change soon, however. The pickets by county employees received widespread media attention – and it appears the Preckwinkle administration took notice.

"We met with county negotiators the day after the pickets and, while there wasn't dramatic progress, there was some small movement in the right direction," Newman said. "If county employees remain active and engaged in this fight, we'll move closer to a fair contract."

As On the Move went to press, members of the AFSCME Bargaining Committee were planning to go directly to the Cook County Board to make their case – something many on the picket lines were ready to do themselves.

"I'd like to tell President Preckwinkle to treat us fairly," Agin Muhammad, a juvenile court probation officer said. "We serve children. We're never going to stop working. We don't need headlines. We just want a good contract."

Winnebago County employees standing strong in contract fight

Frontline employees in Winnebago County – fed up with being underpaid and underappreciated – are building their union as they fight for a fair contract.

THROUGH CONCERTED ACTIONS BOTH IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN THE PUBLIC EYE, MEMBERS OF Local 473 are staying active and engaged, even as management continues to drag its feet, refusing to agree to terms that reflect the value of the vital work employees perform every day.

“They keep trying to shove a deal down our throats that doesn’t give us anything we don’t have now,” said Colleen Opsahl-Shull, a deputy clerk in the Circuit Clerk’s office. “I don’t see a willingness to really negotiate. They are trying to tell us how it’s going to be.”

County employees have their own idea of how things should be, however: They want a contract with fair wages, instead of being among the most underpaid county employees in the region.

A job study commissioned by the county found that wages for deputy clerks were 17 percent below those for comparable positions in neighboring counties, and nearly half of deputy clerks take home less than \$28,700 a year for full-time work.

Low wages are common



Winnebago County employees and their families held an informational picket on May 8.

ing two or three jobs. Forty hours should be enough to live on, to at least get by.”

Taking action away from the table

Management’s unwillingness to offer a fair deal may be having an unintended side effect: It’s given the union plenty of time to build an activist base.

That was on display May 8 outside the County Board meeting in Rockford, when employees and their families held an informational picket that received significant coverage in the local media.

The deputy clerks, in particular, have become very active in the contract fight. Their bargaining unit counts 100 percent of its members as full dues-payers.

“There’s a strong sense of collective action,” Sadlowski said. “They’ve been building the union away from the bargaining table and inspiring a lot of people in the process.”

Across the county, employees are gaining a better understanding of what it will take to prevail, said Paul Lanis, one of the local’s stewards.

“I think the members understand the only way we’re going to accomplish anything is if we do it as a group and do it together,” he said. “Many of them have worked here for a number of years and understand the challenge we’re facing, but we have a number of new employees who are excited to be a part of the process, too.”

across Winnebago County government, the job study found: Many employees of the county nursing home are paid poverty wages, with certified nursing assistants making less than \$12 an hour and housekeepers and dietary staff barely more than \$10. In the jail, the study found that correctional officers are underpaid by \$2 an hour even as they keep the jail safe despite chronic lack of staff.

The low wages persist even though, as an AFSCME audit uncovered, the county isn’t lacking in cash.

“Winnebago County’s lagging behind everyone else,” Council 31 staff representa-



Ed Sadlowski said. “But the county’s got 27 percent of their operating budget in reserves. They’ve got the ability to pay. They’ve got a lot of money in the bank.”

That money isn’t being

spent where it should be, Opsahl-Shull said.

“There’s always money for new carpeting, new computers, but none for us, and we do a good job,” she said. “We have single moms here work-

Pension battle

Continued from page 3

are especially devastating because city employees are not eligible for Social Security – their pension is often their sole source of income during retirement.

As with SB 1, which cut pensions for SERS, SURS and TRS enrollees, the unions will argue in court that SB 1922 violates the state constitution’s requirement that pension bene-

fits cannot be “diminished or impaired.”

Cook County cuts blocked

AFTER CUTS TO CITY OF CHICAGO pensions were passed, some observers predicted Cook County employees would be next on the chopping block.

But despite a furious lobbying effort from Cook County Board President Toni Preckwin-

kle – one that was supported by some unions – legislation to slash county employee pensions never reached a vote in either the House or the Senate.

AFSCME members, joined by allies in several other unions, pushed hard against the legislation and legislators did not believe Preckwinkle’s argument that the county pension system – one of the better-funded systems in the state – required emergency intervention.

“We hope the Preckwinkle administration takes this as a sign that it’s time to return to the table with AFSCME and other unions and work out a solution that’s fair to employees and retirees and helps the pension system in the long run,” Lynch said.

With a Cook County pension bill now on hold until at

least the fall, AFSCME members have valuable time to put pressure on lawmakers to reject cuts if the Preckwinkle administration tries to push legislation through again.

“Cook County employees and retirees should use the summer months to meet directly with their state legislators to urge them to tell President Preckwinkle that they will not support any pension bill that our union opposes,” Council 31 legislative director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said.

State, university pension cuts on hold

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES won a key victory in May when a Sangamon County Circuit Court judge granted a request made by the We Are One Illi-

nois union coalition for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction that halts the implementation of Senate Bill 1 (Public Act 98-599).

The cuts had been slated to go into effect in June, but will now likely be delayed until a final ruling on the law’s constitutionality.

“This is an important first step in our efforts to overturn this unfair, unconstitutional law and to protect retirement security for working and retired Illinois families,” said Michael T. Carrigan, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO, on behalf of the coalition. “We are pleased the court prudently chose to halt implementation of these sweeping changes, which have caused so much fear and uncertainty.”

Back Pay Brigades make progress – but fight continues



The fight for pay justice took place at worksites (top) and visits to lawmakers in the winter (middle) and spring (bottom).

After two years of being denied the wages they earned, AFSCME Back Pay Brigades, made up of local union members from across Illinois, descended on the State Capitol throughout May to demand pay justice.

WHENEVER THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS IN SESSION, THE BACK PAY BRIGADES WERE there, insisting their legislators not only support paying back wages owed, but push their party leaders to make the issue a priority.

“Since 2011 they’ve been stiffing us out of our money,” Local 1964 President Matt Lukow said, echoing the sentiments of hundreds of other state employees. “We worked and we earned the money. I



felt like I was just loaning the state money so they could function at my expense.”

Lukow and other local union leaders in the five departments still owed back

wages – the departments of Human Services, Corrections, Juvenile Justice, Natural Resources and Public Health – engaged in daily lobbying at the State Capitol, supplement-

ed by hundreds of phone calls and e-mails from their members back home.

The result was a partial victory – the General Assembly passed HB 3793, which appropriates enough money to pay about 45 percent of the back wages owed to active and retired state employees who still have not been made whole.

Considering the current budget environment in Springfield, that’s a significant accomplishment.

“Lawmakers spent the closing weeks of their session passing a budget that made deep cuts throughout state government,” Council 31 legislative director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said. “It would have been easy to be pessimistic about any back wages being paid. AFSCME members refused to let up though. They’re directly responsible for the progress made here.”

More work to do

THE PARTIAL PAYMENT OF BACK wages came after two frustrating years. In 2011, Gov. Pat Quinn’s administration refused to implement the wage increases for fiscal 2011 and 2012 called for in the previous state master contract.

AFSCME immediately sprang into action, taking the matter to an arbitrator who agreed that the wages must be paid. The state appealed that decision, but a circuit court also agreed with the union’s position that the money was owed.

Last year the Quinn administration agreed to support payment of back wages as a condition of the current state contract and employees

in a number of agencies were paid monies owed out of the lapsed funds in their agency’s budget. However, five agencies lacked sufficient lapsed funds and required a special appropriation by the General Assembly.

Despite a request from Quinn to drop the appeal of the judge’s order to pay the outstanding wages, the Attorney General’s office has continued the state’s appeal of the circuit court decision and has secured a stay of the circuit court order which puts its implementation on hold.

Efforts on the legal front will continue. But as far as AFSCME members are concerned, direct pressure on legislators to pay all remaining wages owed should remain the focus.

Ready for round two

MEMBERS WHO VISITED THE Capitol as part of the Back Pay Brigades are ready to go back again to finish the job.

“I’m glad the General Assembly actually agreed to start paying people,” said Angela Robinson, a member of Local 2854 and a former DOC employee who now works as a caseworker in the Department of Human Services.

Local 1175 member Tony Williams, a corrections medical technician at Menard Correctional Center, said employees owed money still aren’t satisfied and will be back in the halls of the Capitol to get what they’re owed.

“They’ve kicked part of the bill further down the road,” he said. “We want the state to hold up its end of the deal and I’ll be there tomorrow with bells on if that’s what it takes.”

Chicago contract

Continued from page 5

ner has a child, or if they adopt a child.

Reining in privatization

ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL issues in negotiations was the city’s growing reliance on pri-

vatization. The previous union contract did place certain limits on privatization, but they were not sufficient to block several ill-advised subcontracting ventures that resulted in lost jobs and diminished services.

“This new contract will

significantly improve protection against privatization based on increased labor-management cooperation to improve city services utilizing city employees,” Newman said.

Specifically, the contract establishes a Joint Labor Management Cooperation Committee on privatization that will examine all current and future outsourcing and determine how city employees could perform such work. The committee will begin its work within 30 days of the contract going into effect.

The contract also requires the city to share more information with the union prior to accepting bids

to contract out work and requires the city to provide an economic analysis that compares the true costs associated with contracting out to the costs for AFSCME members to continue performing the work.

“We have to stop contracting out and giving out money for political purposes instead of looking at what’s best for the city,” Walker said. “The people we’ve lost to privatization were among the best the city has.”

Standing tall, sticking together

OVER THE COURSE OF TWO years, the bargaining commit-

tee held firm while, away from the table, city employees grew more active as talks went on.

More than 1,700 city employees signed “Count Me In!” cards last summer signaling they were ready to fight for a fair contract. Last September, hundreds marched in informational pickets at city worksites.

“City employees put themselves out there and that only strengthened the resolve of the bargaining committee,” Council 31 regional director Nefertiti Smith said. “They came to the negotiating table knowing they had the force of thousands of union members behind them.”



FY 15 BUDGET:

DYSFUNCTION IN SPRINGFIELD PUTS SERVICES, JOBS AT RISK

Lawmakers left the General Assembly's spring session without addressing one of the most critical questions facing them: whether to extend the temporary income tax increase passed in 2011.

With no action taken to ensure adequate revenues, the legislature ended up passing a fiscal 2015 budget that contains steep cuts to public services and would likely require layoffs across state government.

If no action is taken by the end of the year, the temporary tax increase will expire on January 1, right in the middle of the state's fiscal year, sending revenues downward and requiring deep cuts.

"It's extremely disturbing to see the General Assembly pass a budget that doesn't provide the state with the money required to address the needs of the disabled, the elderly, and all those who depend on the state's services," said Council 31 Executive Director Henry Bayer. "If these cuts happen, the only reason will be that lawmakers didn't have the political will to do what was right."

The legislature could still take action to ensure adequate revenues – and revise the budget accordingly – in its post-election veto session, but that would become highly unlikely if Bruce Rauner is elected

governor in November. The GOP nominee is strongly opposed to extending current income tax rates, though he hasn't proposed an alternative.

"The budget crisis in Springfield is one of many reasons we need to defeat Bruce Rauner in November," Bayer said. "A Rauner victory all but ensures that the layoffs required by the deep cuts passed by the legislature will become a reality in 2015."

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

When Gov. Pat Quinn unveiled his budget plan earlier this year, he offered two options: A budget based on making permanent the income tax rate increase passed in 2011 and another based on letting those rates expire. He argued that the first option was a far better course for the state to pursue.

An extension of current income tax rates would have meant around 1,400 new state jobs and the reopening of closed facilities in Joliet and Murphysboro.

The alternative "cuts" budget, however, demonstrated the consequences of failing to extend the income tax; massive reductions in funding to agencies already stretched to the limit.

Unfortunately, the budget ultimately passed by the General Assembly bears great similarity to that "cuts" budget. It provides no new funding to cover the cost of negotiated wage or step increases, meaning many departments will have no choice but to eliminate positions, close facilities, or further reduce services.

Below is a summary of the major cuts in the budget:

Corrections: Funding will largely remain at FY 14 levels – 5 percent less than originally requested. The budget will not allow for the reopening of facilities in Joliet or Murphysboro, as proposed in the governor's budget, and will also make it very difficult for the department to comply with a legal requirement to improve mental health services.

Human Services: A 19 percent cut from the requested level means the state will be unable to add new positions at Family Community Resource Centers that would have allowed it to meet federal guidelines for programs like Medicaid and SNAP. State developmental centers and mental health centers will both see funding fall by \$5 million. Plans by the Division of Mental Health to add staff are now in doubt. Other essential programs, including child care and Home Services,

will also be cut.

DHS still plans to close Murray Developmental Center in Centralia. With strong backing from AFSCME, the parents of Murray Center residents are fighting that plan in federal court.

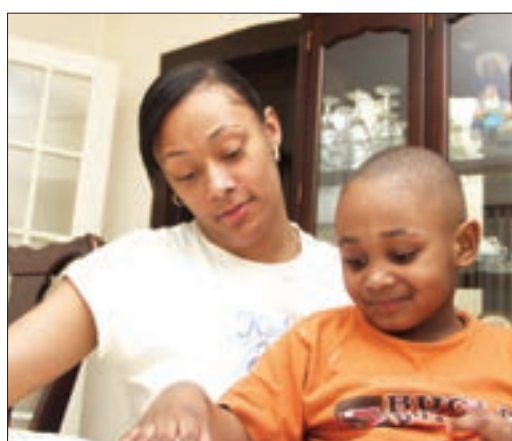
Juvenile Justice: Personal services at DJJ were funded at 9 percent below the governor's introduced level, meaning plans to add 87 additional staff are unlikely to be implemented.

Children and Family Services: An \$11.7 million cut to personal services will mean the department will have to eliminate positions and possibly lay off employees. The agency had planned on maintaining current staff levels, but the budget passed by the General Assembly will not allow for even that.

Veterans Affairs: Overall cuts amount to about 8 percent less than originally requested. It is possible the agency will have to either limit new admissions or close facilities.

Central Management Services: Personal services are cut 8 percent.

Agging: There is an 18 percent cut – \$1.5 million – to personal services compared to what was requested. Home Services for seniors is cut 7 percent – \$60 million – compared to what was requested.





In February, direct support employees delivered 15,000 postcards to Gov. Quinn urging him to include money for increased wages in his FY15 budget.

**Jobs?
Services?**

NO HELP FOR DIRECT-SUPPORT WORKERS IN FY 15 BUDGET

The fiscal 2015 budget passed by the General Assembly – a budget based on letting the temporary income tax increase expire – will do nothing to improve wages for the dedicated workers who provide vital assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities in state-funded community agencies.

Wages for direct-support personnel in community disability agencies average \$9.35 an hour, which is below the federal poverty level for a family of four. These nonprofit agencies are entirely dependent on state government for their funding and have not received any increase from the state since 2007.

“Of all the outrageous cuts in the budget, this may be the most disappointing of all,” Council 31 public policy director Anne Irving said. “Workers in community disability agencies have to struggle just to get by, often working a second job or excessive amounts of overtime. This budget is an insult to them, their families and the people they assist every day.”

The flat funding for DSP wages is especially disappointing because it undid the remarkable victory won when Gov. Pat Quinn included funding for a \$1-an-hour wage increase in his budget proposal – a proposal that

assumed lawmakers would vote to keep the temporary income tax increase.

Quinn’s action came in response to an intensive grassroots lobbying effort by the Care Campaign, a coalition that includes AFSCME, direct support agencies and the families of individuals with disabilities. The campaign had heightened awareness of the wage stagnation facing direct support providers, particularly when it delivered more than 15,000 postcards to Quinn’s office in February demanding funding to improve wages. (See photo above.)

Unfortunately, instead of funding for higher wages in the grant lines for community disability agencies, the budget as enacted actually cuts funding for those agencies by \$6 million.

AFSCME intends to continue to wage that fight for fair wages for community disability workers. The union will make extension of the income tax a top priority to ensure that funding will be available for this critical need.

Beyond the \$1-an-hour increase, the Care Campaign continues to work on building support for legislation (HB 3698/SB 2604) to raise the wages of all these workers above the poverty level – to a minimum of \$13/hour.

Upward Mobility Program: A win-win for employees and state government

Enrollment period ends July 15

State employees looking for an opportunity to advance their careers have a unique option available to them: the Upward Mobility Program.

THE UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAM (UMP) IS PART OF THE AFSCME COUNCIL 31 CONTRACT with the state of Illinois. It allows state employees to receive the education they need to move into positions that

would otherwise be out of reach. Since the program was established in 1989, thousands of employees who have participated enhanced their knowledge and skills and advanced up the career ladder.

The program's annual enrollment period is ending soon. Applications must be received by July 15. For the first time, eligible AFSCME members can apply online by visiting www.cms.illinois.gov/ump.

The UMP allows employees to gain priority for certain job openings – even those in other bargaining units.

Lettie Bush, a member of Local 2794, was a Support Service Worker at Shapiro Developmental Center. She used the resources provided by the UMP to become a Human Services Caseworker at a state Family Community Resource Center in Will County.

"The job I had was very physical and after I had a surgery, I needed to find some-

thing else I could do," she said. "A co-worker inspired me to enroll in the Upward Mobility Program and it was a blessing. I'm learning new things and I'm grateful for the opportunity."

Bush, like other UMP participants, had to take an exam to prove her qualifications for her current position. But she didn't have to go it alone: The program provides several resources, including covered tuition costs for required classes, along with a limited amount of time off from work.

UMP participants also have access to counselors who help identify a "target title" and develop individual education plans.

The program designates target titles agreed upon in bargaining between the union and the state. Employees can work toward advancement in five major career paths – data processing, office services, accounting, human services

and nursing.

There are three distinct types of titles available among the 60 available UMP target titles.

Certificate titles require the completion of a written examination. Once a program participant becomes proficient in all test sections and has completed all requirements, he or she is placed on an eligibility list for that title.

Candidates for credential titles must complete a specified academic degree. They must then submit a UMP promotional application and final official transcript to receive the grade. They are then given a "grade," based on education and experience, and placed on the eligibility list.

For dual titles, participants are placed on the eligibility list by either passing the written examination or by acquiring the specified degree.

"It's a good program that allows us to contribute more

skills," said Local 416 member Mohammad Rashid, who, through the UMP, was promoted from within to Executive Secretary at Fox Valley Adult Transition Center. Because of the UMP, he was able to take classes in criminal justice at Elgin Community College in order to qualify for his position.

"It's a great investment of time and once you're in the program, the Upward Mobility counselors help a lot," Rashid said. "They guide us on what to do and show us the route we have to take."

That investment pays off – and not just for state employees.

"This program is not only of great benefit to employees who want to progress in their jobs, it also provides great value to the employer," said Council 31 associate director Mike Newman. "It helps foster a better educated and more motivated workforce."

Mosaic employees choose AFSCME

Continued from page 4

agency in Rockford.

When Milestone employees voted to form a union with AFSCME last October, it didn't take long for the idea to spread to Mosaic.

After Mosaic employees started discussing forming a

union, management made attempts to undermine the organizing effort.

"Probably about a week after they found out, they had mandatory meetings for everybody," Parrish said.

In the meetings, management treated employees with the same disrespect that drove

the organizing drive – ensuring they wouldn't be very effective.

"Folks felt very insulted. People stood up in those meetings – they were ready and pushed back," Bloede said.

Employees voted 48-3 to form a union – a lopsided result that has provided

momentum as they prepare to sit at the bargaining table for the first time.

Along with wages and better treatment from management, employees hope to push for improvements in benefits for part-time staff and holiday pay – changes that will help not only Mosaic staff, but the

individuals they support as well.

"If an employee is happy, they're going to stick around," Parrish said. "We'll keep the staff, which makes a better environment for our individuals, and that's what the whole point of this is. You have continuity and it'll improve."

Worried?



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Chicago cab drivers organizing to make their voices heard

Taxicab drivers and public employees have more in common than one might think.

EVEN THOUGH CAB DRIVERS IN CHICAGO ARE INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS, THEIR WAGES, OPERATING HOURS AND WORKPLACE PROCEDURES ARE ALL SET BY CITY HALL. IF THEY'RE ACCUSED OF VIOLATING RULES, THEY FACE PUNISHMENT FROM A CITY DEPARTMENT.

Like public employees, cab drivers today are feeling squeezed by politicians – in this case, in the form of increased fines and more costly vehicle requirements which the driver often has to pay for out-of-pocket.

They even face a threat similar to privatization: Outside companies are taking away their business and face little oversight or regulation from the Taxi Commission, creating an uneven playing field.

In the face of these threats, Chicago cab drivers are now teaming up with AFSCME to have a united voice in dealing with the city.

"The city makes changes without consulting us. It's not democratic, it's not fair and it's not just," said David Adenekan, one of many cab drivers now part of Cab Drivers United, a new AFSCME-linked organization that is working to organize drivers throughout the city. "We need a union so we can get involved in the process of how the cab rules and regulations are done."

Obstacles to joining the middle class

DRIVING A CAB HAS BEEN A pathway to the middle class for generations of immigrants and native-born Chicagoans. The hours are long, income is unreliable and the threat of violence is relatively high – but through hard work, cab drivers have been able to provide for themselves and their families.

Until now. A recent study released by Council 31 found that the livelihoods of Chicago cab drivers are increasingly at risk, their work undermined by regulatory road blocks.

Most cab drivers lease

their vehicles. A 2012 overhaul of taxicab regulations allowed these lease rates to increase by as much as 30 percent. At the same time, drivers were required to accept credit card payments – 5 percent of which automatically goes toward a processing fee instead of toward the driver's income. Drivers who own their vehicles are required to purchase a new cab twice as often due to mileage limits that were cut in half.

The regulations imposed new costs, yet also made it more difficult for drivers to increase their income to compensate. Fares have been frozen since 2005 and drivers now are not allowed to work more than 12 hours per shift.

The regulatory overhaul also made it much easier for cab passengers to make anonymous complaints. In the span of one year, complaints against cab drivers doubled. Yet the system makes it difficult for drivers to defend themselves.

"I had one customer come into my cab when my credit card machine wasn't working and I told her and offered to take her to an ATM," said David Mangum, who has been driving a cab for more than 40 years. "I got a citation saying that I refused to accept a credit card, was discourteous and had an unsafe vehicle. They add charges on to extort money from you."

The cost of these policies and fines is significant, pushing the average cab driver's real income down to \$20,234 a year, 15 percent below the poverty level for a family of four. Based on hours worked, the average driver makes only \$5.40 an hour.

Uneven playing field

CAB DRIVERS ARE NOW LOSING business to startup companies like Uber, Lyft and Sidecar – "ride-sharing" services that allow people to book rides through largely unregulated drivers and vehicles.

AFSCME led the fight against an ordinance recently passed by the City Council that institutionalizes

the inequities between taxi cabs and ride-sharing apps, imposing only minimal regulations and licensing requirements on the latter. The General Assembly passed stronger requirements for rideshare companies, but it's unclear which law will ultimately govern them.

"We have to go to all kinds of classes and trainings that Uber drivers don't have to do," Adenekan said. "It's not fair. Enough is enough."

The city's preferential treatment of ride-share companies is only the latest in a series of moves that under

mine cab drivers' ability to prosper. That's why many are now flocking to Cab Drivers United.

"Numbers give us strength, and strength is what we need for the city to listen to us," Mangum said. "That's the only way we'll get justice and respect."

Based on hours worked, the average driver makes only \$5.40 an hour.



ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



Village of Schaumburg employees ratify first contract

MORE THAN TWO YEARS AFTER FIRST VOTING TO join AFSCME, Village of Schaumburg employees now enjoy the rights and protections of a union contract.

The three-year agreement, ratified by Local 1919 members in May, will see wages rise between 2 and 3 percent annually for bargaining unit members. Most importantly, village employees will no longer be considered at-will.

"It's a relief to have the protection and know we're not at-will employees anymore," said Debbie Diamond, a member of the bargaining team. "We've got things set in place that the village can't take away from us."

The contract also begins to reform a complicated system for raising wages that was prone to favoritism and froze the salaries of some of the village's most senior employees.

"Their salaries had been frozen for who knows how long. The new contract gives them a chance at a raise," said Colleen Schlenker, a member of the bargaining team.

Part-time staff members will also benefit in several ways, including additional pay for working on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The contract also formalizes procedures for personal leave and grievances.

Initially, negotiations were very tough, as the new local union sat across the bargaining table from the same administration that had worked to prevent employees from forming a union at all. But the pace picked up considerably when a new village manager took over.

Village employees are looking at their inaugural contract as a great start and a stepping stone to better things.

"It's a fair contract," Diamond said. "There are some things we'd like to improve, but we'll be ready to work on those in three years."

The bargaining team was led by Council 31 staff representative Matt LaPierre and included Diamond and Schlenker, as well as Maria Trajano, Tom Todd, Sandy Gollhofer, Anne Famartino, Pat Schultz and Dave Ogorzaly.

Trio of contracts ratified by Kane County employees

THREE CONTRACTS RATIFIED BY Kane County employees in Local 3966 – covering the offices of the county clerk, circuit clerk and chief judge – all include significant wage increases, as well as other improvements.

Negotiations for the contracts were divided between a master table that handled sections included in all three contracts, along with side tables that dealt with sections specific to each department.

All of the contracts span four years. Employees in the County Clerk and Circuit Clerk's offices will see wages rise by 9 percent over the life of the agreement. Employees in the Chief Judge's office will receive a 3.7 percent raise in

each year.

"For the first time in a long time, since the crash in 2008, people are starting to see things improve," Council 31 staff representative Carla Williams said. "The county came in at first just offering us 1 percent a year and seeking a number of health care changes. We were able to improve on their wage proposal and resist the big health care cost increases."

All three contracts allow employees to use up to three days of long-term sick leave for family members with medical issues. Employee health insurance costs will increase slightly, but overall take-home pay will still rise.

Jim Morefield, who represented County Clerk employees on the bargaining team, said the agreement will help curb favoritism with regard to

wage increases.

"I think locally here in our office we were able to come to an agreement that you can't be giving out raises just because you like somebody. We've been able to control that and get away from favoritism," he said.

Negotiations weren't entirely smooth, however. The contract for Circuit Clerk office employees only came after a federal mediator helped the two sides resolve differences.

"The mediator was impartial and moved things along very rapidly," said Donna Hubbs, one of the Circuit Clerk employees on the bargaining team. "Once she got involved, things went a little quicker."

The bargaining committee, led by Williams, included Hubbs, Malinda Patterson,

Paula Smick and Marianne Gemmer representing Circuit Clerk employees; Donna Kunistman, Yvonne Dominguez and Maria Chapa representing Chief Judge employees; and Jim Morefield, Ayesha Tague and Matt Nelson representing County Clerk employees.

East Moline employees prevail over City Council meddling

CITY OF EAST MOLINE EMPLOYEES in Local 1234 overcame a last-minute attempt by the City Council to sink a new four-year agreement that contains wage increases and other improvements.

The union and the city's negotiators reached a tentative agreement, but when the contract came before the City Council, it was initially voted down.

"The bottom line is one of the City Council members was nit-picking the contract," Council 31 regional director Dino Leone said. "He lobbied some council members to vote against it. We told them the proper way to do collective bargaining was at the bargaining table."

The local's president, Mark Allmendinger, said some members of the council demanded costly takeaways.

"The council didn't think that the negotiators had given up enough," he said. "The main thing they wanted was to short new hires on wages."

The local had no appetite for a two-tier wage structure – and threatened action if the council didn't respect the TA.

"If they did that, they would have opened themselves up to a ULP," Allmendinger said. "The lawyers reminded them that wouldn't be wise."

In the end, the agreement was approved. Wages will rise by 8.5 percent over four years, while health insurance costs will increase only slightly. The contract also improves language regarding temporary assignments, and increases uniform allowances for public works and sanitation employees.

While members are happy with the agreement, they're now keeping an eye out for other attacks from the council members who attempted to block the deal.

"Now they're talking about privatization of garbage and other things that the city's residents, given enough information, probably won't like," Allmendinger said.

The bargaining team, led by Leone, included Allmendinger, Chris Larrison, Jackie Flack and Joe Kauzlarich.

Long talks yield strong contract in Champaign

CITY OF CHAMPAIGN EMPLOYEES

made significant gains in a new contract – so much that they don't mind it took nine months to reach an agreement.

Employees represented by Local 1960 will see wages rise by 3 percent in each of the first two years of the agreement, followed by a 2.75 percent increase in the third year. The contract also limits increases in health insurance costs, provides a bonus for employees who relocate within city limits, requires a longer notice for layoffs and establishes union orientation sessions for new hires.

"It took a long time to haggle over the details, but it's a darn good contract," Council 31 staff representative Michael Wilmore said. "Getting all the details right took a long time, but we maintained civility. There was forward progress with each meeting, even if it was incremental."

The talks were far better than those for the previous contract, local president Mike Powell said.

"The last time they imposed furloughs and we filed a ULP against them," he said. "This time we didn't have that kind of conflict. It's a fair contract for both sides."

Wilmore led the bargaining team, which included Powell, Steve Beckman, Dave Richmond, Angela Lawrence, Broc Summers and Seth Brewer.

Strike threat leads to contract for Community Education Centers employees

AFTER 15 MONTHS OF DIFFICULT negotiations, employees of Community Education Centers – a vendor that provides substance abuse and counseling services at five IDOC facilities – were on the verge of voting to strike before management finally showed willingness to compromise.

Instead of a strike, CEC employees are now working under a three-year agreement that will see wages rise 3 percent in the first year and 2 percent in each of the following years, with only modest increases in health care costs. The contract also contains improved language on grievance procedures and sick leave.

"We settled on a Friday and we were supposed to have a strike vote the following Monday," Council 31 staff representative Steve Joiner said. "The membership was organized and ready to fight."

CEC management had initially proposed more than 400 changes to the contract, including massive increases in employee health insurance costs, up to \$4,600 a year for some.

"These are folks that were making on average \$28,000 a

Continued on facing page

Continued from facing page

year. That's a lot of money for them," Joiner said.

Instead, health care cost increases were kept to a reasonable amount. The contract also adjusts pay scales to correct for the fact that some incoming employees were actually being paid more than senior staff members.

"We definitely wanted our members that weren't even on the pay scale to get where they needed to be," said Jean Vandenberg, who represented CEC employees at Taylorville CC on the bargaining committee. "The negotiations were very long and trying but we stuck together as a group and we came out with everything that we wanted."

The beginning stages of strike voting had already begun when a deal was struck, showing that employees were ready to do whatever it took to win a fair contract.

"They saw that we meant business and that's the only thing that helped them to make a deal," said Martha Nelson from Southwestern CC.

Joiner led the bargaining team through the negotiations and strike preparation. CEC employees on the committee included Vandenberg and Nelson, Marcia Liebscher (Graham CC) and Kim Davis (IYC Harrisburg).

Silvis City employees win 9 percent wage increase

CITY OF SILVIS EMPLOYEES IN Local 1234 will see wages rise 9 percent over four years under a new agreement ratified in February.

The contract includes increased longevity compensation and improvements to health insurance, including optical coverage. The agreement also allows retiring employees to put 15 percent of their accrued sick leave toward health insurance premiums.

Negotiations were quick and relatively smooth, especially compared to previous talks, Council 31 regional director Dino Leone said.

"The new council and mayor have a good working relationship with us," he said. "There's mutual respect there. Both sides came in with reasonable proposals and with that we were able to get it done in a timely fashion."

Lori Medina, a member of the bargaining team, said negotiations went easier this time because the local was able to negotiate directly with the city's administration.

"They had hired an outside attorney last time and there were obstacles caused by that," she said.

The bargaining team, led by Leone, included Medina,

Eric Lindquist and Kathy Palmer.

Little room for growth at Grundy County Health Department

WITH GRUNDY COUNTY FACING financial difficulties, health department employees represented by Local 3903 will see only a slight increase in wages in a three-year contract.

The agreement keeps wages frozen in the first year, followed by a 2 percent increase in the second year and a wage reopener in the final year.

"The county's in bad financial shape," Council 31 staff representative Joe Pluger said. "We walked out of there with the best we could. It wasn't adversarial."

The contract does include improvements on health insurance costs and paid leave. The local's president, Cara Anderson, said negotiations went smoothly, despite the tough fiscal environment.

"Unlike last time, we negotiated directly with the board of health," she said. "We got some things that may not have given us more money, but are still good."

The bargaining team included Pluger, Anderson, Christie Shipton, Kelly Hitt, Penny Johnson, Debbie Hennigan and Mary Jo Hutchings.

Three-year contract for Champaign County Head Start

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY HEAD Start employees – well aware of the funding challenges their agency faces – recently ratified a three-year agreement that includes slight wage increases and significant language improvements.

Wages will rise 1.3 percent in the contract's first year and 1 percent in each of the following two years, unless the federal cost-of-living adjustment is higher.

"We knew that Head Start wasn't the best-funded program out there," Council 31 staff representative Erik Hostetter said. "The employer probably went as far as they possibly could."

Employees – members of Local 900 – will benefit from better layoff protections and a significantly improved system for filling vacancies.

"Before there was no real priority placed on people who were already in-house," Hostetter said. "We fixed that."

Health insurance costs will increase slightly, which can be significant for many employees who already have low wages.

"Some of our aides are making just over minimum wage, so we wanted to hold their health costs down," said Donna Blumer, a member of the bargaining committee.

The bargaining committee, led by Hostetter, included

local President Maurice Taylor, Blumer, Stephanie Vandeventer and Jennifer Feeney.

Jefferson County health department employees see first wage increase in six years

AFTER SIX YEARS OF BONUSES THAT did nothing to enhance base salaries or retirement security, Jefferson County Health Department employees in Local 3664 will see real wage growth in a four-year contract ratified in January.

The agreement increases wages by 2 percent in the first year, followed by wage reopeners in each of the following three years. It also includes a \$450 signing bonus for each employee and an additional personal day each year, bringing the total to four.

"We understood the county has been under some financial constraints, but we're happy to see them agree that employees deserve a real raise after so long," Council 31 staff representative Jeremy Noelle said.

The agreement also simplifies scheduling in a way that will help both employees and county residents who rely on health department services; Operating hours will be the same every weekday instead of having different hours every other Thursday.

"It's much more client-friendly," said Vickie Nollman, a member of the bargaining committee.

Noelle led the bargaining committee with Nollman, Kathy Albright and Carolyn Maclin.

Agreement comes easily for City of Harvey employees

A FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT RATIFIED by City of Harvey employees in March will see wages rise by 5.75 percent over the life of the agreement.

City employees and management enjoy a good relationship that has spanned multiple contracts, Council 31 staff representative Lora Harris said.

"We were negotiating with the same person over the last three contracts," she said. "We've got a good relationship with them. Besides wages, there were no major changes needed."

Local 2404 president Cleo Butler said the city's mayor regularly stands with public employees, making talks easier.

"Our mayor is pro-union," he said. "He was compassionate toward city workers because he needs us and recognizes that."

The bargaining team, led by Harris, included Butler, Dominique Randle-El, Arnela Warren and Colandra Walker.

AFSCME member hailed for roadside rescue

Every day, AFSCME members perform essential work in their communities. Sometimes they go above and beyond, taking action that saves lives.

JASON PATT, A MEMBER OF LOCAL 2452, DID EXACTLY THAT ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 12,

when, driving through a torrential rain-storm, he came across a car that was gradually being submerged under water – with a family of five trapped inside.

Patt, a deputy coroner in Lake County, was driving back to the office when he came across the scene

underneath an overpass on Route 41 near Route 176.

"You could see there was a car stuck in the water under a bridge. It was about as high as the tires and rising," he said. "I shined my flashlight into the car and told them they should get out. I told them that if they didn't get out, they were all going to die."

Initially, though, the family members – Danny Le, his wife, sister-in-law, mother-in-law and four-year-old son – were reluctant to open the doors to the vehicle and allow the water to rush in. But as the waters continued to rise, Patt knew he had to take action.

"The water was about waist-high at that time," he

said. "I walked over to the car and opened the car door. There was a kid in there screaming and obviously terrified. I took the mom and the kid with me and walked each of them over to my vehicle."

Patt went back to the vehicle three times in order to escort each member of the family to safety. Not long after, it became clear Patt had saved their lives.

"Within a few hours the water had taken over the whole vehicle," Patt said. "You couldn't even tell there had been a car there."

While Patt resists the label, the Le family considers him a hero.

"I want to say thank you to Jason. He's a hero," Le told the Chicago Sun-Times.

Public service is nothing new to Patt. Following eight years in the U.S. Navy, including a



**"Our job is to serve the public – to serve and protect, to help people in need."
— Jason Patt**

tour in Iraq, Patt worked for 10 years in law enforcement, including his current position in the coroner's office.

Patt is active in his union as well, serving as a certified steward, a member of the union bargaining committee and a PEOPLE MVP. He's also the AFSCME-endorsed candidate for Lake County sheriff.

"All my years in the military and all my years in law enforcement, I've been a public servant and I saw a family in need of help," he said. "Our job is to serve the public – to serve and protect, to help people in need. That's what you're sworn to do. I just felt I was doing my job and helping this family out."

RETIREE NOTES

Rauner's sorry record on nursing home safety

CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR BRUCE RAUNER HAS MADE MANY EXCUSES TO COVER UP HIS SHAMEFUL HISTORY OF PROFITING FROM NURSING home residents' misery.

Under Rauner's chairmanship, his firm, GTCR, was found liable in the wrongful deaths of multiple nursing home residents, with juries awarding almost \$2 billion in damages.

Rauner has continually denied that his firm was involved in day-to-day operations of the nursing homes. However, a federal judge in one of the nursing home abuse cases found that "the GTCR Group was also instrumental in [the nursing home corporation's] day-to-day management and administration."

In an effort to dodge paying the families of his victims, Rauner's firm allegedly participated in a scheme to fraudulently transfer assets for the purpose of hiding them from successful plaintiffs and other creditors. Rauner continually claims that his firm got out of the nursing home business prior to the events that led to several deaths. However, the federal court ruling on the case detailed the timeline which proves Rauner's claims to be false.

The truth is that Rauner did not "get out of the nursing home business" – rather, Rauner's firm set up a shell company, transferred liability for the nursing home cases to the shell company, then claimed that the shell company was bankrupt, all in order to avoid paying the families of his victims.



Catastrophic coverage added to Medicare Advantage

STATE AND UNIVERSITY RETIREES on the new Medicare Advantage plan will have federal prescription coverage protection added to their health plan.

The new Medicare Advantage plans are known as "Medicare Advantage- Part D" plans, meaning that federal Medicare Part D funds are used to pay part of the costs for prescription drugs.

For most Part D users, there is a coverage gap or "donut hole" for prescription costs in excess \$2,850 a year, at which point co-pays greatly increase until costs reach \$4,550 a year. That's when "catastrophic coverage" kicks in, greatly reducing co-pays.

It was initially unclear whether the state's Medicare Advantage plans would include catastrophic coverage. In May, however, the state announced it would be included.

Legislation would add additional Medicare Advantage vendors

IN NOVEMBER, STATE SEN. MIKE Frerichs (D-Champaign) filed an amendment seeking to provide state and university retirees with more options for Medicare

Advantage vendors.

Currently, retirees in 48 counties only have one insurance plan to select for their state Medicare Advantage coverage, a PPO provided by United Healthcare. Frerichs' amendment would re-open the bidding process for Medicare Advantage plans, specifically to add more HMO options for retirees during open-enrollment periods for the plans. The bill also seeks to alter some of the grading criteria for the bids, as some elected officials thought that the current criteria were arbitrary and unnecessarily restrictive.

In May, the Illinois Senate Executive Committee recommended adoption of the bill, but it did not come up for a vote before the spring session was adjourned. The bill is expected to be revisited when the General Assembly reconvenes this fall.

City of Chicago pension cuts would hurt retirees

THE RECENT PASSAGE OF CITY OF Chicago pension cuts could leave many retirees in dire straits. SB 1922 would replace the compounded 3 percent COLA that City of Chicago retirees currently receive with a simple COLA that would be the lesser of 3 percent or one-half

the rate of inflation. Retirees would also have to go through a COLA "freeze," which means that in the years 2017, 2019, and 2025, there would be no COLA increase at all.

In total, the average City of Chicago retiree would lose approximately \$250,000 in retirement benefits over a 20 year period. Under this law, city retirees would not even get the same inflation protection that a Social Security recipient receives.

Making matters worse, City of Chicago retirees are having their health care coverage phased out by Mayor Rahm Emanuel's administration. This is especially damaging since most city retirees do not receive Social Security and many do not have Medicare coverage either. By 2017, health care coverage will be completely phased out and the average married retiree couple will pay up to \$1,000 per month in health care premiums - money they would have to pay out of a reduced pension annuity if SB 1922 is upheld.

"This is an unfair, unconstitutional, and vicious attack on City of Chicago retirees," said Mary Jones, president of AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 60 in Chicago. "Retirees made every pension contribution while they were working, and

now because the city politicians mismanaged their finances, they want to take away what we already earned and sacrificed for."

The new law also makes significant reductions to the pensions of active City of Chicago employees.

A federal lawsuit now pending challenges the phase-out of health care for City of Chicago retirees, and AFSCME, along with its allies in the We Are One Chicago coalition, has announced it will file a lawsuit challenging the pension bill as well.

Despite hoopla, 401(k)s fall flat

A CHORUS OF RIGHT-WING groups in Illinois, including the Illinois Policy Institute, ALEC, Reboot Illinois and Bruce Rauner's campaign, continue to champion 401(k) style pension plans as a "fix" to the Illinois pension system, even as mounting evidence shows that 401(k) plans do not work as advertised.

The benefits of converting government retiree pensions to 401(k)s have been vastly overstated. A report from the National Public Pension Coalition found that "when states have adopted pension overhaul legislation, they have found

that it came at a significant cost. Alaska and Michigan went down that road and saw their pension debts increase. West Virginia adopted a 401(k)-like plan for public employees in 1991, but reversed course in 2006 after it found that public employees had such low incomes in retirement that they were eligible for means-tested public assistance programs, driving up costs to the state."

Pension opponents also hope that Americans will forget the devastating toll that the 2008 recession took on the retirement accounts of people who relied on a 401(k) plan for their retirement savings. A study by the Employee Benefit Research Institute found that as a result of the 2008 market crash, people enrolled in 401(k) plans lost 25-30 percent of their retirement income in a matter of days.

Why then, if the plans leave retirees in dire financial straits and state budgets no better off, would the Illinois Policy Institute and Rauner be pushing these plans so hard?

So-called reform in Rhode Island – a state held up as an example by ALEC – may offer an explanation. Fees the state paid to Wall Street money managers drove up costs so much that Forbes magazine called it "just blatant Wall Street gorging."

Rauner himself made a fortune off of investing public funds and would've been able to collect even more in fees and costs if state pension systems were converted to 401(k) plans.

Another common claim these groups make in Illinois is that "state and local pensions are too lavish, and we can't afford them." However, one pension system in Illinois, the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) is funded at 98 percent, making it one of the best funded pension systems in the nation.

Why is IMRF doing so well when other systems are so bad off? Unlike the other systems where the state routinely failed to make their employer contributions, IMRF followed the law and kept its plan funding at required levels. The result? A model public pension system, and a big rebuttal to those that claim that "state pensions are unaffordable." The major reason public pension systems are at risk is that politicians failed to keep their end of the bargain.

SHORT REPORTS

AFSCME International Convention coming to Chicago

LOCAL UNION DELEGATES FROM across the country will converge on Chicago later this month for AFSCME's 41st biennial International Convention.

The theme of the convention is "Bold, Brave, Determined." It will be held at the McCormick Place convention center from July 14-18.

The convention's delegates are elected by the members of local unions across the country. The number of delegates is based on membership size, though any local, no matter how small, is allowed at least one delegate. The convention's main responsibilities include consideration of amendments to the International Constitution and resolutions on critical matters of policy, politics and strategy that will guide the union's national agenda for the next two years.

Delegates will also participate in several activities off the convention floor, including meet-up events for certain job sectors and a number of workshops on topics ranging from internal organizing to retirement security for all. Delegates will hear a keynote address from International President Lee Saunders as well as speeches from a number of allies who support public employee unions.

Labor Board sides with City of Rock Island employees

PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES FOR the City of Rock Island, represented by Local 988, have emerged victorious in a pair of long-running disputes recently decided by the Illinois Labor Relations Board.

In the first case, the board agreed with an administrative law judge's finding that the city violated the law "when it threatened probationary employees with termination if they participated in an anticipated work stoppage or strike, and informed employees of this threat."

That charge stemmed from an incident in fall of 2007 when two probationary employees were told by a supervisor, Jerry Martin, that they were not allowed to strike. An employee testified that the supervisor "quickly informed us that if AFSCME was to go on strike that we

wouldn't be able to because we would lose our positions."

A supervisor also told another member of the bargaining unit, Paul Stanforth, that probationary or seasonal employees who failed to report during a strike "will be fired" and that "if you guys go on strike, do you realize you won't have health insurance; and you do not have enough support in the union to go on strike."

Administrative Law Judge Michelle Owen found that Martin's actions "would reasonably tend to interfere with, restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of their right to strike," adding that "... a reasonable employee in a probationary employee's position, and in the position of the other members of the bargaining unit, would feel coerced by an employer initiating a discussion with employees regarding the lawfulness of probationary employees going on strike."

In the second case, the city was found to violate state labor law in two instances when it implemented dress code changes – including one that would forbid workers from wearing buttons in support of their union. In one case, an employee was told to remove "Contract Now" and "I support my bargaining team" buttons because they "made a political statement."

In both cases, the changes were made without consulting the union, even though dress codes were explicitly covered by the collective bargaining agreement.

The hearing officer found the city had violated its duty to bargain in good faith by making the changes. In the case of the buttons, the officer wrote that the collective bargaining agreement did not "specifically address union buttons or other union insignia" and that "for many years employees had been allowed to wear union buttons" until the policy was changed by the city unilaterally.

Children of AFSCME members awarded scholarships

THE CHILDREN OF THREE AFSCME members have been named recipients of the 2014 Larry Marquardt Scholarship. Each of the three students will receive \$1,000 toward their college educations.

Mason Vetter, the son of



Mason Vetter

Local 448 member Randall Vetter, will be attending Rock Valley College in Rockford. In his application essay, he wrote that "the labor movement is society's last great hope to salvage the middle class."

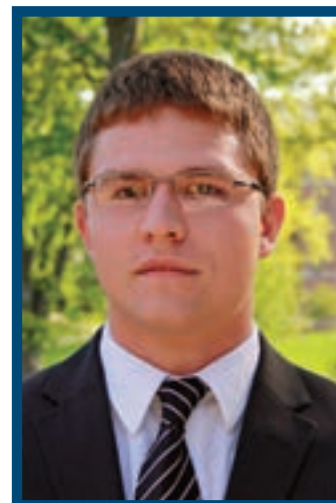
Brittany Reynolds, the daughter of Local 1019 member Christina Reynolds, will be attending MacMurray College in Jacksonville. In her essay, Reynolds noted the value of immigrant workers to



Brittany Reynolds

the labor movement's future. "We all just want the dignity to work hard, and have the freedom to do so," she wrote. "The union is needed now more than ever."

Jas Colton Brummer, the son of Local 981 member Dan Brummer, has completed his first year of study at the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Ind. He wrote that "labor unions have been a reliable and effective



Jas Colton Brummer

tool for the working class and remain a fighting force needed now more than ever."

In addition to the Marquardt Scholarship winners, Char'Nee Turner, the daughter of Local 2081 member LaNese Kincaid-Turner, is one of 10 national winners of the 2014 AFSCME Family Scholarship awarded by the international union. She will receive \$2,000 each year for four years.

Privatization: helping corporations, hurting the middle class

A NEW REPORT OFFERS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE RUSH TO PRIVATIZE GOVERNMENT SERVICES MAY BE good for lining the pockets of corporate CEOs, but is also causing great harm to the middle class.

The report, released by In the Public Interest, a non-profit think tank, notes that government jobs have historically provided "ladders of opportunity" that allow people to climb into the middle class. Yet when these positions are privatized or outsourced, "the subsequent contracted positions offer lower wages, reduced benefits, and little or no retirement security."

"As a result, taxpayers inadvertently support the further dismantling of our once robust middle class," the report's authors wrote. "The degradation of formerly family-supporting jobs through government outsourcing turns middle class careers into poverty-level jobs. Governments across the country are using our public dollars to fuel the low-wage economy and increasing economic inequality."

Wages and benefits of outsourced jobs are often so poor, the report notes, that employees have to rely on public assistance programs like Medicaid – a "hidden cost to the government" that goes unaccounted for.

The broader community is also hurt by privatization, the report notes, by reducing employees' ability to spend at local businesses.

The impact of privatization is particularly clear at state and local government prisons, where, for instance, the median income of correctional officers at privatized facilities is about \$10,000 less per year than at government-run prisons.

The report also looked at Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's decision to outsource homeless outreach services to Catholic Charities, noting that wages fell by a staggering 45 percent afterward.

The only people seemingly not hurt by privatization are the CEOs of the companies that profit from it. Eric Foss, the CEO of Aramark – the food-service and facility management giant – received over \$18 million in total compensation in 2013. Damon Hininger, CEO of the Corrections Corporation of America – the country's largest for-profit prison firm – received more than \$3 million in compensation.





Council 31 launches "100% Union" campaign

With public employees and their unions facing attacks on multiple fronts, Council 31 has launched a new initiative to maximize the strength of AFSCME membership in Illinois.

The "100% Union" campaign's primary goal is to enroll fair-share feepayers as full members of the union and to activate them along with existing members to combat the assault that threatens the very existence of union contracts in the public sector. The campaign is being run in coordination with the international union's "50,000 Stronger" campaign that is running throughout the summer.

Historically, laws in Illinois and other states that give public employees the right to collective bargaining can also require that all represented employees pay either union dues as members or a "fair share" fee to cover the cost of services the union is required to provide to non-members.

But that system – which ensures that everyone who benefits from the union's activities contributes their fair share to paying the cost – is now under attack. The case of *Harris v. Quinn*, which the U.S. Supreme Court was set to rule on as *On the Move* went to press, could see the ability of unions to collect such fees greatly reduced or eliminated entirely.

Fueled by the corporate-backed National Right-to-Work Foundation, that case is part of a larger attempt by anti-worker forces to destroy public sector labor unions.

"Whether it's Right-to-Work on a national level or Bruce Rauner right here in Illinois, we have to be ready to fight these attacks, and we have to be strong in order to win," Council 31 Deputy Director Roberta Lynch said. "The best way to do that is to ensure we have as many members as possible ready to withstand these assaults and that we have the resources needed to win the fights against

such powerful and well-funded opponents.

Attaining a 100 percent membership rate helps at the bargaining table, too.

"When management sees that a local union has a 100 percent membership rate, they know they're dealing with a strong, unified group of employees that's ready to stand together and fight," Lynch said. "A local with a high membership rate is a local that comes to the bargaining table in a strong position."

Members enrolling members

At the heart of the "100% Union" campaign are volunteer member organizers (VMOs) who have volunteered to go door-to-door in their communities to talk directly with fair-share feepayers about the benefits of becoming a union member.

Darlene Moser, a member of Local 692 who works as a library paraprofessional in the Rockford Public Schools, was one of several VMOs who worked an eight-hour shift signing up members as part of a concerted effort in Winnebago County.

"We just want people to realize the benefits and advantages of being union members," she said. "One of those advantages is having a united front in all areas. We need the support of everyone to succeed."

In one weekend, Moser and other VMOs signed up 78 new members – a full third of the fair-share payers in the area.

"We talk about the challenges in front of us – upcoming bargaining and the forces allied against us in the state legislature," Council 31 regional director Joe Bella said. "We find out what people's concerns are, and most people are very receptive."

The benefits of union membership are so clear that most people don't require much persuasion to sign up, Council 31 staff representative Ed Sadlowski said.

"We ask questions that allow people to come to their own conclusions," he said. "It's not a sales pitch. It's learning about the individual and demonstrating how the union is relevant to them."

Some feepayers don't realize they're not full union members. Michelle Holt, a Rockford Public Schools paraprofessional, didn't realize she was a fair-share payer until approached by one of the Rockford VMO's. Now, she's a full member of Local 692.

"I think the job security and the help the union can provide is a good thing. At my last job I didn't have that and I think I was wronged there. I'm appreciative for any kind of help they can give me," she said. "It's very helpful for everyone to know their rights and what the union is there for."

Moser said signing up new members has injected energy into her local, which is already discussing making another push toward 100 percent membership.

"Once we have full membership and stronger numbers, we're more of a united front," she said. "The more people we have that understand that, we can have strength in our numbers that we didn't have before."