

ON THE

MOVE

VOTE NOV. 5

~~PROJECT 2025~~

Stop the plan to
weaken unions, cut taxes for the 1% and
slash funding for public services

What Project 2025 means for us

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STAFFING PAGE 11



ON THE MOVE

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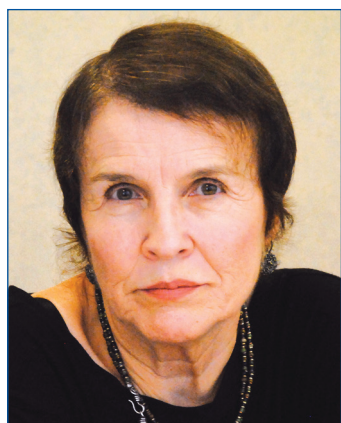
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Let's vote to stop Project 2025



BY ROBERTA LYNCH

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, PROJECT 2025 IS COMING AFTER THE POWER OF WORKING PEOPLE.

The five richest men in the United States are now referred to as *centibillionaires*, meaning they are each worth more than \$100 billion. That's not a typo, though it is a travesty. And there's more: The ranks of billionaires are steadily growing. Every person now on the Forbes 400—an annual listing of America's wealthiest—is a billionaire. In fact, the ranks of billionaires increased by 88% over the past four years.

The richest 10% now control 67% of our country's wealth. The sale of yachts is through the roof. And mega-mansions are booming too.

In other words, the super wealthy are doing very well. So why are so many of them so bound and determined to drive the rest of us down? This is the central question provoked by the Project 2025 blueprint for restructuring American society (see page 7).

This gameplan for a new Trump administration was produced by the Heritage Foundation, the policy arm of America's wealthy elite. Its goal is to profoundly reshape American society to benefit those who are already doing exceedingly well—to increase privatization of public services, decrease affordable health care, reduce taxes on the super-rich, and concentrate power at the top.

Unions built the middle class

No surprise: They really don't like labor unions.

That's because, over the course of generations, unions in our country lifted up working people into a solid middle class that could afford more than the basic necessities of life; a middle class that could own a home, raise a family, take a vacation, buy a second car.

But beginning in the 1980s, the percentage of workers represented by unions in the private sector began to decline, due both to aggressive employer hostility and to

jobs being shipped overseas. As a consequence, the overall well-being of those working families also took a big hit.

Union growth was initially much slower in the public sector, where the right to collective bargaining had to be won state by state. But win we did in states all across the country—and public sector union representation is now higher than in the private sector.

Unions fought for laws that strengthened workers' rights on the job, improved workplace safety, made health care more affordable, and much more.

And labor unions didn't just fight for a voice in the workplace. We realized that in order to improve our lives, we also needed to have a say in the political arena.

In fact, over time, labor unions became the most effective countervailing force to the nearly unbridled power that the super-rich had in politics.

Despite setbacks over the years, unions today are more popular than ever with the American public. Union workers who are fighting for better wages and benefits—many going out on strike to win them—are sending a powerful message that working people don't have to accept the ever-growing consolidation of wealth in the hands of the few. Our country can afford to sustain the basic well-being of all.

We don't have to be a country where so many have to work excessive amounts of overtime, or even two jobs, just to get by. We don't have to be a country where working people live paycheck to pay-

check, unable to save for their children's education or their own retirement. We don't have to be a country where the cost of essential medications can drive a family into debt.

More and more workers are waking up to this reality. As they do, more and more workers are seeking to form unions. And, despite threats and intimidation from their employers, more and more of those workers are succeeding.

Boy is the Project 2025 crowd mad about that. That's why they loaded up their gameplan with a host of measures aimed at weakening unions.

A target on our backs

None is more radical, nor more dangerous, than their recommendation that Congress seek to ban collective bargaining in the public sector. Yes, they would try to prevent any public employee anywhere from being able to join a union.

This is not just an idle threat. We saw what happened in Wisconsin when Republican Gov. Scott Walker pushed through an anti-union law that resulted in a decline of more than 60% in public employee union membership. Iowa soon followed suit. And now Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is leading an all-out attack on public sector unions in that state, stripping thousands of public employees of their bargaining rights.

No doubt about it, Project 2025 is coming after the power of working people.

But know this: We're ready to fight back. The entire labor movement in this country is rising up to say 'no way'. We're determined to stop them in their tracks, defend the gains we have made and make sure the path to progress remains open.

The surest way to do that this fall is by voting, and volunteering to help get out the vote, for union-recommended candidates. Let's get to it!

AFSCME ends DHS reliance on temps

Contracting out not needed to meet staffing goals

For more than two years, AFSCME has been working to end the Illinois Department of Human Services' (DHS) reliance on temporary agency staff in residential centers for people with developmental disabilities. Now, after Council 31 prevailed in statewide arbitration, those temporary staff are being converted into permanent state employees and joining the ranks of our union—and they're already reaping the benefits of union membership.

"They're excited about being in the union," said Danny Williams, president of AFSCME Local 29 at Shapiro Developmental Center. "Some of them have never been union members, and they were working place to place and week to week. They like having the consistency of knowing where they're working and where they're going."

DHS' reliance on temporary agency staff began during the COVID-19 pandemic, when an unparalleled public health crisis created the need to institute emergency measures to fully staff facilities. As COVID-19 spread rapidly, AFSCME was committed to working with

the state to fully staff facilities as safely as possible, even if that meant bringing in outside agency employees to fill the gaps.

But as the public health crisis subsided, DHS resisted changing its reliance on temporary agency staff, not acting quickly to develop a plan to transition agency staff into full-time DHS employees, or to recruit and retain permanent employees from outside the department.

The union's position was clear: The department couldn't continue to use emergency staffing measures when there was no emergency.

"We were angry, because it seemed to us like DHS was trying

to take our work away," said Stacey Adams, Vice President of AFSCME Local 401 at Murray Developmental Center. "From 2021 on, we fought and always let management know that these are state jobs. They should be done by state workers."

Council 31 grieved this clear violation of state employees' collective bargaining agreement. An arbitrator agreed with the union, ordering DHS to end all contracts with temporary staffing agencies by July 31, 2024.

Since the arbitration decision, local unions and AFSCME staff have worked to ensure compliance with the order, consistently following up with management at each DHS facility that still had temporary agency staffers working.

An important goal was making sure that not only were these contracts ended, but that temporary agency staffers were given the opportunity to join the department as full-time employees and become new AFSCME members in the process.

The effort has been a major success across the department. As of Aug. 23, 96 temporary staffers were brought on as full-time employees across the seven developmental centers, with all but 28 of those new employees

having already started their employment.

One of the biggest successes came at Ludeman Developmental Center, where 24 agency staff have transitioned into full-time union-represented roles.


The union's position was clear: The department couldn't continue to use emergency staffing measures when there was no emergency.

"We share the successes of the union with these new employees and go over how many advantages they've picked up in the transition from being temps to state employees, from the benefits, to paid holidays, to health insurance," said Crosby Smith, president of AFSCME Local 2645 at Ludeman. "This

campaign has been successful. Right away these employees start out knowing that the union will be there for them."

At Shapiro Developmental Center in Kankakee, 22 agency staff have transitioned into full-time DHS employees. With a permanent workplace, many of these new DHS employees are relieved to not be working on the whims of a temporary staffing agency, to have the opportunity to settle in Kankakee, and to learn about the robust rights and protections they have as union members.

"One young lady who is pregnant is excited that she's now going to receive maternity leave benefits," said Williams. "When she comes back from maternity leave, she's going to get into the Upward Mobility Program to become a nurse, which is a lifelong dream of hers. These things weren't possible for her at her agency."

Even at developmental centers where DHS is lagging on fully transitioning from temporary staffing agencies such as Kiley Developmental Center in Waukegan, AFSCME is seeing strong and consistent progress. The union is continuing to press management to make sure that hiring and retaining permanent, full-time employees is a top priority at each facility. 

LABOR DAY THE AFSCME WAY



AFSCME members across the state hit the streets in their communities to celebrate Labor Day — OUR day!



Stateville employees stand up against closure

After an alarming court order mandated all individuals in custody at Stateville Correctional Center be transferred by Sept. 30, Council 31 and members of AFSCME Local 1866 launched an all-out effort to prevent the hasty closure and save jobs.

On Aug. 29, Stateville employees—joined by other AFSCME members who traveled from as far as 300 miles to stand in solidarity—took to the picket line to deliver a simple message: Keep Stateville Working.

“We’re here today to say there should be no layoffs and no chaos at Stateville CC,” said Local 1866 President Eugene Washington.

The Department of Corrections agreed to the court order, which was in response to a class action lawsuit from individuals formerly incarcerated at Stateville who contended the facility was unsafe. But, as Local 1866 Vice President Charles Mathis pointed out, that charge doesn’t hold up to scrutiny.

“If Stateville was unsafe for the individuals, then why are we still coming to work every day?” he said.

“There is no evidence of any individual in custody or any employee being injured by this building—none,” Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said at the picket. “We want common sense and human decency to prevail. We’re demanding justice and safety for all.”

Now, the department is scrambling to transfer hundreds of individuals in custody to other prisons, all of which are too far for Stateville employees to commute to, and which leave individuals in custody farther from their families and support networks, and without the robust education programs they rely upon. Meanwhile, Stateville employees and their families are left wondering how they’ll pay their bills if the evacuation is allowed to proceed.

Since the state’s closure threat emerged in early 2024, Council 31 and Local 1866 have maintained that rebuilding Stateville is necessary, but there is ample room on the grounds to build a new facility without disrupting the lives of employees and individuals in custody. The state has said it anticipates the facility will be closed for three to five years while it is rebuilt.

“We would like to see

Stateville continue to stay open,” Washington said. “We have plenty of space here on the grounds to build a new prison while Stateville continues operating.”

While the department is optimistic it can meet the three-to-five-year timeline, lawmakers on the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA) expressed their skepticism. State Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer, co-chair of COGFA, said in June that the plans are “far from shovel-ready.”

Following the judge’s order, Council 31 immediately responded with legal filings of its own. One was a motion to intervene in federal court to challenge the hard deadline imposed by the judge. Council 31 also filed a separate motion in state court asking that IDOC cease any further transfers of incarcerated individuals before

returning the matter to an arbitrator who retained jurisdiction over all safety matters within the department.

As of the time *On the Move* went to print, both legal filings are working their way through the court system. In order to ensure that the rights and jobs of Local 1866 members are protected should the closing proceed, AFSCME has initiated impact bargaining with IDOC management.

IDOC ignores danger of hasty transfers

The hasty transfer of individuals out of Stateville and into several medium-security facilities poses a grave risk to corrections staff at those facilities. Already critically understaffed, AFSCME members at facilities set to receive Stateville’s population fear for their safety and say the department has not considered the threat it’s unleashing.

Graham Correctional Center is one of those facilities set to receive some of the incarcerated individuals from Stateville, mostly because of its dialysis unit. But those transfers would mean doubling the number of dialysis patients at Graham,



Local 1866 members, joined by members of other locals, walk the picket line outside Stateville’s gates.

with no clear plan for how employees should cope with that extra workload.

“We’re already short-staffed,” said Nick McLaughlin, president of AFSCME Local 2856 at Graham. “We have several lockdowns a month; now we’re increasing the population without increasing the staff first. That’s not a good idea.”

McLaughlin recalls that last winter, a downgraded individual in custody from Stateville assaulted a sergeant at Graham. He worries that those assaults could become more frequent as

IDOC pushes forward with little regard for the safety of those employed and housed in prisons across the state.

“We are trying to save the lives of hundreds of correctional employees all over the state who are going to have these individuals brought to their facilities with no planning, no preparation and completely inadequate staffing levels,” Lynch said at the picket. “We are here today to stand up against chaos and irresponsibility. What is happening in this department today is shameful.”

LOCAL 2073’S SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT SHOWCASES COMMUNITY COMMITMENT



Staring down the state’s relocation plans for their facility, members of AFSCME Local 2073 at Logan Correctional Center organized a multi-facility double-elimination softball tournament in August. Organized to build unity and raise funds for the community food shelf, it sent a strong message: We’re a vital part of this community, and we’re not going anywhere.

Members of six other AFSCME IDOC local unions traveled to Lincoln to compete. In the end, the home team—Local 2073—hoisted the trophy as tournament champions.

Loretto employees step up fight for safe staffing

Members of AFSCME Local 1216 at Loretto Hospital on the West Side of Chicago are fighting for safe staff-to-patient ratios and fair pay. If necessary, they're ready to strike to get what they deserve.

Loretto's mission is to provide health care for all, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. But that mission is being undermined by management's whittling away of staffing numbers.

Some 90 registered

nurses at Loretto are represented by Local 1216, but that number should be much higher. The hospital has lost 30 percent of its nursing staff since 2020. That means that the high standard of patient care that Loretto RNs take pride in has started to suffer.

"We love our jobs, our community and our patients," Local 1216 President Jessica Bell said. "But management's self-inflicted staffing crisis is jeopardizing patient safety, efficiency, and quality of care."

Hospital management has refused to turn over staffing information to the union, a violation of federal labor law. In August, Council 31 filed an unfair labor practice charge at the National Labor Relations Board to compel the release of that information.

At each recent bargaining

session, AFSCME members have turned out to back up their bargaining committee. Their solidarity is on full display as management looks across the table and sees a room full of RNs listening carefully as their employer proposes slashing staffing ratios and eliminating their step plan.

Local 1216 members have had to fight for every inch of progress at the bargaining table and have grown increasingly frustrated by management's lack of movement, leading them to consider

"I'm ready to strike because the patients deserve a safe, caring environment to heal."


taking stronger action by walking out on strike.

Members are beginning to share the reasons they'd be willing to strike on social media.

"I'm ready to strike because the patients deserve a safe, caring environment to heal," wrote one RN.

"I'm ready to strike because [we deserve] fair pay and safe staffing," wrote another.

"It's outrageous that these dedicated health care professionals are faced with demands that would actually undermine patient safety and jeopardize the quality of care they can provide," said Council 31 Regional Director Anne Irving.

"This hospital claims to care about the community it serves, but so far it just seems to care about taking care of the people at the top," she added. "That's got to change." 



Loretto RNs of Local 1216 after leafletting community members outside the hospital.

Chicago faces big budget hole

City must raise revenue to plug the gap

On August 30, Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, budget director Annette Guzman, and comptroller Chasse Rehwinkel briefed labor union representatives on the alarmingly large shortfall—as much as \$986 million—projected for the 2025 city budget.

This projection comes on top of an already existing deficit in the 2024 fiscal year, which the city is planning to address through a hiring freeze. The shortfall is due in part to the expiration of the federal American Rescue Plan funding

that carried Chicago through the dire pandemic years, and in part to slower than expected tax collections.

When pressed on what the shortfall could mean for city employees, the mayor said only that he hopes to work together

with labor unions to find solutions to both raise revenue and cut costs.

Mayor Johnson is scheduled to release his budget proposal in October. That proposal will provide more detail on how the administration plans to fill the budget gap.


AFSCME is firmly opposed to any layoffs of union members and is strongly committed to ensuring that the terms of our union contract are honored.

Council 31 Research Director Martha Merrill has begun examining potential new revenue sources to address the shortfall, while



Intergovernmental Affairs Director Adrienne Alexander is working with elected officials on the same.

AFSCME members are encouraged to reach out to local

union leaders and staff representatives with ideas on how the city can operate more efficiently while avoiding layoffs and cuts to the important work we do. 

Frontline and Fearless

46th International Convention celebrates our strength and charts path ahead

In August, hundreds of AFSCME members from Council 31 locals travelled to Los Angeles for AFSCME’s biennial convention, joining thousands of their fellow union members from around the country to chart our union’s path forward.

Throughout the five-day convention, Council 31 delegates voted on dozens of important resolutions which will guide our union’s strategies on issues from artificial intelligence and organizing to workplace rights and safety. They also built solidarity, exchanged knowledge and ideas, and learned how to build more union power in their workplaces.

Things started unpredictably when the first day of the convention was shaken by a magnitude 4.8 earthquake, but no serious injuries or damage were reported and delegates weren’t deterred, living up to this year’s theme of “Frontline and Fearless.”

“Everybody checked on the person next to them, and then we got right back to business,” said Amy Bodestab, president of AFSCME Local 2887 at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. “That’s exactly what I expect from union people!”

Council 31 front and center

Council 31 delegates were eager to learn what they could from members of other councils, but they had a good deal to teach others, too.

“Our local already has meetings set up with members at other universities,” Bodestab said. “They want to learn about how we won our contract and exchange ideas.”

Minda Williamson is a CNA at Sunny Hill Nursing Home and the president of AFSCME Local 1028 representing Will County employees. She was among the Council 31 delegates who rose to speak on resolutions during floor debate. As someone who works at a short-staffed nursing home, she felt it was important to be heard on a resolution reaffirming our union’s commitment to establishing staffing standards.

Officer elections

AFSCME’s national leadership is elected by convention delegates every four years—and this was an election year. AFSCME President Lee Saunders was re-elected to a fourth term. Saunders has overseen the period of record-setting contracts and an intense wave of organizing that has grown our union’s ranks and strengthened our collective power. Secretary-Treasurer Elissa McBride was also re-elected.

Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch and Deputy Director Mike Newman were both re-elected by acclamation as International Vice Presidents. In those roles, they help create nationwide policy and develop strategies to increase organizing, strengthen worker representation, further our union’s priorities before Congress, and more.



Spirits were high among the Council 31 delegation at the International Convention.

Council 31 takes home PEOPLE award

AFSCME PEOPLE—Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality—is the union’s political fundraising arm. Through voluntary contributions from union members, PEOPLE gives our union the resources to take on corporate interests when they come after the interests of working families.

Council 31 was recognized for having the highest percentage of members as PEOPLE MVPs, the top contribution level. AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 also won the award for raising the most PEOPLE money of any retiree chapter.

Tina Winfield, president of AFSCME Local 141 at Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center, accepted the awards on behalf of Illinois PEOPLE.

“So many members

around the country understand the importance of political action and are contributing to AFSCME’s PEOPLE fund,” Winfield said. “We [understand] that when we support lawmakers who support us, we’re investing in our jobs and in our communities.”

Ask your local union leaders for a PEOPLE card to begin contributing today.

VP nominee Walz addresses AFSCME members

Also at the convention, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz delivered a rousing speech in what was his first solo campaign event as Vice President Kamala Harris’ running mate.

As Minnesota’s governor, Walz has protected AFSCME members’ jobs while investing in the public services we provide, signing legislation to ban private prisons and giving public school workers the ability to provide free breakfast and lunch to their students. Walz did all this for Minnesota’s communities while AFSCME negotiated a historic contract with the state with across-the-board raises and expanding their rights on the job.

“We know that when unions are strong, America is strong,” Walz said. “That’s why Vice President Harris and I have both joined workers on the picket line. And it’s why, as governor, I signed one of the biggest packages of pro-worker policies in history into law. Today, Minnesota is one of the best states for workers in the nation. That’s our vision for the entire country.”
Vice President Harris

addressed the convention with a video message from the campaign trail, saying that as president, she will “fight for a future where every worker, including those in the public sector, has the freedom to organize.”

Resolutions to take our union into the future

Convention delegates passed 45 resolutions which will guide our union’s strategy on everything from artificial intelligence to our rights to safety on the job. To view the full list of resolutions, visit

AFSCME.org/Convention



Cody Dornes of Local 46 speaks in support of a resolution reaffirming our union’s commitment to organizing.

WHAT PROJECT 2025 WOULD MEAN FOR US

*Our union. Our rights. Our freedoms.
They're all on the ballot this fall.*

Project 2025, an extreme new governing plan created for a second Trump Administration, is setting off alarm bells in union halls throughout the nation. The 900-page blueprint would claw away hard-won workers' rights, undermine the public services that millions of Americans rely on, make health care less accessible, and cut taxes on the super-rich—reshaping the American economy to rig it even farther in favor of the wealthy elite.

The plan comes from the Heritage Foundation, a radical anti-government think tank. Though Donald Trump has tried to distance himself from Project 2025, he has been a booster of the Heritage Foundation, raising money for it and hiring its staffers to work in his administration.

Heritage authored a similar report before Trump took office in 2016. Two years into his term, the think tank published a blog praising him for enacting nearly two-thirds of the recommendations in that report and lauded him for hiring 70 former Heritage employees.

This time around, the Heritage Foundation's policy recommendations are even more alarming and extreme than they were in 2016.

Here's what you need to know about Project 2025.

Banning public sector unions (page 82)

The very existence of AFSCME and every other public sector union in the nation is on the table. Project 2025 asks Congress to consider outlawing public sector unions of any kind. They want our employers to have the right to cut our wages and benefits, and drastically reduce the public services we offer—and they don't want our union to put up a fight when they try to do so.

Letting bosses go all out to terminate unions mid-contract (page 603)

The plan wants to diminish the voice of pro-union workers and let management organize campaigns to decertify the union at any time it wants. Unions would be forced to spend more time fending off management's anti-union campaigns—even after being certified—than bargaining contracts.

Eliminating Head Start (page 482)

The Head Start program has given millions of low-income children a preschool education. Every available indicator shows that Head Start creates better outcomes for children and families, but Project 2025 would scrap it anyway—and put more than 100,000 teachers and other staff out of work in the process.

Firing federal civil service workers for political reasons (page 80)

Civil service workers are public servants—they're supposed to be insulated from politics. But Project 2025 seeks to destroy the very concept of civil service by encouraging the president to demand fealty from government workers. If they don't comply, they'll be fired and replaced with someone who will.

Eliminate child labor laws (page 595)

Project 2025 suggests letting children as young as 14 work in slaughterhouses, coal mines, sawmills and other dangerous workplaces by rolling back child labor laws.

Cutting benefits for disabled veterans (page 649)

Even our nation's veterans aren't safe from being targeted. The report suggests reducing the number of medical conditions that veterans can claim to qualify for disabled status, and hollowing out the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Gutting federal student loans (page 167)

Project 2025 encourages the president to take away the ability of parents of college students to take out Parent PLUS student loans.

For more on Project 2025's impact on seniors, see Retiree Notes, page 15.



AFSCME ILLINOIS PEOPLE RECOMMENDATIONS: 2024 GENERAL ELECTION

Standing together in our union is how we win strong contracts with good pay and benefits. We defend our rights and defeat those who would take them away.

Voting together for union-recommended candidates is how we elect leaders who will aid that effort.

The following recommendations are based on the work of the AFSCME International Executive Board, the Illinois PEOPLE Conference, and Area PEOPLE committees comprised of local union members, who arrived at their recommendations after examining voting records, reviewing questionnaires and conducting interviews to determine where the candidates stand on the issues that matter to AFSCME members.

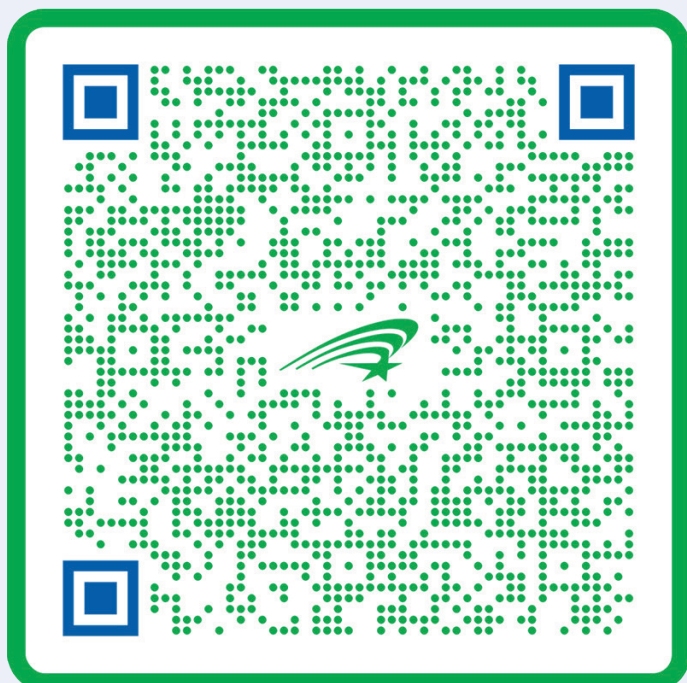
Through that process, these candidates have emerged as individuals who have pledged to stand up for the rights of working people.

- **Early voting starts Sept. 26 (Sept. 22 in the city of Chicago)**
- **Election Day is Nov. 5**

AFSCME does not typically endorse in uncontested elections. Candidates' AFSCME voting records are denoted by a percentage following their names.

**We all have a part to play in electing candidates
who will have our backs.**

Scan the QR code to volunteer!



President of the United States of America

Kamala Harris (D)

Vice President of the United States of America

Tim Walz (D)

Judicial

3rd Appellate Court District (Lytton):

John Anderson (D)

3rd Appellate Court District (O'Brien):

Linda Davenport (D)

3rd Appellate Court District (Schmidt):

Lance Peterson (D)

U.S. House of Representatives

District 1: Jonathan Jackson (100%) (D)

District 2: Robin Kelly (100%) (D)

District 3: Delia Ramirez (100%) (D)

District 4: Jesús "Chuy" García (100%) (D)

District 5: Mike Quigley (80%) (D)

District 6: Sean Casten (100%) (D)

District 7: Danny Davis (100%) (D)

District 8: Raja Krishnamoorthi (100%) (D)

District 9: Janice D. Schakowsky (100%) (D)

District 10: Brad Schneider (100%) (D)

District 11: Bill Foster (100%) (D)

District 13: Nikki Budzinski (100%) (D)

District 14: Lauren Underwood (100%) (D)

District 17: Eric Sorensen (91%) (D)

Illinois Senate

District 1: Javier Loera Cervantes (100%) (D)

District 4: Kimberly A. Lightford (100%) (D)

District 10: Robert Martwick (100%) (D)

District 13: Robert Peters (100%) (D)

District 19: Michael E. Hastings (84%) (D)

District 20: Graciela Guzmán (D)

District 25: Karina Villa (100%) (D)

District 27: Mark Walker (100%) (D)

District 31: Mary Edly-Allen (100%) (D)

District 34: Steve Stadelman (100%) (D)

District 40: Patrick Joyce (84%) (D)

District 43: Rachel Ventura (82%) (D)

District 46: Dave Koehler (100%) (D)

District 49: Meg Loughran Cappel (88%) (D)

District 52: Paul N. Faraci (100%) (D)

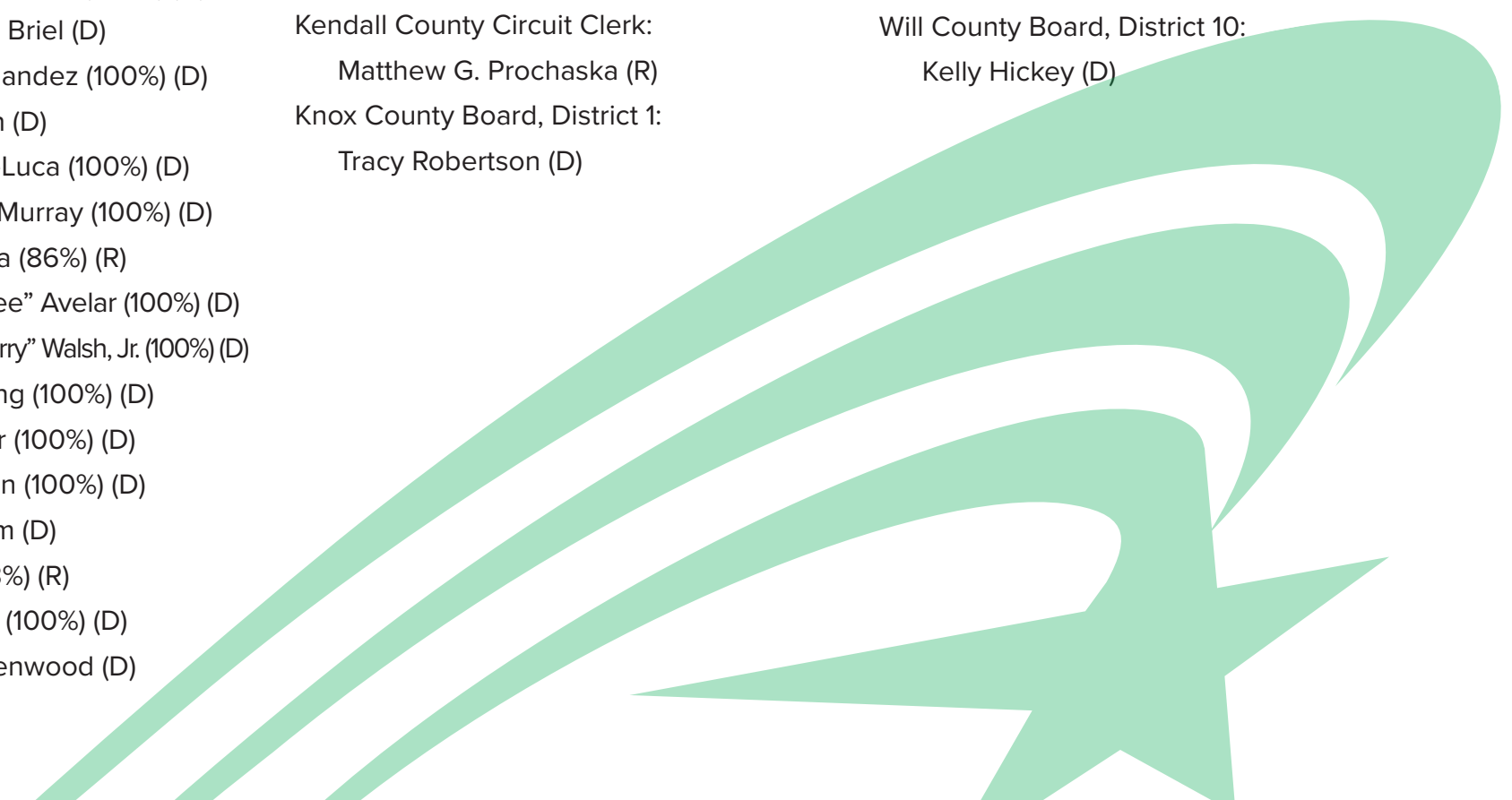
Illinois House of Representatives

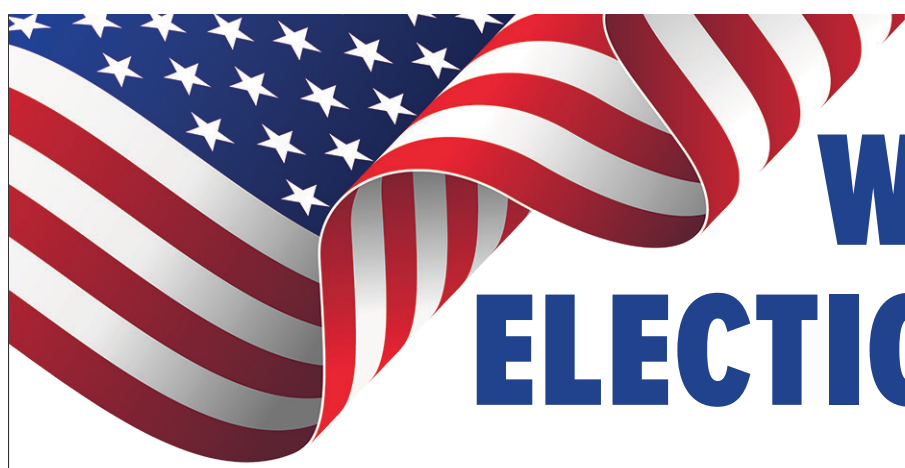
District 1: Aarón Ortíz (100%) (D)
District 2: Elizabeth “Lisa” Hernandez (73%) (D)
District 3: Eva-Dina Delgado (100%) (D)
District 4: Lilian Jiménez (100%) (D)
District 5: Kimberly Du Buclet (100%) (D)
District 6: Sonya Harper (100%) (D)
District 8: La Shawn K. Ford (100%) (D)
District 13: Hoan Huynh (100%) (D)
District 15: Michael J. Kelly (100%) (D)
District 17: Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (100%) (D)
District 18: Robyn Gabel (100%) (D)
District 19: Lindsey LaPointe (100%) (D)
District 24: Theresa Mah (100%) (D)
District 26: Kam Buckner (100%) (D)
District 30: William “Will” Davis (100%) (D)
District 31: Michael Crawford (D)
District 34: Nicholas “Nick” Smith (100%) (D)
District 35: Mary Gill (100%) (D)
District 36: Rick Ryan (D)
District 39: Will Guzzardi (100%) (D)
District 40: Jaime M. Andrade, Jr (86%) (D)
District 43: Anna Moeller (100%) (D)
District 45: Martha “Martí” Deuter (D)
District 46: Diane Blair-Sherlock (100%) (D)
District 47: Jackie Williamson (D)
District 48: Jennifer Sanalitra (69%) (R)
District 49: Maura Hirschauer (100%) (D)
District 50: Barbara Hernandez (100%) (D)
District 51: Nabeela Syed (100%) (D)
District 52: Maria Peterson (D)
District 53: Nicolle Grasse (D)
District 54: Mary Beth Canty (100%) (D)
District 57: Tracy Katz Muhl (100%) (D)
District 58: Bob Morgan (100%) (D)
District 59: Daniel Didech (100%) (D)
District 61: Joyce Mason (100%) (D)
District 65: Linda R Robertson (D)
District 66: Suzanne Ness (100%) (D)
District 67: Maurice A. West II (100%) (D)
District 69: Peter Janko (D)
District 72: Gregg C. Johnson (100%) (D)
District 76: Amy “Murri” Briel (D)
District 77: Norma Hernandez (100%) (D)
District 79: Billy Morgan (D)
District 80: Anthony DeLuca (100%) (D)
District 81: Anne Stava-Murray (100%) (D)
District 82: Nicole La Ha (86%) (R)
District 85: Dagmara “Dee” Avelar (100%) (D)
District 86: Lawrence “Larry” Walsh, Jr. (100%) (D)
District 91: Sharon Chung (100%) (D)
District 96: Sue Scherer (100%) (D)
District 97: Harry Benton (100%) (D)
District 104: Jarrett Clem (D)
District 111: Amy Elik (63%) (R)
District 112: Katie Stuart (100%) (D)
District 114: LaToya Greenwood (D)

Local Government

Champaign County Ballot Question:
Vote YES on the Public
Safety Sales Tax
Champaign County Board,
District 5: Matt Sullard (D)
Champaign County Board,
District 8: Emily Rodriguez (D)
Cook County State’s Attorney:
Eilleen O’Neill Burke (D)
DeKalb County Board, District 4:
Stewart Ogilvie (D)
DeKalb County Board, District 11:
Anna Wilhelmi (D)
DuPage County Board, District 1:
Maria Sinkule (D)
DuPage County Board, District 3:
Lucy Chang Evans (D)
DuPage County Board, District 4:
Lynn LaPlante (D)
DuPage County Board, District 5:
Saba Haider (D)
DuPage County Board, District 6:
Greg Schwarze (D)
Jackson County Circuit Clerk:
Christian Hale (D)
Jackson County State’s Attorney:
Joe Cervantez (R)
Kane County Circuit Clerk:
Theresa E. Barreiro (D)
Kane County Board Chairman:
Corinne M. Pierog (D)
Kane County Board, District 4:
Mavis Bates (D)
Kane County Board, District 10:
William J. Tarver (D)
Kane County Board, District 12:
Ricky Rivard (D)
Kane County Board, District 14:
Brenda Engelhardt (D)
Kane County Board, District 16:
Ted Penesis (D)
Kendall County Circuit Clerk:
Matthew G. Prochaska (R)
Knox County Board, District 1:
Tracy Robertson (D)

Knox County Board, District 3:
Kimberly Thierry (D)
Knox County Board, District 4:
Joshua Kramer (R)
Lake County Circuit Clerk:
Erin Cartwright Weinstein (D)
Lake County Coroner:
Jennifer Banek (D)
Lake County Board, District 12:
Paras Parekh (D)
Lake County Board, District 13:
Sandy Hart (D)
Lake County Board, District 18:
Sara Fredrick Knizhnik (D)
LaSalle County Board Chair:
Brian Dose (D)
McHenry County Board Chairperson:
Kelli Wegener (D)
Rock Island County Auditor:
April Palmer (D)
Rock Island County Recorder:
Kelly Fisher (D)
Shelby County Circuit Clerk:
Kari Ann Kingston (D)
Shelby County Board, District 4:
Uvanna McKinney (D)
Shelby County Board, District 9:
Chrissy Grant (D)
Stephenson County Board, District C:
Casey Jacobs Anthony (D)
Stephenson County Board, District D:
Jim Hart (D)
Will County Executive:
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant (D)
Will County Recorder: Karen Stukel (D)
Will County Coroner: Laurie Summers (D)
Will County Board, District 7:
Dawn Bullock (D)
Will County Board, District 7:
David Lozano (D)
Will County Board, District 10:
Meta Mueller (D)
Will County Board, District 10:
Kelly Hickey (D)





WHAT THIS ELECTION MEANS TO US



The issues at stake in this election are many.

Our union, our rights, our very freedoms—they're all on the ballot this fall.

AFSCME members are ready to vote to build a better, more just future—and below, they're sharing what this election means to them, and why they're ready to get active to support the candidates who will have their backs.

Patrick Sheridan
Local 963

"This election is about investing in the people and the country. Some people want to invest in public services and safety nets, and some people don't. Some people want to bring people up, others don't. For me, I want to bring people up across the country."

Sommer Churchill
Local 978

"It is very important that everyone concerned with protecting workers' rights get out and VOTE! Labor rights are in jeopardy and must be safeguarded."

Craig Linne
Local 2073

"Politics is getting further to the right and further to the left, and it's hard to find a good candidate with a mix of what people care about. As a member of the LGBT community, I care about our rights. It's really hard to find someone from the Republican Party who checks the boxes that I need."

Stacey Adams
Local 401

"I'm a woman, so I'm excited to be able to vote for the first female president. I like Kamala Harris' policies of lowering prescription drug costs, building an economy that works for the working class and fostering a more peaceful world. She doesn't want to take away collective bargaining for public employees like Trump does with his Project 2025."

Miguel Vazquez
Local 3297

"The survival of the working middle class is at stake. Project 2025 and its backers are the takers."

Regina Darden
Local 370

"Everyone needs to do what's right and vote. I would like everyone to do their research. Don't spread bad information just because you saw a snippet of something on social media!"

Joshua W. Hoots
Local 51

"To me, it means the difference between America moving forward or America moving backwards. As a local president I don't tell people how to vote—I just share what the union endorsements are. But everyone must vote their conscience. This election for me is about women's rights, veterans' rights and union rights."

Yvette Gray
Local 486

"This election is very important to me. Being able to see for myself a woman running for president never seemed possible as we were coming up.

They're taking away women's rights. They want to make it so we can't make decisions for ourselves. That's not fair. We have to get out there and try to make a difference. We're struggling, fighting for fair wages. Maybe with the right president, legislators and judges, we can get things in order for working people."

Keke Lindsey
Local 1563

"It's important that we get the right candidates in office for women's reproductive rights, workers' rights and human rights. I want my granddaughter to have a voice when it comes to her rights as a woman in the future."

Angela Lewis
Local 2226

"I would like to say that, first, I'm glad to be living at this time to be able to witness history to see the first woman of color to be elected Vice President, and then to run for the highest office of the United States is just simply inspiring for all women to recognize their potential. Most importantly, she stands for the working people and her beliefs that everyone deserves a fair chance and values all freedoms and respect for human rights."

Mickey Lomelli
Local 1753

"There's a lot at stake for workers' rights in this election. Workers' rights are in danger because of Project 2025. If we don't win this election, Project 2025 is going to be catastrophic to workers' rights and for working people in general. They're going to come after our union rights."

Kim Pope
Local 981

"Our enemies are relentless in their attacks against unions, and this election is no exception. Having a president who truly recognizes the importance of unions and working people is vital to the labor movement, and necessary to secure a stable future for us and our families."

Tiffany Euler Simpson
Local 997

"To me, this election is particularly important for several reasons, including women's rights. Female reproductive rights have been a hot topic of discussion amongst politicians since women were first given the right to vote 102 years ago. The government's intrusion into the most intimate moments of a woman's life cannot be allowed to continue."

Deidre Silas' killer convicted of first-degree murder

The man accused of killing Department of Children and Family Services Investigator and AFSCME Local 805 member Deidre Silas has been convicted of first-degree murder.

On Jan. 11, 2022, Silas was assigned to visit a home in Thayer, a small town in central Illinois. Hours later, responding to a 911 call, local police arrived at the home to find her dead. There were six children living in squalid conditions at the home. Silas had been attempting to perform a wellness check when Benjamin Reed, a resident of the home, stabbed her more than 40 times.

"We are relieved that justice has been done, but there is no joy in this moment," said David Morris, president of AFSCME Local 805. "The pain of Deidre's loss is still there. It will never go away."

In a bench trial, Sangamon County Circuit Judge

John Madonia convicted Reed, but found him mentally ill at the time of the murder. Madonia called it "one of the most brutal and heinous" cases he's ever seen, according to the *State Journal-Register*. Reed's sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 15; he faces 20 years to life in prison.

Silas joined DCFS in August 2021. Previously she spent more than seven years with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, where she worked with children and teens with special needs and mental health issues. Silas was a proud AFSCME member then, too, serving as a union steward for her local union at DJJ. She was the mother of two children.



Before working as a DCFS investigator, Silas worked with youth in the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Silas was the second Illinois DCFS investigator and AFSCME member to be killed during an investigation since 2017. Pamela Knight, a child protection investigator was assaulted by Andrew Sucher while attempting to remove a vulnerable 2-year-old child from his home, and later died of the injuries. Sucher later pled guilty and is serving a 21-year sentence for the crime.

After Silas' murder, AFSCME Council 31 pushed for the passage of two bills that enhanced protections for DCFS workers. The first, signed into law in 2022, allowed for DCFS field staff to carry pepper spray after receiving the proper training. The second allowed DCFS field staff to shield the addresses on their driver's license or state

ID by using their work address instead of their home address. That bill was signed into law in 2023.

Council 31 is also using the labor-management process to press for additional safety measures. As a result of these discussions, all field staff can now receive a department-issued bulletproof and stab-proof vest. 🦋

Victory follows quickly after Local 1787 pickets for safe staffing

Members of AFSCME Local 1787 at the Quincy Veterans Home took to the picket line on Sept. 4 to call out the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) for not taking the necessary steps to foster hiring at the facility.

"We have the best union contract we could ask for. We have the highest pay and the best benefits, but we can't get anybody in the door because CMS won't post these jobs," said Local 1787 President Jennifer Hudelson.

Quincy is short 30 nursing assistants, leaving the remaining 120 employees to work to the point of burnout to make sure that the veterans are cared for. Employees at the home do the important work of caring for our nation's veterans, yet inexplicable hold-ups and endless

delays at CMS were preventing open jobs from even being posted on the state's hiring portal.

They had pressed CMS every way they could think of, but still, the jobs went unposted. So they organized a picket with a simple message that CMS could understand.

"Our message was that we want these jobs posted and we want them filled," Hudelson said. "We're not going to take it anymore."

Members walked the picket line with signs saying

"Honk for Jobs" and "Post Our Jobs." Members of the Teamsters and Illinois Nurses Association who also work on Quincy's grounds stood on the picket line in solidarity with AFSCME members.

There's no doubt their message was heard loud and clear. Just hours after the picket, all the job postings were made available online.

But the local wasn't done yet. Now that the jobs were posted, members of the local took it upon themselves to also recruit applicants for those jobs. They crafted flyers immediately after the picket advertising the union jobs and blasted them out through their personal Facebook pages.

Within two days of the postings, the union had recruited more than 60 applicants.

Now, the next step is making sure that CMS processes those applications and gets offers and start dates to



A Local 1787 member walks the picket line for safe staffing.

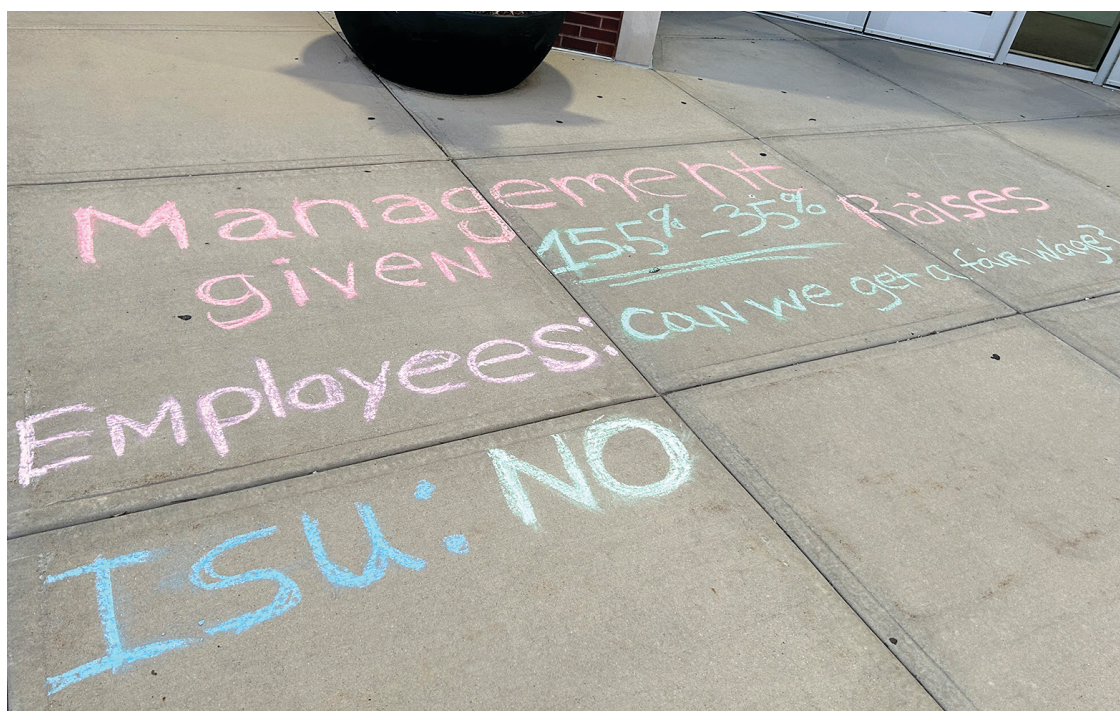
applicants in a timely manner so they don't end up taking jobs elsewhere.

"We made sure to let

management know that we won't hesitate to picket again if we're not seeing action,"

Hudelson said. 🦋

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



Members of Local 3236 got their message out all over ISU's campus in chalk.

Chalk up Local 3236's new contract to strong action

AFSCME LOCAL 3236 AT ILLINOIS State University has secured two strong new contracts for its clerical and health care bargaining units that can both point to a chalking action as their contract campaign's turning point.

Members of Local 3236 under the healthcare contract are nurses and medical specialists at ISU's on-campus health clinic. Local 3236 members in the clerical bargaining unit are office and library managers, among others. The union represents 140 ISU workers in total.

"Management always talks about student success. Most people think of the faculty when they hear that, but it's the support staff who actually help students succeed," said Local 3236 President Deb Shambrook. "We're the ones that are there five days a week, in an office setting or in the library, helping them get the answers or the health care they need to succeed and thrive."

Members were trying to win fair wages that ended wage compression between new and veteran employees, expand remote work policies, and secure stronger rights on vacation time and continuing education release days. But early on, it became apparent that ISU administration wasn't going to meet their demands without a fight.

For ideas on how they could get their message out,

they looked to the time-tested strategy of student activists: splashing their message across campus in chalk.

Alisa Sudlow, a clinic nurse who served on the health care bargaining team, was among those who went out to chalk up campus with messages alerting the campus community to the ongoing fight for a fair contract.

On the sidewalk outside the human resources office, Sudlow wrote a simple message that irked some of those inside.

"I wrote the definition of the word 'negotiate,'" Sudlow said.

Negotiate, verb: "Try to reach an agreement or compromise by discussion with others." It was a point that union members needed to drive home to the administration, given management's lack of interest in discussing anything of substance.

Some people inside the building took offense and called campus police. When police arrived, Sudlow and her fellow union members were told they were well within their rights, and nothing could stop them from peacefully putting their message in chalk.

Despite the attempt at intimidating them, it was clear whose side the campus community was on. Incoming freshmen and their families were on campus to pick up their student IDs, tour dorms and get ready for the upcoming school year. Members of Local 3236 said that as they chalked up campus, they received heaps of encouragement and solidarity from the new Redbirds and their families.

That solidarity helped push them along. Soon, both units had secured new contracts.

For the health care unit, the three-year contract raises

wages by an average of 9.3%, which could rise even higher if the university announces a higher across-the-board increase for other workers on campus. They also won the new right to use continuing education release days consecutively and improved rights around temporary assignments.

The new contract for the clerical unit raises wages by an average of 8%, which could also go higher if a general wage increase is announced. They were successful in strengthening and expanding the remote work policy.

The health care bargaining team included Sudlow, Heather Burnette, Amy Horsch and Danielle Nussbaum.

The clerical bargaining team included Shambrook, Sean Berrocales, Julie Cooper, Amanda Dingler and Jessica Martin.

Both committees were led by Council 31 Staff Representative Renee Nestler.

State Board of Education employees secure "monumental" contract

MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 2811 who work for the Illinois State Board of Education started bargaining a new contract for their 45 members while negotiations for a new State of Illinois master contract were already well underway. These state employees have their own contract

because they don't work for the executive branch, but they pay close attention to the master agreement, and they knew they wanted to mirror its gains.

Many AFSCME members at ISBE land there as their first job out of college. Others are single mothers, just trying to pay their bills. Still others found at ISBE a job that provides a stable and secure retirement and health benefits.

But for too long, low wages had been the norm at ISBE. The bargaining committee vowed to change that.

"It was ridiculous to us that we were working for the state, but we were still struggling to pay our bills," said Shelley Hamlin, a program specialist II and Local 2811's president.

Early on, management's paltry economic offers offended the bargaining committee. Clearly management wouldn't get the message unless union members made a strong show of force, so the local organized an informational picket outside the ISBE office in Springfield.

Members of nearby unions and other AFSCME locals joined in solidarity. A Council 31 media advisory caught the eye of several local news stations, which amplified the union's message and made certain that ISBE bosses would get the message.

But more action was still needed to get them across the finish line. In the months that followed, members wore green every Wednesday. Sticker and button days were scheduled frequently. They went directly to one of the well-attended meetings of the ISBE Board of



Local 2811 President Shelley Hamlin speaks to the media at a picket outside the ISBE office in Springfield.



Local 2811 members walk the picket line outside the ISBE office in Springfield.

Directors, where they urged the board to settle a fair contract with fair pay for employees.

Then in July 2023, state government employees reached a contract settlement that had wage increases of nearly 19% and only modest health insurance cost increases. Those victories kept Local 2811 fighting.

As the bargaining committee sensed they were nearing the end, they made one final move: Throughout the coming weeks, they adorned the halls of the ISBE office with vibrant AFSCME green balloons. Union members would replenish them when they got deflated so that wherever management looked, they would always find green balloons. It served as a constant reminder that the union was determined to win a fair contract at all costs.

Taken together, these actions were the deciding factor. Management said as much at one of their last bargaining sessions.

The average wage increase in the final contract ratified by members was “monumental,” Hamlin said, featuring pay increases of 32% over four years. The agreement also reduced the total number of steps on the wage scale so employees will climb it even faster. Starting and top wage rates were both substantially increased, helping both the newest and the longest-serving employees.

The union also won increased longevity and seniority bonuses, more than doubled the amount employees can get reimbursed for continuing education, gained two additional weeks of paid parental leave and secured stronger union

rights.

“We knew that if we stuck with it, we’d succeed,” Hamlin said. “It was painful at times, but we stuck it out because we knew how important this was to our members.”

The bargaining committee included Hamlin, Treasurer Pam Krushall, and Executive Board members Wanda Schoeneweis and Toya Lloyd. The committee was led by Council 31 Staff Representative Joseph Jay.

Thornton paraprofessionals move up

THE PARAPROFESSIONALS OF AFSCME Local 3335 who work for Thornton Township High School District 205 keep the buses running on time. They also make sure discipline records are kept, student attendance is tracked and equipment is accounted for.

In other words, members of Local 3335 make the school district happen.

“We felt like they didn’t respect us enough,” said Sandra Fontaine, Local 3335’s president who has worked for the school district for 18 years. “We knew if we were to strike, they would respect us then.”

The big issue: Pay. The school district was struggling to retain employees because wages hadn’t kept up with inflation. The starting wages were well below what other school districts were paying.

Another priority was clarifying workers’ rights around

inclement weather. Many paraprofessionals drive great distances just to get to work every day, so when snow hits, the drive back home to their families can get downright dangerous. But in recent years, there have been instances where school administration has canceled classes for students and told teachers not to come in, but paraprofessionals were still forced to show up.

“We were like, ‘Why don’t you care about my life?’” Fontaine said. “Most of us can work remotely, but you’re forcing us to come in on dangerous

roads.”


Members donned stickers on designated days, putting their solidarity on display for the whole school. They went directly to where the power was: the District 205 school board. Members lobbied them to put the pressure on management to get a contract done.

“It was around then we started to see their tone shift,” Fontaine said. “We started seeing a little more progress, and it was coming a little quicker.”

The final agreement increases pay by 23% over five years, with the largest

annual raise—6%—coming in the first year of the contract. It also doubles the reimbursement for continuing education.

“Members were so, so excited about it,” Fontaine said. “All they asked us is, ‘When do we sign?’”

The bargaining committee included Vice President Anniece Lashley, Secretary Tammera Jones, Treasurer Venita Wiggins and Pamela Linton. The bargaining committee was led by Council 31 Staff Representative Neal Jameson. 



The Local 3335 bargaining committee after reaching an agreement on a new contract.

SHORT REPORTS

Thousands of Nevada state employees join AFSCME

NEARLY 3,000 NEVADA state employees won a voice on the job in early September after voting overwhelmingly for AFSCME representation. This victory allows them to join contract negotiations with AFSCME Local 4041, which already represents other Nevada state employees, this fall.

Employees in Unit C include Department of Motor Vehicles service techs, family support specialists at the Department of Welfare and Support Services, engineering techs at the Department of Transportation, library techs at all Nevada System of Higher Education institutions, and others who perform front-line jobs that serve communities throughout Nevada.

"We see the benefits of having a union contract and voice on the job, that's why we've organized as AFSCME and voted to have union representation. I'm excited tech workers now get to join our fellow AFSCME members at the bargaining table this fall," said Austin Krehbiel, a family support specialist at the Division of Welfare and Support Services.

"Since winning collective bargaining rights in 2019, having a union contract has improved working conditions for all state employees. We fought for this election because we know the difference a voice on the job



The new AFSCME members in Nevada are engineering techs, family support specialists, library techs and more.

can make. Now we will have more power to make even more improvements for state workers and the services we provide," said Sandra Dilup-Carter, a family support specialist at the Division of Welfare and Support Services.

Since winning their first contract as AFSCME in 2021, employees covered under the AFSCME collective bargaining agreement have seen wage increases of more than 30%, along with added benefits and improved grievance procedures.

AFSCME members hold the line in Oregon wildfire

WHEN A FAST-MOVING FIRE threatened hundreds of

residents at two state-run care centers, members of the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE/AFSCME Council 28) stepped up and saved lives.

On Aug. 18, 2023, the Gray Fire broke loose in Medical Lake, Washington, after a faulty power line set ablaze grasslands, pine trees and homes, burning over 10,000 acres in hours. A year later, the memories of the fire and workers' bravery in rescuing their patients underscores AFSCME members' dedication and spirit that exemplifies our motto, "Never Quit."

Eastern State Hospital and Lakeland Village, home to more than 500 residents with disabilities and psychiatric needs, were in the path of the fire. By the time the facility had called for evacuation, residents and workers had minutes to get out of Lakeland.

"In the beginning, we didn't know what was happening or which way the fire was moving," said Colette Buck, a WFSE Local 573 member and communications consultant at Lakeland Village. "The winds were so aggressive and unpredictable. I saw flames move at the speed of a car going down the freeway."

"I remember looking out the window of the cottage I was in and seeing a wall of fire behind it," said Rachele Ragsdill, an attendant counselor manager. "That's when we decided we weren't waiting for the evacuation call."

Workers quickly realized there were not enough buses to evacuate every resident, especially those who rely on mobility devices. The buses that were available had to navigate roads surrounded by burning forests.

That's when Lakeland

Village's staff kicked their efforts into overdrive, pushing residents uphill through choking smoke to try and get them to safety at Eastern State Hospital.

In the end, all residents were evacuated safely and there were no fatalities. AFSCME members had demonstrated beyond any doubt their commitment to those in their care.

10,000 hotel workers strike for fair pay

MORE THAN 10,000 HOTEL workers across nine cities went out on strike over Labor Day weekend after negotiations for a new master contract with the Hilton, Hyatt and Marriott hotel chains hit the wall.

"We came to the decision to go on strike because of all the success other unions have had," Christian Carbajal, a market attendant who has worked at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront for 15 years, told *Labor Notes*. "[It's frustrating] that we have to go this far to be given a fair wage."

In Baltimore, Boston, Greenwich, Honolulu, Kauai, San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego and Seattle, hotel workers represented by UNITE HERE have all gone out on a rolling strike. Workers at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront have opted to stay out on strike indefinitely while others have returned to work.

Low pay, unaffordable healthcare, long hours and demanding workloads are taking a toll on hotel workers while bosses continue to rake in billions of dollars. The pandemic also weighed on the industry, leading many hotels to cut housekeeping staff. While the number of guests has rebounded since the pandemic, staffing has not, forcing the remaining staff to work grueling hours at a breakneck pace.

UNITE HERE members in as many as 20 cities could join the strike in the coming months as the contracts for 40,000 additional workers expire later this year. The union said that 15,000 workers have already voted to authorize a strike.



UNITE HERE hotel workers walk the strike line in Greenwich, CT.

RETIREE NOTES

Project 2025 spells danger for seniors

AS DEFENDERS OF DEMOCRACY, AFSCME Retirees are again working to preserve it by joining efforts to organize against Project 2025, a plan to undermine our democratic institutions, abolish checks and balances, and chip away at church-state separation.

Even though Donald Trump is now trying to distance himself from this political playbook, it was authored by a host of individuals from his administration including Paul Dans (former chief of staff of the US Office of Personnel Management under Trump), Spencer Chretien (Trump's former special assistant), and Russ Vought (Trump's director of Office of Management and Budget), to name just a few.

Project 2025 would touch on virtually every facet of American life, and the policy changes it proposes include the elimination of some federal agencies, the

overhauling of others and the stocking of all departments with loyalists to the cause of seizing and consolidating executive power.

"Trump's Project 2025 threatens the continued existence of public-employee unions like AFSCME and the very workings of government and democracy," AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31 coordinator Maria Britton-Sipe said. "We must educate ourselves and our fellow seniors in order to organize and vote against it."

The plan's proposed changes affecting seniors and the programs they rely on are radical and dangerous. Below are a portion of the ways seniors would be directly impacted:

- Increased costs for prescription drugs for senior citizens (pg. 465)
- Massive cuts to the Medicaid program that would jeopardize long-term care for seniors and health care for millions of low-income families (pgs. 466-468)

SOLIDARITY AT STATEVILLE

Peter Mendoza, a Stateville Correctional Center retiree and member of Sub-chapter 60, walks the picket line in solidarity with employees at his former workplace.



★ ★ Make a plan to vote! ★ ★

Key Dates for the 2024 General Election

You can vote early, in person or by mail, from Sept. 26 (Sept. 22 in Chicago) through Nov. 4.

September 20 **First day to request a mail-in ballot**

September 26 **Early voting and vote-by-mail begins**

October 20 **Online voter registration closes**

November 5 **Election Day. Polls close at 7 p.m.**

- Expanded use of artificial intelligence to administer the Medicare program, jeopardizing access for seniors to important health care services (pg. 463)
- Reinstatement of a tax on employer-provided health insurance (pg. 697)
- Privatize Medicare (pg. 464)
- Privatize veterans care (pg. 647)

Retirees are one of the largest voting populations in the United States and have a long track record of being educated voters. We must do our best to ensure all seniors understand the stakes.

Chapter 31 retirees set agenda at national council meeting

"IT WAS IMPRESSIVE TO SEE retirees from across the country taking part in the annual AFSCME Retiree Council Meeting," said Alma Wingard, one of the three Chapter 31 representatives. "Regardless if someone

was from Maryland or Colorado, the private sector or the public sector, we were all very concerned about protecting Medicare, Social Security and the retirement benefits we worked to receive."

Meeting in August before the AFSCME International Convention in Los Angeles, the Retiree Council elected new leadership. At the convention, the Council approved various resolutions impacting retirees, including these measures:

- Addressing Health Care Profiteering
- Support the Repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset
- Continuing the Fight to Lower Prescription Drug Costs
- Federal Investments in Public Services
- Stop Trump's Project 2025
- Mandatory Staffing Ratios Save Lives and Lower the Cost of Health Care

"Most of us retirees understand that union membership continues well after retirement," Wingard continued. "It is only with the strength we have in our unity, with both current

employees and retirees, that we preserve the ability to protect workers' rights for ourselves, our children and grandchildren, and society".

Sub-chapter 87 Honors Veterans

ON JULY 8, THE DECATUR Area Sub-Chapter 87 members met in Taylorville for a potluck and meeting focused on thanking our nation's veterans.

The president of the sub-chapter, David Spinner, asked each member who is a veteran to come forward so they could be honored. The veterans each stated their name, service branch and dates of service.

Spinner welcomed Yvonne Stuchell, a volunteer for the Quilts of Valor Foundation, a non-profit organization started in 2003 to make quilts for veterans touched by war.

Stuchell presented Sub-chapter 87 member Ricky Reed with a beautiful red, white and blue quilt and thanked him for his service. 🦋



Members of Retiree Sub-chapter 87 honor veterans at their July meeting in Taylorville.



How do you safeguard elections and ensure every vote is counted?

Our [election] judges are all trained by the state board of elections. They are always encouraged to call our office with any questions. We are lucky

to have several judges that have many years of service and experience.

Our elections are very secure, and I just don't think people see the lengths we go to make sure they stay that way. For example, all of the judges have a list of everyone who has received a vote-by-mail ballot so they can't vote

again in the polling place. There are so many safeguards in place that people just don't see.

Do you have a sense of pride in your role in our democracy?

I am so proud to work for the county clerk. If history has taught us anything at all, it is how important voting is in our country. I love that I get to be a part of that process, and I get to serve my community in that way.

What do you want people to know about the folks who run their local elections?

I wish people understood how long and hard our election judges work. They start their day at 5 a.m., just like we do at the office, and our day doesn't end until all the voting machines and ballots have been returned. They usually work 15 hours or more on Election Day. These are good people volunteering to serve and it's a long day for the minimal amount of money they make. They deserve to be treated with kindness, patience and respect.

Why did you get active in your union?

I am just one of those people that feel unions are important. I don't mind taking the initiative on getting something done. I like to encourage and stand up for others. I feel it's important for us to be given fair wages and appreciation for the work we do.

We just started negotiations for a new contract this month. We're always fighting for fair wages. Ultimately what we're fighting for is to be treated fairly and with respect. 🦋

Liz Ragan

DEPUTY CLERK
SHELBY COUNTY

AFSCME Local 3323

Can you tell us about your job and what you do at work every day?

I am a deputy clerk in the County Clerk and Recorder's office. I've been here for almost nine years. Our office has many responsibilities. We record all the land records in our county. We're the keepers of birth, death and vital records. We issue all the marriage licenses for every couple getting married in Shelby County.

Our office is also the local election authority for the county, so we administer the elections as well. When I first came to work here, the elections were what interested me the most. We're a very small office so we all share responsibility of these roles.

How do the employees of Shelby County prepare for an election?

Election season never ends. As soon as one ends, you are already gearing up for the next

one. This year, the general election is on Nov. 5 and our packets for the April municipal elections will start being filed on Nov. 12.

There is a lot that goes into each election. Each of us in the clerk's office has a specific area we focus on. My focus is voter registration, but we all help each other. Our county clerk is great at organizing and we follow her lead. She has been working there for a long time and she is the best of the best.

What do you enjoy about election work?

My favorite part about working the elections is Election Day. It's like a rush all day long. It's busy and the hours are long, but it's always exciting because we have all spent so much time and worked so hard for this one day. It's great to see it all come together like it does.