

RETIREE NOTES

AFSCME retirees get out the vote

AFSCME CHAPTER 31 retirees wasted no time after the statewide PEOPLE Conference concluded to start getting union-endorsed candidates elected to office.

“This is a particularly important election for retirees,” said David Spinner, president of sub-chapter 87 (Decatur-Hillsboro). “Almost daily I am hearing from my members how their doctors and dentists are refusing to see them because the state is failing to pay their insurance claims. If we can help just a few more union-friendly legislators get elected this fall, then we can get our state back on track and our members can get the health care they earned.”

Retirees from Carbondale to Chicago have already started knocking on doors, making phone calls and writing letters to get the word out to other retirees about the importance of this election.



Kathy Breeden, president of sub-chapter 77 (Galesburg), casts her vote at the AFSCME PEOPLE Conference.



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin with AFSCME retiree David Spinner and AFSCME-endorsed candidate for House District 95, Mike Mathis.

“We can’t let money dominate this election. Billionaires like Rauner may be able to blanket the airwaves with negative commercials and mud-slinging,” said Larry Brown, president of Chapter 31, “but as we showed in the primaries, he’ll never match our ability to turn out volunteers and take our message straight to the voters.”

To volunteer to help union-supported candidates, sign up at AFSCME31.org/ReadySetVote.

Medicare Advantage benefit choice period

MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE STATE AND university retirees will have an open enrollment period for Medicare Advantage plans from October 14 to November 15.

If you do not wish to make changes to your health insur-

ance then no action is required. However, new enrollees and those who wish to make changes should check their mailboxes now for a benefit choice package from CMS.

During the open-enrollment period CMS will be hosting seminars across the state. The schedule will be included in your open-enrollment information.

Retirees can find detailed information about these plans as well as answers to frequently asked questions at AFSCME31.org/retirees/get-answers.

Kansas “Turnaround Agenda” threatens pensions

BRUCE RAUNER LIKES TO CLAIM that his “Turnaround Agenda” would lead to heightened prosperity in Illinois. However, when actually put into practice

these policies inevitably hurt working families, in particular public-sector employees and retirees.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback imposed his own version of the “Turnaround Agenda” in 2012, cutting taxes on the wealthy and large businesses. By the end of 2014, Kansas had run up a deficit of \$300 million, triggering additional spending cuts.

To fill the gap caused by lavishing tax cuts on the rich, Brownback took millions from social service, public health, transportation and youth education programs.

And this year, the Kansas legislature sent a bill to Brownback that allowed him to skip up to \$100 million in payments to the Kansas Public Employee Retirement System to help balance the budget.

“These types of policies, often masquerading as ‘pro-business,’ inevitably leave public pension systems vulnerable,” said Jeanne Cameron, Executive Director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans. “Anti-worker politicians like Brownback and Rauner craft huge tax subsidies designed to benefit only their wealthiest citizens. Their favorite way to pay for these is raiding social service funds and pension payments.”

In Illinois, Rauner’s proposed budget for 2017 asks the legislature to give him the power to conduct “fund sweeps,” which would allow Illinois to balance its budget by skipping payments to our pension systems—a practice that caused Illinois’ pension shortfalls in the first place.



ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

FOR HEALTH/DENTAL INSURANCE NONPAYMENT SERS AND SURS RETIREES



HAS YOUR HEALTH OR DENTAL CARE PROVIDER...

- **Asked for payment upfront before rendering services?**
- **Directly billed you for the full cost of your services (not including co-pays or deductibles)?**
- **Refused you service because “your insurance isn’t paying claims?”**
- **Turned you in to a collection agency?**

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO...

1. Talk to your doctor or dentist.

Tell them your insurance is still good, but due to the state budget impasse they are withholding claim payments until the state has a budget and that the health insurance company is liable for these payments, not you.

2. Call your insurance company.

Explain what happened. They will likely tell you something similar to: “We can’t pay because the state isn’t paying us.” Take note of who you talked to and when.

3. Call CMS at 800-442-1300.

Explain what happened. Be specific about the payment problem you are experiencing (collection notices, withholding care, etc.). Take note of who you talked to and when.

4. If CMS is unhelpful, contact AFSCME by email at webaction@afscme31.org.

Celebrating Labor Day

Retirees celebrated the contributions of working men and women across Illinois on Labor Day.

