



ON THE

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# MOVE

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



# STANDING TOGETHER FOR A FAIR CONTRACT

**STATE EMPLOYEES RISE TO MEET THE CHALLENGE**

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AFSCME Council 31  
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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

# AFSCME never quits

*Unions faced with unprecedented assault in high court*

**D**oes Bruce Rauner go out for late-night cocktails with Charles and David Koch, the infamous uber-rich brothers who are seeking to remake the American political landscape with their vast fortune?

DOES THIS TRIO RENDEZVOUS EVERY YEAR AT SOME EXCLUSIVE RESORT OR JET OFF TOGETHER to some tropical island? Do they brainstorm together about what company to take over next or where to invest their mega millions? These are things we regular folks will likely never know.

But whether or not they're drinking buddies or traveling companions, Rauner and the Kochs are most definitely political soul-mates, joined at the hip by a fierce desire to silence the voices of average working families in the political arena and the workplace. Their strategy for achieving that aim is straightforward: eradicate unions, especially public employee unions.

Without the organized strength of the millions of working people who belong to unions today, the super-rich would effectively control the entire political process. They would make up the overwhelming bulk of campaign contributions, theirs would be the only viewpoints offered up in a conglomerated media world in which they hold the controlling financial interest, and theirs would be the loudest voices in the policy debates over the critical issues of our time.

The interests of the Kochs and Rauner converge most clearly in a case now before the US Supreme Court that seeks to banish 'fair share fees' in the public sector. In fact, the connection could hardly be clearer. The suit was brought by a right-wing legal group, the Center for Individual Rights, that gets its funding from the Koch Brothers, with Bruce Rauner filing an amicus brief

echoing the Center's arguments.

While purporting to be about freedom of speech for public employees, this case (Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association) is at its root an attempt to bankrupt labor unions—requiring them to provide all aspects of union representation (contract negotiations, grievance procedure, legal advocacy, etc.) to all employees in a union workplace, while allowing any employee who so chooses to refrain from paying even a penny toward the cost of that representation.

Fair Share fees were ruled constitutional by a 9-0 vote of the US Supreme Court in 1977. But with a majority on the current Supreme Court now firmly allied with the corporate elite, it is all too possible that decades-old decision will be overturned—and the collection of fair share fees will become unconstitutional.

If that happens, you can be certain that the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI), a water-carrier for the Rauner/Koch crowd, will go into high gear. IPI gets funding from both Rauner and Koch-backed organizations. It's been leading the fight to abolish public-employee pensions, expand privatization of public services, and cut state employee salaries.

So if you work anywhere in the public sector, you can be very sure that this right-wing empty-thought tank is not on your side. But you can also be sure that they will be trying to sell themselves as your new best friend—pressing you to quit the union and make your co-workers who are union members pay for you.

You can also expect to get

that same kind of warm, fuzzy encouragement to quit from another faux friend, Governor Bruce Rauner—the same governor who is leading the charge to drive down the take-home pay of state workers, abolish the collective bargaining rights of local government employees, and privatize whatever and wherever he chooses.

Many in the media will echo their calls. When organized labor backed legislation that sought to prevent a strike in state government by providing for the intervention of an independent arbitrator, just about every newspaper in the state parroted Rauner's talking points, which argued it would be better to let him force a strike. As if that weren't enough of media subservience to the powers-that-be, the Illinois Policy Institute just bought up the Illinois Radio Network, one of the primary sources of news for local radio stations all across the state of Illinois.

So we have to begin now to prepare for the massive onslaught of misinformation that's about to descend on all of us.

We have to be prepared to hold fast to the powerful force we've built up over decades that has significantly improved wage levels, ensured access to affordable health care for us and our families, successfully defended against all attempts to slash pension benefits, tackled countless managerial abuses at worksites all across Illinois, brought dignity and a measure of fairness to every represented employee, defended public services against privatization, and won legislative and political victories that have improved the lives of all citizens. That force is our union.

AFSCME has never quit in the fight for a better life for all—and that's why it's essential that none of us ever let ourselves be manipulated into quitting on our union.



### On the Move

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BY  
ROBERTA LYNCH

**WE HAVE TO  
HOLD FAST TO  
THE POWERFUL  
FORCE WE'VE  
BUILT UP OVER  
DECADES:  
OUR UNION.**



# Rauner breaks off contract negotiations

*Seeks to foster conflict*

In the final minutes of a Jan. 8 negotiating session between AFSCME and Gov. Bruce Rauner's administration, members of the state employee Bargaining Committee were shocked when the governor's representatives announced that they believed negotiations were at impasse and would no longer continue to bargain.

"IMPASSE" IS A TERM WITH LEGAL MEANING IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, REFERRING TO A SITUATION IN WHICH FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS ARE FUTILE.

The Union immediately rejected the "impasse" claim, making clear that AFSCME is prepared to continue to negotiate. "The Governor's rash action invites confrontation and chaos—it is not the path to a fair agreement," AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "The people of Illinois deserve leadership that is focused on working together and getting things done, not someone who demands his own way or nothing at all."

Although negotiations have been long-running and contentious, nothing about the early January bargaining session hinted that management would pull out.

For 40 years, AFSCME has been able to reach fair agreements at the bargaining table with every Illinois governor. But as a candidate, Bruce Rauner repeatedly boasted that he would force public

employees out on strike in order to impose his extreme demands.

That's why unions representing state employees supported legislation providing arbitration as an alternative means to settle the contract if talks broke down. When the governor vetoed that bill, he pledged to legislators that he would work in good faith to reach a settlement. By defying his legal responsibility to bargain, Rauner broke that pledge.

As *On the Move* went to press, the Rauner administration formally declared impasse and asked the Labor Board to affirm that position. In the meantime, the "tolling" agreement (contract extension) is still in place.

## Critical disagreements at the table

STATE EMPLOYEES WANT A FAIR agreement. They don't want to go backwards on economic security, allow the governor to jeopardize public services, or give up their voice at work.

Areas of disagreement between the parties include:

- **Affordable health care.** The administration wants to double health premiums for employees if they keep their current health plan, making Illinois among the worst states in the nation for health coverage.
- **Fair pay.** Rauner wants to freeze wages and step increases for four years. With no general or step increases plus huge hikes in health costs, workers would see their take-home pay diminished. The governor also wants to impose a so-called "merit bonus" plan that's better termed "political pay" since it would open the door to cronyism and favoritism by allowing management to decide how bonuses are awarded and who gets them. What's more, any employee missing more than seven working days in a year would be ineligible, blatantly discriminating against families with small children or employees with illnesses.
- **Privatization.** The administration insists on eliminating safeguards that prevent unfettered privatization of public services. The union is standing up to ensure that public services aren't contracted out for private profit, and to protect the standard of living of public employees.

## Standing up for workplace rights

"I'VE BEEN A STATE EMPLOYEE

"Unions are the only voice that working people have."

for 40 years," said Ruby Robinson, president of Local 2833 and a member of the Council 31 executive board and state bargaining committee. "When I started, there was no union. I don't ever want it to go back to the way it was. I never want to see our rights taken away."

But the battle is much bigger than state employees alone.

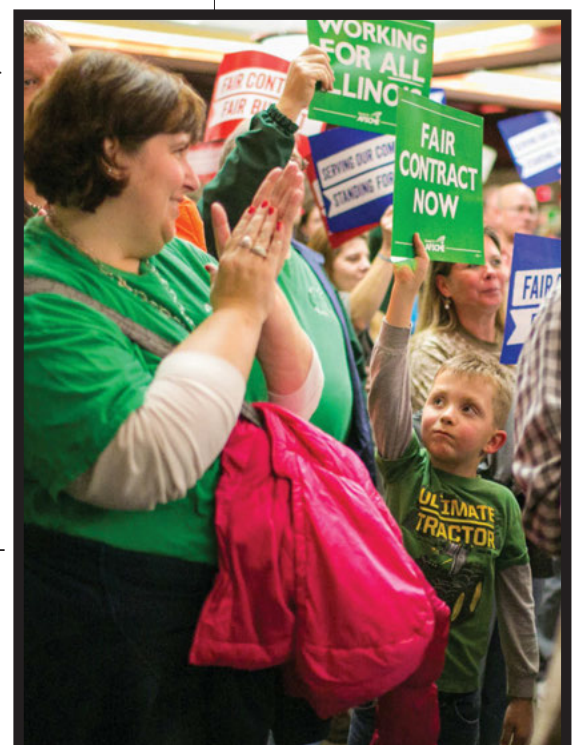
"Governor Rauner is aggressively seeking to destroy the entire labor movement," Lynch said. "Unions are the only voice that working people have. And he wants to silence that voice."

"We

can't let him divide and conquer working people," Robinson agreed. "That's why we need as many citizens as possible to help us fight back."

At press time, AFSCME planned to renew its support for legislation to provide arbitration as an alternative means to reach a contract settlement. And state employees began organizing local union meetings to discuss the status of bargaining and the possibility of a strike.

"We're prepared to continue to work in good faith to reach an agreement that's fair to all," Lynch said. "It's unfortunate we have a governor who doesn't appear to respect or value the work state employees do."



# Legislative agenda: Protect workers' rights, ensure fair funding for services

*AFSCME delegates set 2016 legislative agenda, make primary endorsements*

A day after the Rauner administration walked away from state contract negotiations in Peoria, delegates representing AFSCME locals across the state gathered there for the Council 31 legislative and endorsement conference to chart a course forward.

ONE YEAR OF GOVERNOR RAUNER HAS LEFT ILLINOIS LIMPING ALONG WITHOUT A BUDGET, human service agencies closing their doors, and public employees threatened with the loss of basic union rights. AFSCME's PEOPLE program is more important than ever.

"We cannot overstate the peril of the moment," AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch told the crowded room. "Not only is the future of the labor movement hanging in the balance, but the future of all working people is at stake."

Wealthy elites are manipu-

lating the rules so they can profit at the expense of working families, Lynch said, pointing out that funding for political campaigns is so skewed that half of all contributions in the current presidential race are from just 158 wealthy families.

"The labor movement is at the center of these battles because we have a vision of raising wages and lifting up our communities," said Council 31 Deputy Director Mike Newman. "We won't bow down to the oligarchy of rich, selfish bullies like Gov. Rauner. We're going to stand up and demand a fair

and just society."

AFSCME members were joined by two state legislators who are standing up for working families and a fair economy.

"Good union jobs meant everything to my family," said Rep. Litesa Wallace (D-Rockford), whose mom was a postal worker and father a police officer. "Public employees are the backbone of our state, but Rauner's goal is to dismantle collective bargaining. We have to fight against that."

Sen. Sam McCann (R-Carlinville) spoke of the importance of building on our grandparents' achievements and not backing down when faced with extraordinary challenges. "Collective bargaining is the best way to preserve the middle class in this country," he said. "We need to win this bat-



Rep. Litesa Wallace



Sen. Sam McCann

## Moving forward in 2016

SOME 500 PEOPLE CHAIRS AND local presidents adopted seven priorities for AFSCME Council 31's 2016 legislative agenda:

- Protect workers' rights
- Address revenue shortfalls in state and local governments
- Fight privatization of public

services and assets

- Adequate staffing levels and quality services delivery in state agencies
- Funding to improve wage levels in community disability agencies and other AFSCME-represented human service providers
- Adequate funding for state universities
- Oppose cuts to public employee pensions

## AFSCME endorsements: 2016 March primary

*Primaries in March will have decisive impact on the future of workers' rights in Illinois*

"RAUNER AND HIS FRIENDS HAVE MILLIONS TO DOLE OUT IN THESE RACES, AND THEY are determined to gain Republican control in the Legislature in order to pursue their agenda of wiping out public employee collective bargaining in Illinois," warns AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch.

"They may have the money, but we have the people power. Every AFSCME member and their families need to knock on doors, make calls and get involved. If we stand together, we will still be here when Bruce Rauner is gone."

AFSCME's PEOPLE Executive Committee, which is made up of the chairs of each local area PEOPLE committee, made 2016 primary legislative endorsements based on recommendations of the regional PEOPLE committees. In addition, the full body of delegates—local presidents and PEOPLE chairs—voted on endorsements for statewide and national candidates in contested races at the January 9 statewide Legislative and Endorsement Conference.

### U.S. SENATE:

Tammy Duckworth (D)

### U.S. CONGRESS:

Bobby Rush (D, District 1)  
 Robin Kelly (D, District 2)  
 Luis Gutierrez (D, District 4)  
 Danny Davis (D, District 7)  
 Michael Noland (D, District 8)

### ILLINOIS SENATE:

Omar Aquino (D, District 2)  
 Patricia Van Pelt (D, District 5)  
 Michael Hastings (D, District 19)  
 Cristina Castro (D, District 22)  
 Sam McCann (R, District 50)

### ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Alex Acevedo (D, District 2)  
 Luis Arroyo (D, District 3)  
 Cynthia Soto (D, District 4)  
 Juliana Stratton (D, District 5)

Sonya Harper (D, District 6)  
 Emanuel Chris Welch (D, District 7)  
 La Shawn Ford (D, District 8)  
 Michael Madigan (D, District 22)  
 Christian Mitchell (D, District 26)  
 Thaddeus Jones (D, District 29)  
 Marcus Evans (D, District 33)  
 Al Riley (D, District 38)  
 Jaime Andrade (D, District 40)  
 Litesa Wallace (D, District 67)  
 Mike Halpin (D, District 72)  
 Dennis Scobbie (R, District 95)

### Illinois Comptroller:

Susana Mendoza (D)

### Cook County State's Attorney:

Kim Foxx (D)

### DeKalb County Board Chair:

Mark Pietrowski (D)

### Kane County Board:

Brian Pollock (District 4, D)  
 Barbara Hernandez (District 8, D)  
 Tom Armstrong (District 20, D)  
 Willie Clements (District 22, D)  
 Joseph Haimann (District 24, D)

### Kankakee County:

State's Attorney: Jim Rowe (D)  
 County Board District 9:  
 Shane Ritter (R)

### Lake County Circuit Clerk:

Erin Cartwright Weinstein (D)

### Livingston County State's Attorney:

Randy Yedinak (R)

### Madison County:

Board Chair: Alan Dunstan (D)  
 Recorder: Amy Meyer (D)

### Rock Island County Circuit Clerk:

Amy Beeding (D)  
 Tammy Weikert (D)

### Stephenson County Board District E:

Bill Hadley (R)

### Williamson County State's Attorney:

Brandon Zanotti (D)

### Winnebago County:

Board Chair: Scott Christiansen (R)  
 Circuit Clerk: Tom Klein (R)  
 Board District 10: Joe Hoffman (D)  
 Board District 12: Jaime Salgado (D)  
 Board District 17: David Soll (D)  
 Board District 19: John Guevara (R)

# Community disability employees press for a pay increase

*AFSCME backs legislation to raise wages to \$15 an hour for direct support personnel*



wanted to affect the lives of kids.”

## Hiring crisis mounts

TURNOVER DUE TO LOW WAGES for such a challenging job has always been a problem for community-based service providers in Illinois, but now it's a crisis. Many DSPs in Illinois have not received a wage increase since 2007—the last time the state increased its low reimbursement rates to providers. Rising wages in other sectors like fast food and retail have made it even harder for agencies to recruit and retain quality staff. Disability agencies are facing hard-to-fill vacancies for up to 25 percent of their staff.

Recently, a federal court monitor charged with ensuring individuals' access to community services told the judge in the case that Illinois is not complying. The monitor found that a staff shortage in community services—driven by low wages—means individuals cannot access the care they need. “The monitor fully supports an increase in reimbursement rates to increase wages for DSPs in order to facilitate the provision of adequate, appropriate supports,” the report said.

Excessive vacancies force employers to rely more on mandatory overtime, leading to staff burnout and driving up costs. “There's a lot of stress in this job. A lot of times, you just finished working your shift and then you are forced to work the next shift if you want to keep your job,” Woods said.

Woods says the proposed legislation would improve services for people with developmental disabilities. “Our goal is to help each individual reach their potential and live in society with the least amount of restrictions on them as possible,” she said. “We can reach that goal if the state invests a little more in this field and raises wages to stabilize the workforce.”

Woods argues that people with developmental disabilities need stability in their lives. They need someone they know and trust working with them every day in order to learn and thrive. “My own child was recently diagnosed with autism. Now I think: How would I want someone to treat and teach my son? I think that's the perspective our legislators need.”

**A**n estimated 27,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities live and learn in community-based settings in Illinois. But the trained paraprofessionals who care for these vulnerable individuals every day—feeding, clothing and teaching them—must struggle to care for their own families on poverty-level wages.

AFSCME AND ITS PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY AGENCIES WILL PUT FORTH A BILL IN THE 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION that seeks to reduce turnover, fill vacancies, and ensure that Direct Service Personnel (DSPs) are adequately compensated for the important work they do. The proposed legislation calls for increased reimbursements to state-funded service providers that reflect a new \$15 base hourly wage for all DSPs.

## We're talking about human lives

YOLANDA WOODS, A DSP FOR

20 years, finds her work at the Hope Institute in Springfield extremely rewarding.

“There's nothing better than seeing the kids you've worked with since they were five or six years old go out and be able to hold down a job in the community,” she said. “It's sad that this work isn't valued because we are talking about human lives. We aren't babysitters. We are trained to help individuals live the best life they can live.”

DSPs like Woods provide habilitation services that help a person learn or improve skills and abilities

that they may not be developing normally: basic life skills like using the bathroom independently, loading the dishwasher, self-medication or even how to use a cash register.

## A powerful voice

BUT WITH MORE THAN 400 different employers and even more work locations, these dedicated employees too often find themselves forgotten by the state lawmakers who must fund their agencies. Residential programs serving individuals with severe

Yolanda Woods, direct support personnel at Hope Institute in Springfield, advocating for increased state support for community disability agencies in 2013.

developmental disabilities, often combined with physical disabilities, can be costly to operate.

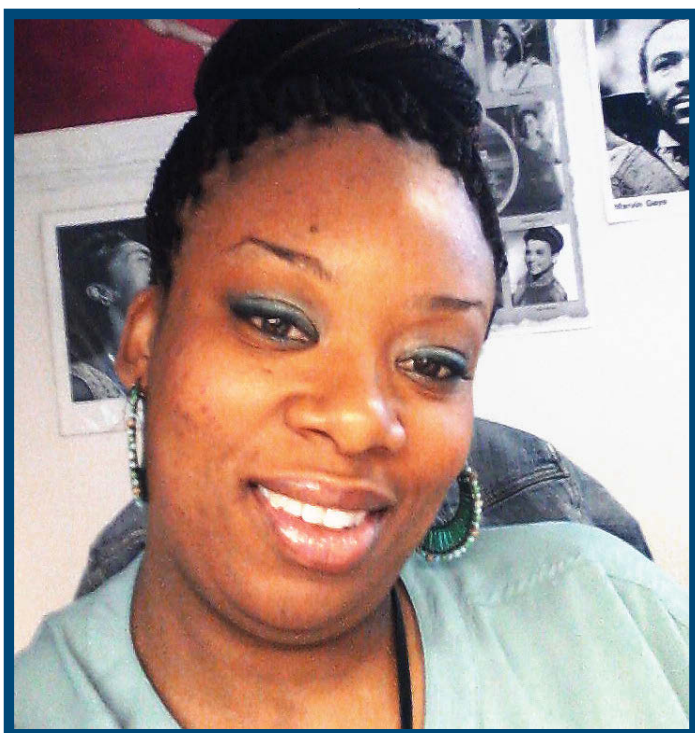
“That's why AFSCME has been working to help these employees form unions,” said Council 31 Associate Director Tracey Abman. “If we can bring all of them together all across the state, we can create a powerful voice for fair pay and quality services.”

With an average hourly wage of \$9.35, many DSPs qualify for public benefits such as Medicaid and food stamps and are forced to accept them in order to support their families. “If I had done something else I might be in a better financial position,” said Woods. “But I

# Making a difference, one life at a time

*AFSCME probation officer and parole agent share their story*

Probation officers and parole agents help rehabilitate offenders to reduce recidivism and improve the lives and futures of individuals and their families. These men and women find their sometimes dangerous professions to be highly rewarding as they know their work is critical not only for the people they serve but for our communities and our state. On the Move interviewed two long-time public service workers to get a glimpse into their worlds. They shared their own stories and set the record straight on the value of public service work.



## KISHA ROBERTS-TABB

*A Cook County Juvenile Probation Officer, Kisha Roberts-Tabb has been a member of AFSCME Local 3477 for 13 years.*

**Why do you do this work? Tell us about your job.**

I believe it's not an accident that I'm doing this job. This is my purpose. It's a calling.

I started off working in the Austin and Englewood neighborhoods of Chicago. Then I went to Jumpstart, an educational program that helps you advance your career, and now I am Cook County's Human Trafficking, Gender Responsive and LGBTQ specialist. I focus on helping young girls who are victims of human trafficking, girls and young women with unique needs, and any minor who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, to ensure they have the best ser-

vices possible.

By the time a young person gets to me, they are often in life or death situations. We established my position so that these girls would be treated as victims of human trafficking and not criminalized for things that aren't in their control. I can be helpful to my fellow members because I have relationships with the FBI, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police Department, and the Department of Children and Family Services. Also, if the minor is in danger or is set to testify against the trafficker, we work with agen-

**"By the time a young person gets to me, they are often in life or death situations."**

cies outside of Illinois to get them in a safe environment as far from the trafficking as possible.

**How do probation officers help rehabilitate young offenders?**

We have a service-centered approach. We evaluate each situation to see what caused the minor to get on

the road to the legal system. Then we focus on providing wrap-around services to best assist the minor—and their family—to prevent recidivism to the juvenile system or graduation to the adult system. The role of probation officer is limited, however, and we strive to be collaborative with community-based services, the schools and the families.

**How do you stay positive and motivated?**

For me, it's the response I get from the kids. After 13 years I still have a relationship with kids I handled on my very first caseload. It keeps me motivated to keep doing this work because I see their progress. I see kids graduating from high school, becoming entrepreneurs by starting home day care centers or getting their own apartments. From the outside some of their progress may seem small, but they haven't been in school since sixth grade and they are working and taking care of themselves. Seeing that kind of achievement motivates me to make bigger and better progress for my clients.

**How do you feel about Rauner's animosity toward public employees?**

I feel like it's just propaganda when he says public workers are overpaid or greedy. If the public worked one day in our position they'd know it's not about greed. I deal with pimps and human traffickers. I find young girls in horrible situations and get them safe from predatory men. I'm in a very dangerous position—I'm definitely not doing it for the money. Field officers go into unsafe environments every day, unarmed. We make the decision to go into a blind spot not knowing if we're going to walk out again. What's greedy about that?

**How can we challenge Rauner's negative portrayal of public service workers?**

I feel like as a union and a community we have to do a

better job of changing the image of public service workers. For whatever reason, so many people in our community have no understanding of the kind of work we do. We are paid a fraction of what Rauner and his cronies make, but we are changing the lives of our youth. We need to change the image of public service workers by being more collaborative with our fellow workers. We have to be supportive of each other because they are attacking all of us.

## MATT LUKOW

*A Senior Corrections Parole Agent, President of Local 1964 and AFSCME Council 31 Executive Board Member, Matt Lukow has been a state employee in Sangamon County since 1990.*

**Why do you do this work? Tell us about your job.**

I always wanted to get into law enforcement. After five years as a corrections officer I was able to become a parole agent. It's a really interesting job. There are 35,000 parolees statewide. My caseload consists only of felons released from state prison. Every day I check on the parolees at home or at work to make sure they are doing what they need to do and getting the help they need. Sometimes I follow up on referrals for mental health

or substance abuse counseling or conduct random drug tests. I check in with everyone on my caseload at least once a month.

**What do you think of Gov. Rauner's push toward privatization?**

Privatization of the prison industry is extremely troublesome. It would be a huge mistake. Whenever you have a for-profit agency being paid to incarcerate people you are going in the opposite direction of what Rauner professes to support, which is fewer people in our prison system. If you're paying private agencies dollars per inmate, the incentive is to lock people up and keep them in prison longer. The staff would be lower quality. Security and safety would be diminished. We've seen it in other states and it ends up costing more in the long run because inmates aren't treated correctly or humanely and there are more assaults and escapes.

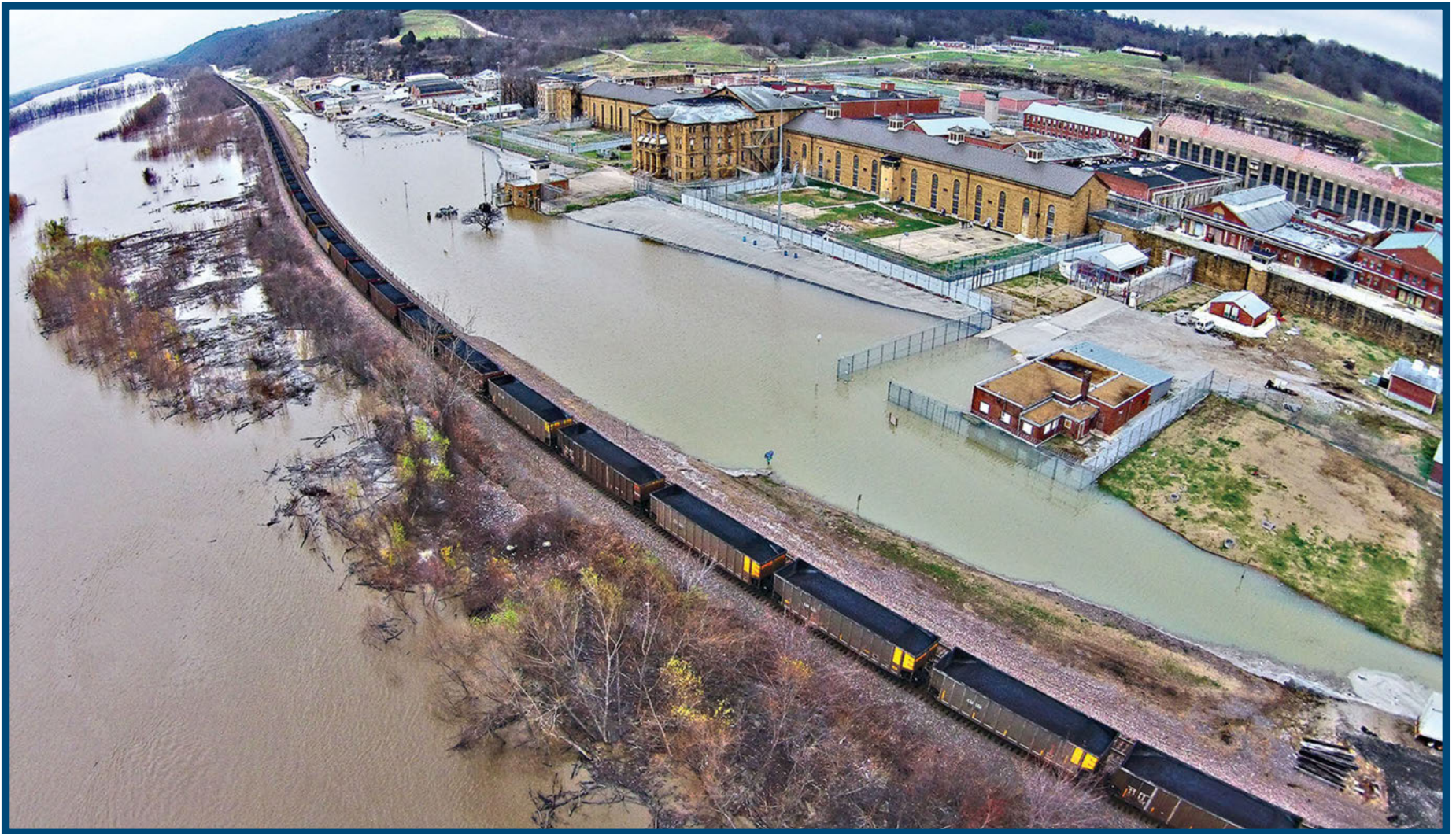
**"We need to make sure the public understand tht union members want a living wage for everybody."**

**How do you feel about Rauner's animosity toward public employees?**

It's a move to try to destroy unions and the country. We've seen it happen in Wisconsin and Indiana. Big money interests want to see wages reduced and benefits and pensions reduced or

*Continued on the facing page*





# AFSCME members work around the clock to keep floodwaters at bay

*In late December, AFSCME members across Illinois worked tirelessly to protect Illinois residents*

**A** FSCME members across the state dealt with rising waters and treacherous weather conditions over the holidays as 2015 came to a close.

PUBLIC WORKS TEAMS PLOWED SNOW AND SALTED ICY ROADS, PARAMEDICS RESPONDED TO weather-related emergencies, and members piled sandbags to control damaging flood waters.

At Menard Correctional Center in Chester, Illinois, AFSCME members used 800 tons of sand in 25,000 sandbags to protect the maximum-security prison from the rising Mississippi River. Using flatbed trailers and picnic tables as walkways, maintenance craftsmen, counselors and correctional officers worked on their days off to transfer more than 200 inmates to safety.

Due to pressure from AFSCME Local 1175 over many years, Menard was better prepared this time than for the historic floods of 1993. Proactively planning for the eventual crest of the river prevented what could have been utter catastrophe.

"It is truly amazing what we accomplished in a very short time," Local 1175 President Jerry Grammer said. "Teamwork has been exemplary during a very chaotic situation."

IYC Pere Marquette, a Department of Juvenile Justice facility north of Alton, also took a hit from overflowing Mississippi waters. AFSCME members worked together to transfer the youths to other facilities, keeping them out of harm's way.

Working 12-hour shifts seven days a week, Randolph County Sheriff's Deputies, members of AFSCME Local 2402, evacuated homes in Rockwood and on Kaskaskia Island and monitored the Mississippi River levees. "This is a flood we only see every 20 or 30 years," Deputy Shane Rinehart said. "Our biggest responsibility during the flood is protecting those levees. If the levee was breached, entire towns would be lost."

Danger is part of many AFSCME members' work lives. "The 24/7 services that AFSCME members provide mean that no matter how bad the weather is, they have to get to work," said AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Eddie Caumiant. "They just have to get in their cars and head into it."

Tragically, Shawn Beaupre, a dedicated correctional officer and AFSCME Local 494 member, died in a car accident caused by freezing rain on his way to work at Pontiac Correctional Center on December 28. His car crashed into a flooded creek and he was overtaken by

the frigid waters. Shawn will be greatly missed by friends and his large, loving family of 11 children. "Shawn always had a smile on his face," remembered Duane Beal, his longtime co-worker at Pontiac. "It was a joy working with the man."

**"Teamwork has been exemplary during a very chaotic situation."**

## One life at a time

Matt Lukow, continued from the facing page

done away with so they can take more money for themselves and their stockholders.

Gov. Rauner doesn't appreciate state employees and the work that we do. His anti-union, anti-state employee rhetoric is bad for morale. If he's successful in cutting our benefits and pay that will hurt morale more and make it harder to attract good people for this work. He's also trying to cut the Upward Mobility Program, which benefited me a great deal. I was able to become a sergeant after corrections officer, and then parole agent. I also earned a master in social work which has helped me a great deal on the job.

### How can we challenge Rauner's negative portrayal of public service workers?

We need to let people know what we do and that we provide vital functions to the state of Illinois. If you're making a decent wage, according to people like Rauner, it's not fair. He's trying to pit the citizens of Illinois against their state employees, saying we have too much while they don't have anything. I think it's the opposite. We should be racing to get everyone's wages and benefits up to where we are in the public sector so all workers have decent wages and can work a full-time work week.

Our benefits are not extravagant. We are not overpaid. Our economy has become a race to the bottom. Corporate bosses want to put us all at Walmart wages and benefits. We need to make sure the public understands that union members want to see everybody have a living wage.

# Thousands of working families Rally for Fairness across Illinois

Thousands of AFSCME members and retirees, fellow union members, community groups, elected officials and faith leaders joined seven Rallies for Fairness across the state in early December. They sent Gov. Rauner a clear message: Anti-worker agendas have no place in Illinois.

All seven rallies were packed with energetic crowds waving signs that said “Serving Our Communities, Standing for Fairness” and “Fair Budget, Fair Contract.”

The kickoff in Chicago drew some 1,300 people, with a special appearance by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky. Rallies in Joliet, Rock Island, Marion, Rockford and Collinsville built momentum on the ground and in the media as thousands more came out to protest Gov. Rauner’s anti-worker agenda.

In a stunning Springfield finale, more than 2,000 people filled the street to march and swamped the rally hall to hear messages from state senators Sam McCann and Andy Manar, AFSCME members on the front lines and representatives from other unions and community groups fighting for a fair budget.

The rallies sent a message of solidarity, determination and urgency: The citizens of

Illinois need a fair budget to fund the vitally important public services they rely on every day, the men and women of state government who provide those services need a fair union contract, and Governor Rauner must stop holding this state hostage to his demands that would hurt all working people.

While the threats working families face have never been graver, these rallies demonstrated that we have never been more united. Employees in state government were joined by other AFSCME members who are university employees, city and county employees, and employees of community nonprofit agencies, as well as scores of AFSCME retirees. All stood arm in arm with other unions, including the IFT, IEA, SEIU, Laborers, FOP, Firefighters, Nurses, building trades and more. In every city, religious leaders, community groups and human services providers stood with us and echoed our call. And dozens of elected officials—from Congress to the Illinois General Assembly and on to city councils and county boards—came out to show their support.

The rallies laid a strong foundation to build on toward the goals of a fair state budget and fair contract for all state employees.



U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky spoke at Chicago’s Rally for Fairness to voice her support for public employees. Elected officials, clergy, unions and community groups across the state joined AFSCME members and their families in the call for a fair budget and a fair contract for state employees.



Right Photo: William Calvert, AFSCME Local 2258

## AFSCME members send a powerful message

Speaking to hundreds of rallying community members or one-on-one with reporters, AFSCME members told their story to the public during the week of Rallies for Fairness. Their words echoed through union halls and resonated in homes across the state.

Working in a prison, you put your life on the line every day. Correctional employees are proud to serve and keep our community safe. That’s why it’s so hard to see our governor trying to drive down our standard of living. When you don’t pay people fairly you have constant turnover, which weakens safety and security in a prison. Millionaires and billionaires are blaming working-class people for the financial problems in our state. They want to divide us, but I believe we’re more united than ever. And if we’re united, we’re going to win.

**RALPH PORTWOOD**  
Stateville Correctional Center, Local 1866

I’m a single mom who was once on welfare. Now as a DHS employee, I am able to help other parents when they struggle to provide for their families. But now, Governor Rauner is putting our well-being at risk by demanding huge hikes in what all state and university employees pay for our family health care. My son has a rare disease; he is alive today because of our doctors and we want to keep them. We need to be able to afford to keep them.

**DENA MCGILL**  
Department of Human Services, Local 2600

My fellow DCFS employees and I protect children. We are motivated by the overwhelming desire to serve. It’s our union that holds DCFS accountable for caseload size, to make sure no child slips through the cracks. It’s our union that advocates for more resources so we can protect kids. And it’s our union that speaks out against harmful budget cuts. A strong union is a strong advocate for protecting kids. And we are the union.

**STEPHEN MITTONS**  
Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2081



Because of Rauner's political games, vital programs for our state's most vulnerable are making cuts and even closing their doors. The governor wants to drive unions away so he and his buddies can get even richer and so companies can do whatever they want to do to their employees. I know what it's like when there is no union to protect staff or ensure quality services. That's why we have to stand together to show the governor that we aren't afraid and we will continue to fight.

**STEPHANIE VALENTINE**  
Milestone Inc., Local 2515

My job is to make sure foster homes are safe and nurturing places for children. I love my work because I know I can make a difference in children's lives, in the lives of their parents and foster parents. One of Gov. Rauner's priorities is to privatize public services. But you cannot truly serve children and at the same time make profits your top priority. That's why we need strong unions. We are the ones who care about and protect the children.

**CARLENE ERNO**  
Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2615

Every day I see the harm the governor is causing by refusing to agree to a budget and making big cuts to critical assistance programs for our state's most vulnerable. At DHS we help families access necessities: food, heat, medical care, child care. But now we have a governor who is putting that help at risk to leverage his anti-worker agenda. Rauner says he cares about human services. But I have news for the governor: You cannot have strong human services without strong unions.

**JENNIFER CURTIS**  
Department of Human Services, Local 1805

Governor Rauner's refusal to work toward a budget agreement or a fair contract has hit me on every level possible. I worry about the disabled residents I care for every day. I worry about the community mental health agencies in our network that are making cuts and closing down. And I worry about my youngest daughter and other children with autism. If Rauner gets what he wants, families across the state will suffer—both those who work for Illinois and those who need our help.

**JULIE YANA**  
Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center, Local 141

My job is to review cases of children who are under DCFS care and ensure they get all the help they need. I do this work because everyone deserves a chance to improve their lives and our union makes sure they get that chance. Now Gov. Rauner is trying to take away our right to collective bargaining. We are standing up to say: drop your extreme demands, stop holding our communities hostage, and agree to a fair budget and fair union contracts now!

**KATHY LANE**  
Department of Children and Family Services, Local 448

Gov. Rauner wants to get rid of the safeguards in our contract that prevent privatization. But these private companies aren't about providing a good service—they're about making money. When Ohio privatized their prison food service, they found the food had maggots in it. The inmate population wanted to riot. It's because we have a union that we can stand up for safety and quality services. We will do whatever it takes. Together.

**DARREN WILLIAMS**  
Lawrence Correctional Center, Local 3600

Rauner wants to drive out our union and drive down our wages. His role models are Indiana and Kentucky, where correctional employees don't make a wage that lets them support a family. It's because we have a union that we can stand up for safer working conditions and resist management's demands for forced overtime that makes us work 16 hours straight. We have to stand together and stay united.

**SHAUN DAWSON**  
Logan Correctional Center, Local 2073



Rally in Quad Cities



Roberta Lynch fires up Springfield



Rally in Rockford



Rally in Chicago

Photo: William Calvert, AFSCME Local 2258

# Hope for a better life at Good Shepherd Manor

*“For our co-workers, our residents and ourselves”*



Mildred Keel’s favorite part of her workday is breakfast. She works nights caring for the residents of Colnon Wild House at Good Shepherd Manor, a residential facility for men with developmental disabilities, but breakfast is when they spend quality time together.

“I ASK THEM QUESTIONS AS I GET THEM BREAKFAST,” SHE SAYS. “DID THEY HAVE VISITORS YESTERDAY? What are they doing for the holidays?” I love it here. I’m really attached to the guys.”

Her affection and concern for the residents is what drives Mildred every day, and why she helped organize a union with her co-workers.

“All of us shared the same sentiment—for the things we do and the extra miles we go, we should be better appreciated and better compensated,” she says. But most important to workers like Mildred is the best interest of the residents. Employees with 15 years of dedicated service have lost jobs with no warning after only one infraction. “Threatened with losing your job over

any little thing, you get anxious and the residents can feel that. A bad vibe could make or break their whole day.”

Despite coercive tactics from management to quash the union organizing effort, on November 20 a majority of the organization’s 137 housekeepers, clerical workers, DSPs, maintenance workers, food service workers, health care providers in the infirmary and transporters voted to join AFSCME Council 31.

A single mom with two teenagers, working toward better pay and benefits means a lot to Mildred. Most DSPs make less than ten dollars an hour. “At first I was a little nervous,” she admits. “We didn’t know what would happen and we feared retaliation. But we just stuck together and stayed united—and we got the union.”

## Anti-union campaign fails

MANAGEMENT’S HOSTILITY TO the organizing effort stung dedicated employees like Heidi Jones. Employees often heard the phrase, ‘If you’re for a union, you’re greedy and you don’t care about the residents.’

“I wouldn’t jeopardize my guys at Good Shepherd for any reason,” Jones says. “We’re not trying to take anything from them. We wouldn’t be here if we didn’t care.”

When Management distributed a weekly multi-page newsletter and started a Face-

book page to promote anti-union rhetoric and attack pro union employees, Good Shepherd employees found a support system in the AFSCME Council 31 family. AFSCME members from nearby facilities like the Kankakee County Training Center, Shapiro Development Center and Pinnacle Opportunities came to speak about how they are making gains for themselves and the people they serve through their local unions.

## Organizing to win

MANY OF THE WORKERS AT Good Shepherd did not know each other very well before they started organizing. Isolated in the various residential homes on different shifts, many employees had never even met their coworkers. After gathering together on a regular basis and sharing simi-

lar concerns and desires, however, they realized their common purpose.

When it came to organizing a union, Alice Davis didn’t need much convincing. “I knew a lot of stuff management was saying wasn’t true. They were lying about the union because *we* are the union.”

Alice has worked at Good Shepherd Manor for 15 years. “We didn’t have a voice. They could change the policy book on us whenever they wanted to. There was nobody to stand up for us or let us know what we could do. We had no representation. It was really sad.”

Now the recently elected bargaining committee is ready to negotiate the new union’s first contract.

“I’m so glad we’ve actually been able to take the first step to have a voice,” Alice says. “I’m elated. I’m so elated we are union.”



“I’m so glad we’ve actually been able to take the first step to have a voice. I’m elated. I’m so elated we are union.”  
—Alice Davis





## Organizing to WIN: Hundreds join AFSCME Council 31 in 2015

**T**he security and dignity that come with a hard-won union contract are increasingly rare for U.S. workers in the 21st century.

UNCHECKED CORPORATE GREED HAS CREATED A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT FOR UNION ORGANIZING. Workers who seek to organize a union routinely face pressure-packed anti-union campaigns that include harassment, threats and constant misinformation.

Union workers are compensated 28% more than non-union workers and are more likely to have family health care and retirement savings. Women and people of color benefit even more from union membership: African American women in a union are paid 34% more than their non-union counterparts. But the percent of unionized workers in the U.S. has declined from 20% in 1983 to just 11% in 2014.

This downward trend in union membership is mirrored in workers' wages, which have steadily declined in real value despite their increased productivity. Income inequality is at its highest levels and just this past year, Pew Research Center released a report that the middle class has shrunk to the point where it no longer includes the majority of

households in America.

In short, while union membership has declined, Americans are working harder than ever at jobs with lower wages and fewer rights—and our country's economy, and its people, suffer as a result. But despite the obstacles and threats, workers are standing up across the country to say: "We are not expendable. We are hardworking human beings with families... and we want a union."

### Uniting with a common purpose

OVER THE LAST YEAR, MORE than 1,800 workers organized a union in their workplaces with AFSCME Council 31 to build a better future for their families. New AFSCME Council 31 members include 634 employees of Northern Illinois University, more than 500 employees in Kankakee County from Good Shepherd Manor, Indian Oaks Academy and Kankakee County Training Center, hundreds of cab drivers in the City of Chicago, and many more across the state.

"Despite the constant attacks on unions, the fundamentals haven't changed. People get treated poorly and they want to form a union in their workplace," Doug Woodson, organizing director at AFSCME Council 31, told *On the Move*. He sees continued union organizing as an encouraging trend in Illinois and across the country.

"Everyone wants a better life for themselves and a bet-

ter future for their children. That's why workers are uniting together. We are organizing for a common purpose."

### Strength in numbers

MANY LONG-TIME UNION MEMBERS recognize the importance of helping workers become part of AFSCME.

As you drive through the neighborhoods of Kankakee you see many signs reading, "We Support State Workers." This small community has a big hunger for workers' rights. More than 1,600 AFSCME members work in Kankakee County, many of them members of the 100% union Local 29 at Shapiro Developmental Center.

Gary Ciaccio, president of the local, has been an AFSCME member for 35 years. He and his fellow members played critical roles in the organizing efforts of hundreds of workers in three different private sector facilities in 2015.

"I think it's crucial that AFSCME continue organizing in the private sector

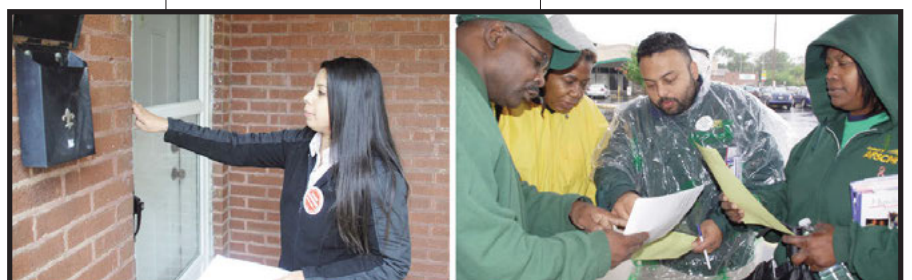
because the way these workers are treated is very unfortunate," Ciaccio said. "We have to raise their standard of living because it affects all of us."

AFSCME Local 29 members knocked on doors during organizing campaigns at Kankakee County Training Center, Indian Oaks Academy and Good Shepherd Manor, educating underpaid workers about the power of a union. "We've spoken at large meetings about the difference AFSCME has made in our careers, helping us afford a mortgage and have decent health insurance for our children," Ciaccio said. "We tell

Over the last year, more than 1,800 workers organized their workplaces and voted to join AFSCME Council 31 for a better future.

them how much better things can be if you're represented by a union."

"Workers organize to improve their lives—and in doing so they help build a larger, stronger union in Illinois for all AFSCME members," Woodson said.



Help combat the attacks on workers' rights.

Become an AFSCME  
**PEOPLE Champion!**

Donate \$250 or more each year to fight back against corporate interests and politicians seeking to weaken labor unions. Text PEOPLE to 228466 to get involved.



# ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

## University of Illinois employees fight to keep hard-won gains



IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH AFSCME LOCALS 3700 AND 698, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS sought to eliminate the step plan for most of its employees and resisted any wage increases, blaming the state budget impasse for its hardline positions at the bargaining table.

"It was a very tough situation for us," said Local 3700 President Ann Zetervall. "The university basically said they wanted to pay everyone less. They wanted to eliminate our step plan and go back to what existed before the union was here."

"The university came in with proposals that we could never support," said Chris Ward, President of Local 698 and a certified veterinary technician in the veterinary teaching hospital. "They used Rauner's anti-union agenda and budget games to influence negotiations."

In the end, the University agreed to keep the Local 3700 step plan in place but frozen for the first two years of the contract. All employees will receive the 2.5 percent campus-wide cost of living increase from the 2014-2015 academic year.

Both bargaining teams retained the option to renegotiate wages in the third year of the contracts. "We are working on a plan for those negotiations now," said Zetervall. "The only way we can be successful is if every member gets involved in the campaign. We need to come out and show the university community that our wages and our lives matter."

Bargaining for both contracts was led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative David Beck. Zetervall was joined on the Local 3700 bargaining team by Nadja Robot, Katrina Smith, Buffy Vance, Jerri Lyn Beck, Kelly Edwards, Penny Grundy, Barbara Jauhola, Denise Jayne, Dorinda Miller, Jill Ouellette, Staci Sessler, Joyce Snider, Tonia White-Rose and D'Anne Winston. Local 3700 members include more than 1,300 clerical and administrative employees, as well as staff in the university extension and child development workers.

Members of Local 698 include more than 400 technical and professional employees. Bargaining team members included Gregg Homerding, Chris Ward, Becky Burner, Marc White, Ben Riegler, Kristi Donze, Heidi Schwarz, Jim McGuire, Dave Davis, Greg Hollern, Jan Harper, Susan Wright, Chuck Reed, Stacey Coffmann and Alexx Dahl.

**"The only way we can be successful is if every member gets involved in the campaign. We need to come out and show the university community that our wages and our lives matter."**  
—Ann Zetervall,  
AFSCME Local 3700

### Interest-based bargaining helps Rock Island City employees

INTEREST-BASED BARGAINING seeks consensus and requires active participation from both sides of the table. Members of AFSCME Local 988 successfully negotiated two contracts using this process and won overall wage increases of about 12 percent for both units, whose contracts expire December 31, 2019.

Unit A is comprised of about 80 equipment operators, maintenance staff and garage mechanics, as well as streets, water, sewer and sanitation workers. Unit B includes 60 office and clerical workers, housing inspectors and assistants.

"Every single proposal was discussed until both parties agreed to the final language," said AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Miguel Morga, who led negotiations for both contracts. "We all benefited from training in advance of negotiations and a mediator helped steer our talks when consensus proved difficult."

Both units locked in a good contract for nearly five years with significant wages increases and additional merit increases that average two percent each year.

Unit B employees also won a more flexible sick-time usage policy. The bargaining team improved the grievance procedure for employees of Unit A so that supervisor-steward meetings are held at the

start of the process.

Bargaining team members included President Alan Vanderheyden, Rick Hitchcock, Quincy Steele, Russell Thomas, Doug Newton, Mike Brown and Mike Sonnevill for Unit A. Vanderheyden was joined by Cara Ryckeghem, James Chapman, Beth Hofeditz and Autumn Rower on the Unit B bargaining team.

### Paramedics in Monroe County win first union contract

TWO YEARS AGO, PARAMEDICS and EMS staff employed by Monroe County Emergency Medical Services organized a union to improve working conditions and assert their rights on the job. Despite the coun-

ty's resistance, they persevered in negotiations for their first contract, winning an eight percent raise over three years and shaping policies to improve emergency services.

"The county officials were dragging their feet," said Scott McDaniel of AFSCME Local 8236. "After three months without meeting, we'd go to the table and leave after 20 minutes with nothing done."

McDaniel has been a paramedic for 20 years. As lead supervisor he is in charge of medical decisions for patients. He and his co-workers felt strongly that their voices must be heard.

"They thought we just wanted money but that was the least of our issues," said McDaniel. "Management has never been on an ambulance. It's really important to public health that we have input on policy."

He is happy with the bargaining team's accomplishments. "There are a lot of things that we've never had a say in before that we do now," he said. For example, paramedics and EMS basics (paramedics in training) had limits on the number of times they could change a shift each year. In order to ensure flexibility for continuing education, the bargaining team negotiated that shift trades conducted for academic reasons would not be counted against any employee.

AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Ed LaPorte led the Local 8236 bargaining team, which included McDaniel, Nick Hoeffken, Kim Everett, Dan Parrott and Jason Nonn.

Asked how he has done such a challenging job for 20 years, McDaniel had a ready answer. "I like helping people," he said. "You can't save everybody, but you can do your job to the fullest, do the best you can, and learn from what you've done before. That's true in life too."

### Paramedics, EMTs in Jackson County make strides with community support

MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 2464 are often first on the scene in emergencies. But these Jackson County Ambulance Service employees have been working for years with no wage structure or salary scale. A new employee could make the same as someone with 15 years of experience. By building support in the community, the 38 emergency responders won eight percent wage increases over four years with significant gains toward seniority pay.

Fighting tooth and nail, members organized several rallies at the courthouse and lobbied the county board. After bringing in federal mediators, the bargaining team ultimately secured seniority-based cash bonuses, double time for mandated

**"You can't save everybody, but you can do your job to the fullest, do the best you can, and learn from what you've done before. That's true in life too."**  
—Scott McDaniel,  
AFSCME Local 8236

overtime, and paid time to maintain and earn paramedic licenses. The bargaining committee also front-loaded higher wage increases in the four-year deal that is retroactive to December 1, 2013, and expires in November, 2017.

Local 2464 President Matt Whalen said the best part of his job is helping out his local community: "People call us at their worst. No one ever wants to see a paramedic, but that's why we're here."

Whalen is proud of how his fellow ambulance service members are playing a larger role in their local. "This was the first time we really stepped up to say, 'We deserve more,'" he said. "We achieved a lot of the things we set out to do and now we're hoping to build from here."

The bargaining team was led by Staff Representative Jeremy Noelle and included Whalen, Gary Bartlow and Travis Young, the previous local president and vice president.

"We're still fighting," Whalen said. "We are filing grievances to ensure proper implementation of our contract. And we're backing our state workers; we will do anything we can to help the cause."

### Springfield street department secures five-year deal

AFSCME LOCAL 3417, REPRESENTING truck drivers and laborers who plow streets, repair roads, sidewalks and sewers, trim trees, and maintain the public works of our state's capital, won a new contract that guarantees annual raises for five years.

The bargaining team was led by Staff Representative Roger Griffith and included Tim Plummer (President), Norm Howard, Sr., Matt Howse, Jon Self and Curtis Yokem. They negotiated an additional longevity pay step at 15 years, a guaranteed minimum of one hour's pay for any overtime work, and a new safety incentive bonus program for the local's 65 members.

"We stuck together and protected 95 percent of what we had in our previous contract," said Curtis Yokem, chief steward and member for nine years. "Unions are having a harder and harder time; but we fought and came up with a decent, fair contract in these trying times."

Continued on the facing page

# AFSCME endorses two candidates in key primary races

Our state has been plunged into a war over the rights and standard of living of working people. Governor Rauner launched this war with his attacks on unions, public employees, and public services.

THIS ELECTION YEAR WILL BE A CRITICAL TEST FOR THE ABILITY OF UNION MEMBERS TO STAND UP AGAINST A CORPORATE ELITE WITH VAST WEALTH AT ITS DISPOSAL. Two key contests come in the primary season—one in Chicago's 5th House District and one in and around Springfield, the 50th Senate District. AFSCME endorsed the following two candidates in those districts in what will



Juliana Stratton

be tough races at the ballot box.

### Juliana Stratton for Illinois State Representative (5th district)

JULIANA STRATTON, A LONG-time community activist, is challenging incumbent Ken Dunkin for state representative of the 5th legislative district in Chicago. Stratton, who received AFSCME Council 31's endorsement, served four years as Executive Direc-



Senator Sam McCann

tor of the Cook County Justice Advisory Council. A graduate of DePaul Law School, Stratton is Executive Director of Cook County Justice for Children and an officer on her local school council. Her mother is a retired AFSCME member and her sister is a public school teacher. She is committed to stand with public service workers.

Stratton takes on Rep. Dunkin (D-Chicago), who failed to support a key child care funding bill on the same day that he did not show up

to support the union-backed fair arbitration bill.

### Senator Sam McCann for Illinois State Senator (50th district)

STATE SENATOR SAM McCANN (R-Carlinville) has served the 50th District since January 2011. McCann has a long track record of supporting working families, despite enormous pressure from

Governor Rauner. McCann was the sole Republican who voted to support the union-backed fair arbitration bill.

Commenting on his vote to support a fair contract for all state employees, McCann said, "I followed the two C's: My conscience and my constituents."

McCann is endorsed by AFSCME Council 31 and the Sangamon County GOP.

## Vote by mail in March primary election

GET READY NOW TO VOTE IN THE upcoming Primary Election in Illinois. It's never been so easy. Voting by mail is an option now available to everyone. Voters can request absentee ballots from their local county clerk or board of elections. Ballots must be postmarked prior to March 15, Primary Election Day.

This election is critical for working families. The public services AFSCME members provide and the workplace rights and economic security union members have worked so hard to gain are at stake. Governor Bruce Rauner is set to spend millions to elect a legislative majority that will back his plan to weaken unions in our state.

## ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

Continued from the facing page

### Public works team in Homewood wins raises, protects paid time off

IN A NEW FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT, the 100% union AFSCME Local 2891 public works team in Homewood won annual raises with a new, higher salary scale for building and landscape maintenance workers. The contract guarantees an overall 12.25 percent raise, retroactive to May 1, 2015, and expires in 2020.

Local 2891 members are mechanics who work on vehicles, landscape and building maintenance workers and utility crew members who maintain streets, lights and trees, including snow removal and emergency response work. Because of the nature of their responsibilities, employees are often called to work late into the evening with very early assigned start

times the next morning. The bargaining team negotiated a new emergency response time rehabilitation bank that provides each employee with 16 hours to use in such situations, protecting workers' earned vacation and sick time.

The bargaining team was first led by Staff Representative Ken Anderson and completed by Staff Representative Cameron Day and included Local 2891 President Bryon Doerr, Vice President Timothy Mensik, Recording Secretary Dale Demro and Executive Board Member Steven Foley. The team doubled the time frame for new hires to get required CDL licenses, protected the longevity system, avoided any increases in health care contributions, and secured a \$500 boot allowance.

Members unanimously voted to ratify the contract, which includes a health care and wage reopener in order



Tim Olaosebikan, president of AFSCME Local 3492, and executive board member Sarah Ostrom, who are direct support personnel at the Ray Graham Center, participated in a roundtable discussion about developmental disabilities services in Illinois on November 19 with state Rep. Stephanie Kifowit (center).

to protect workers from any increases resulting from the impending "Cadillac" health care tax.

"My experience in our months-long negotiations

reminded me of a character named Socrates in Dan Millman's 1980 book, 'Way of the Peaceful Warrior,'" said President Bryon Doerr. "To paraphrase, I have learned

that we must focus our energies not on fighting the old, but building the new. The negotiations helped our union become stronger and more united."

# Winnebago County employees unite for good jobs and public safety

*Standing strong in the streets and at the table wins higher wages*



After two years of negotiations, 500 hardworking and determined members of Winnebago County's AFSCME Local 473 won raises and strengthened their rights on the job. Their success will improve workplace safety and enhance the quality of services for county residents.

AS THE BARGAINING TEAM PUSHED FOR FAIR WAGES FOR ALL COUNTY EMPLOYEES, NEGOTIATIONS proved challenging. In October, two years into negotiations, the bargaining team's efforts secured a tentative agreement with county negotiators only to have the County Board reject the deal. The Board specifically pushed back on a new "step plan" for some employees, scheduled to be implemented on the last day of the four-year deal.

After a final five-hour bargaining session, both sides compromised and reached a new agreement that resolved the dispute. Union members ratified the revised agreement on November 23 and the County Board accepted it the next day.

## Safe staffing levels for the public good

LOW WAGES ARE A FUNDAMENTAL problem throughout Winnebago County government and Local 473 members consistently advocate for the need



to reduce turnover. Safe staffing levels are critical at facilities like the Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center, the 911 Call Center and River Bluff Nursing Home, yet employees are paid far less than those in comparable counties—and so it is hard to retain qualified employees.

"The whole county is underpaid," AFSCME bargaining team member Vaughn Fowler said. Fowler, vice president of Local 473, is in his eighth year as a Building Maintenance Mechanic at River Bluff Nursing Home. "The Certified Nursing Assistants at River Bluff are dedicated—they get to know the residents, help them with basic living skills, do their hair, help them eat—but many are leaving because of unfair wages."

Bargaining team member and Correctional Officer Tim Cox has a similar view: "We're losing people to other facilities where they are doing the same job for better pay. This is a hard job, especially when you're doing double, triple the work. As short-staffed as we've been, it's tough getting people to stay."

Contract negotiations included efforts to resolve two job classification studies and two arbitration victories involving appropriate pay for correc-

tional officers. Analyzing the pay structures of other counties comparable to Winnebago, which includes the city of Rockford, a 2008 job study and resultant arbitration award found that correctional officers were grossly underpaid relative to their counterparts performing similar work for other public employers.

In a subsequent 2010 ruling, the same labor arbitrator affirmed that Winnebago County owed its officers two dollars more per hour. Yet the award left a loophole for the county, ruling that it need only raise wages once revenue was available. For seven years the County failed to meet its obligation—despite bringing in \$28 million a year from a one percent "public safety" sales tax.

## Family sustaining wages for public service employees

ULTIMATELY, THE AFSCME Local 473 bargaining team increased wages for all County workers, winning two percent wage increases across the board

in the first two years of the contract and three percent increases in the final two years.

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Edward Sadlowski and

Regional Director Joe Bella, bargaining team members included Rose Jackson (President), Vaughn Fowler (Vice President), Tim Cox, Sue Grenlund, Joe Young, Tom Van Den Eeden (Treasurer), Mike Easton (Executive Board), Barbara Schulz (Executive Board), Josh Liston, Amy Vowell (Executive

Board) and Jason Ferro.

"By supporting each other, we were able to get more competitive salaries for the area," AFSCME Local 473 President Rose Jackson said. "We said to ourselves: Let's see what else we can accomplish!"

And it was a lot. The contract strengthens job rights in such matters as compensatory time, shift trades, improved training opportunities, non-discrimination, time off for union activities, employer-paid parking, limits on outsourcing and more.

In adherence to the arbitrator's 2010 ruling, all corrections officers on the payroll as of October 1, 2015, are also guaranteed a 4.52 percent wage adjustment and a \$0.25 per hour wage increase, with all officers on the payroll as of October 1, 2016 receiving a five percent adjustment and a \$0.25 per hour increase.

Every full-time employee covered under the agreement will receive a one-time \$300 ratification bonus, \$200 for part-time employees. Addressing the county's lagging pay that contributes to high turnover rates, the bargaining team secured upward labor grade adjustments for several classifications and established a joint committee to study recruitment and retention of employees in all departments.

## "The most united we've ever been"

LOCAL 473 MEMBERS ARE CONFIDENT that their collective efforts have set Winnebago County on a better path forward. "There has been a renewed energy in our local," Jackson said. "People are pulling together. Half of our fair share employees signed up to become full members."



## NURSING CARE

My job as a CNA at River Bluff Nursing Home is very important to me. I'm giving care for residents who are unable to do it themselves, ensuring they eat properly, are bathed and in a safe environment. I try to give every resident extra respect and love. I think every employee should be treated fairly and compensated appropriately for the work we do.

—TORI LOUNSBERY

"There is a renewed energy in our local. People are pulling together."

—Rose Jackson, AFSCME Local 473 President

Members consistently stood together at rallies and informational pickets, packing every County Board meeting in the months leading up to the settlement. They told their story to the media, used social media and placed a full-page ad in the Rockford Register Star. Staff Representative Ed Sadlowski noted, "Local 473 ran a contract campaign focused on issues that are important to our membership, their families, and the community. Every member got involved, which put pressure on the Board to do the right thing."

"I was really touched by how everybody came together," Cox said. "This is the most united we've ever been and we're just getting started."

"Members are ready to take action and do whatever needs to be done next," President Jackson said excitedly. "People are stepping up and saying, 'This is our union, our jobs, and we need to take control.' It's been awesome."

# RETIREE NOTES

## Retirees Rally for Fairness

AFSCME RETIREES STOOD shoulder to shoulder with working members to demand an end to Bruce Rauner's anti-worker agenda in a series of rallies across Illinois during December. Joining them were union members from across the labor movement, community and faith groups, elected officials, and concerned citizens from all walks of life.

Along with demanding a fair budget to protect vital state services, protesters called for a fair contract for state workers and an end to bargaining demands from the Rauner administration that would cause massive increases in health insurance costs for state and university retirees.

"If you're not going to stand up to cuts to your benefits and social services now, you can't complain later," said Vicki Thomas, vice-president of sub-chapter 88 (Champaign-Urbana), who took the union bus to the Springfield rally. "Retirees can either get involved now or sit back and watch our benefits disappear."

Hundreds of retirees attended the rallies in Chicago, Joliet, Rock Island, Marion, Rockford, Collinsville and Springfield, setting a strong foundation for the fights ahead in 2016.

## AFSCME retirees, community groups call attention to budget cuts in "lottery protest"

GOVERNOR RAUNER SIGNED A stopgap measure that would allow the state to continue to pay lottery winners in December, despite vetoing similar measures aimed at restoring

funding to programs for seniors.

AFSCME retirees from Chicago, along with members of Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans and the Responsible Budget Coalition, protested the governor's priorities by holding a press event to show the lottery tickets they purchased to symbolically fund these critical social services.

"The Meals on Wheels program has been cut from five days a week to three but they put aside a billion dollars to pay lottery winners?" exclaimed Charlie Hogan, president of AFSCME Retiree sub-chapter 163 (North Cook County). "This isn't right. Budgets are moral statements. It's where our priorities are."

Along with cuts to

meal delivery programs, Rauner has targeted several senior programs such as home care services, Medicaid programs such as the Illinois Breast & Cervical Cancer Program, and LIHEAP, the energy assistance program which helps low-income families and seniors pay for heating and cooling their residence.

## A win for retirement security

*Advocates elected to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund Board of Trustees*

**A** FSCME member Trudy Williams, Illinois Education Association member John Piechocinski and AFSCME retiree Sharon Thompson won seats on the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund.

IMRF PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE ANYONE WHO WORKS FOR OR RETIRED FROM ANY MUNICIPALITY, county, school district or other unit of local government in Illinois, except the City of Chicago or Cook County. It is the most financially sound public pension

system in the state.

These three trustees will work to ensure the IMRF is properly funded and to protect pension benefits.

Trudy Williams is President of AFSCME Local 3433 and an AFSCME Council 31 Executive Board member.

She is an Administrative Assistant in the Fulton County State's Attorney's Office. Trudy is committed to preserving the fiscal stability of the pension fund.

John Piechocinski has been an IMRF Employee Trustee since 2011. As the Head Custodian for Plainfield Community Consolidated School District, John is an Illinois Education Association member and dedicated advocate for employee participants.

Sharon Thompson has been an IMRF Annuitant Trustee for 15 years. She is an AFSCME retiree and for-

mer Lee County Treasurer. Sharon is committed to continuing her work to preserve the defined benefit plan for workers and retirees.

By voting together, union members were able to ensure that workers will continue to have a strong voice on the IMRF board. Williams, Piechocinski and Thompson will do their utmost to assure that the IMRF remains strong and solvent so that current and future retirees can count on security and dignity in retirement.

## Scholarships available for AFSCME members and families

**U**nion membership helps workers build a better future for their families. AFSCME members and their families benefit from annual scholarship opportunities to pursue their education goals at colleges, universities, labor programs and technical schools.

Council 31 is accepting applications through April 15 for its annual Larry Marquardt Scholarship. Applicants must be AFSCME Council 31 members in good standing who plan to attend school full-time or children of

AFSCME members who are high school seniors or college students under the age of 25. Two winners will be awarded \$1,000 each.

The scholarship honors Larry Marquardt, the first executive director of Council 31 and a tireless union organizer who dedicated his life to improving the lives of working people.

Visit: [www.afscme31.org/union-scholarships](http://www.afscme31.org/union-scholarships) for more information on this and other scholarship opportunities.



# CORPORATE ELITE BACKS U.S. SUPREME COURT CASE AIMED AT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

In *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, currently before the U.S. Supreme Court, a wealthy elite is trying to ban the 'fair share' fees now paid by represented employees who opt out of joining the union.

By requiring unions to represent employees who don't have to pay anything toward the cost of that representation, these right-wing forces hope to bankrupt the labor movement and thereby wipe out the only force with the strength and resources to provide a counterweight to the outsized influence of the uber-wealthy in our political system.

On January 11 the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case and a decision is expected later this spring.

## Why the corporate elite wants to ban 'fair share' fees

- Americans are working more than ever before. But it's harder to get by, let alone get ahead. Our economy is out of balance because corporate CEOs and wealthy special interests have manipulated the rules in their favor.
- It's become much harder for working people to band together and exercise their right to negotiate together for better wages and benefits that can sustain their family.
- And as the number of union jobs has dropped, the income share of the richest 1 percent of Americans has grown to 22 percent of all U.S. income. Meanwhile, middle-class income has dropped. All working people, and our families—whether in a union or not—do better when unions are strong.
- Unions are everyday people who come together to make their voices heard on issues that affect all of us: fighting for smaller class sizes; working to make sure we can all retire with dignity; holding billionaires like corporate CEOs accountable for paying their fair share; and making sure that employers understand that we are working harder and harder just to get by.
- When unions are strong, we have a more balanced economy for everyone. Everyone who works should be able to make ends meet, have a say about their futures, and be able to negotiate better wages and benefits one can sustain a family on. The best way to do that is by using our strength in numbers—banding together and speaking with one voice. All workers benefit from having our voices heard.
- Collective bargaining has also historically been a path to the middle class for people of color and has helped to fight inequality in the workplace so that women get paid for the work they do. African-American union members today earn 31 percent more than their non-union counterparts. And many union contracts include measures that make the workplace more equal and fair for women—for example, more time off to care for a sick child or employment protection for victims of sexual harassment. This sets the bar higher for all workplaces, union and nonunion alike.

### FRIEDRICHS v. CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

A bad decision from the U.S. Supreme Court could limit working people's ability to negotiate better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Higher wages. Better benefits. Workplace safety.

Union workers earn \$207 more per week than nonunion workers.

Unions make communities stronger by advocating for smaller class sizes for our children and better patient-to-staff ratios in our hospitals.

So what is this case really about?

Greedy CEOs and wealthy special interest groups want to manipulate economic rules in their favor and make it even harder for our public servants—our teachers, firefighters and nurses—to speak up together and fight for what's good for our families.

## AMERICA'S ECONOMY IS ALREADY OUT OF BALANCE. A BAD DECISION HERE WILL MAKE IT WORSE.

#WorkTogether



While the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* on January 11, hundreds of workers assembled outside the court building to protest the ongoing attacks against working families from wealthy special interest groups. Stephen Mittons, a DCFS child protection investigator and president of AFSCME Local 2081, spoke to the crowd on the steps of the Supreme Court.

*"It is frightening to me that the same CEOs and corporate interests who have been manipulating the rules of our economy for decades are now trying to make it harder for working people to come together, speak up and get ahead. It would be shameful to see the Supreme Court decide this case in favor of wealthy special interests and put the important services public employees provide to children and families at risk. I don't think protecting children and families is a matter of politics; it's our duty."*

Stephen Mittons, AFSCME Local 2081