An Election That Really, Really Matters

Hillary Clinton, a former Secretary of State, a former U.S. senator, a former First Lady — a friend of working families, of labor, of AFSCME. This is, without a doubt, the most critical election in our lives. Meet some of the AFSCME members who tell why they are voting for Hillary Clinton Nov. 8. Page 6.

Our children mean everything. If the unimaginable happens — if a child goes missing — we will do anything it takes to find her or him. AFSCME, in partnership with the National Child Identification Program and the American Football Coaches Association, is providing free ID kits to members nationwide. Page 14.

When the rains kept falling in Louisiana in August, few could imagine the catastrophe that would quickly befall Baton Rouge. The flooding destroyed homes and lives — and the hopes of many survivors who found themselves swamped by losses that are still being tallied. Some survivors are AFSCME members — and some AFSCME members volunteered to help them recover. Page 10.

COVER: (from left to right) Lisa Keefe, Jeffrey Marcoux and Al Dodie meet Sec. Hillary Clinton at a rally in New Hampshire.

CLOCKWISE: Jerry Jones takes a quick selfie with Sec. Hillary Clinton; AFSCME members volunteer in Louisiana; Protect your child this school year with a free ID kit.
WORKS IS GOING DIGITAL!

We’re excited to announce a new era for AFSCME WORKS that will make it easier to deliver the stories that matter to you.

Stories about your service. Stories about your sisters and brothers standing up and fighting for our rights. Stories that will make you AFSCME Proud!

Sign up at AFSCME.org/digital to make sure you get the stories you care about.

Have You Shamed Someone Today?

Shame on these leaders for endorsing Donald Trump for President. It’s time to put country ahead of party and immediately disavow Trump’s dangerous candidacy.

I’ve been involved in a lot of campaigns over the years, but I can’t remember another one where the contrast between the candidates was this great and the choice was this clear.

Without question, there’s a lot of economic anxiety out there. Even though the recession is over, even though incomes are rising again, so many working families feel like they’re getting a raw deal. They feel like they can’t get ahead no matter how hard they work. They feel like they won’t be able to give their kids the same opportunities they had.

**Talking the Talk vs. Walking the Walk**

There is only one candidate in this Presidential race who understands these struggles, who really gets it. And I’ll give you a hint: It’s not the guy who made “you’re fired” his reality show catchphrase.

Donald Trump wants you to believe he’s on the side of working people. He talks a good talk, but we need a President who will walk the walk.

He says we’ve got to bring jobs back to America, but it turns out his clothing line uses labor from China and Bangladesh.

He says he’s on our side, but then he argues that Americans’ wages are too high.

He says he supports unions, except that he embraces a national right-to-work law and he’s a first-class union-buster, refusing to negotiate with workers at his hotel property in Las Vegas.

Talk is cheap. Lip service isn’t going to raise our incomes, protect our pensions or give our kids a better future. We need a President who will produce for us, not pander to us.

We also need a President who treats all people with respect. Not someone who attacks people of color, who smears immigrants and religious minorities, who insults war heroes and Gold Star families, who says vulgar things about women and mocks people with disabilities. Public service workers bring our communities together. We can’t have a President who would tear us apart.

**A Strong, Seasoned, Steady Leader**

On the other side, we have Sec. Hillary Clinton – as strong, seasoned and steady a leader as you will find. She is both competent and compassionate. She has the heart, the brains and the guts to succeed at the most important job in the world.

She will fight for an economy that works for everyone. She’s a champion for higher wages and equal pay for equal work. A champion for Social Security and retirement with dignity. A champion who will defend our collective bargaining rights, who proudly declares that when unions are strong, America is strong.

She cares about the things we care about, the things that we talk about around the dinner table, the things that keep us up at night. She understands the challenges facing working families. She honors our work and shares our commitment to our communities. She knows that public service workers never quit. She knows that we make America happen.

The stakes are too high to sit this one out, Sisters and Brothers. We have the power to determine what kind of country we’ll be for the next four years.

So let’s do what we do best, AFSCME. I’ll be out there hitting the streets, and I’m asking you to join me. Knock on doors till your hands are sore. Make phone calls until your voice is hoarse. We can rest on November 9. Until then, let’s leave it all on the field and elect Hillary Clinton President of the United States.
Providing Economic Security for All Generations

Serving as your secretary-treasurer gives me the opportunity to work closely with members in both the dawn and the twilight of their careers.

I love the enduring energy that AFSCME Retirees and Next Wave bring to AFSCME, whether working on retirement security or shining a light on issues like student debt.

Protecting Our Future
Our retirees are fighting to ensure that all retirees can live in dignity after a lifelong commitment to making our communities stronger. Millions of Americans are in danger of not having enough money to maintain their standard of living after they’ve reached the end of their working years. Meanwhile, right-wing politicians continue to attack the pensions we have earned, while threatening to privatize Medicare and Social Security. For so many people a Social Security check is the only thing keeping them out of poverty, and they couldn’t visit the doctor if it weren’t for Medicare.

Meanwhile, our Next Wavers are fighting for their rights just as they are getting a foothold in their careers. In an economy that can be tough sledding for workers of all ages, they often face the additional pressure of starting adulthood buried under an avalanche of student loan debt. Total student loan debt nationwide now exceeds $1 trillion (yes, that’s trillion with a “t”).

Advocate for Working Families
So as we look toward the November election, we need to make sure we’re supporting the Presidential candidate that is serious about addressing these crises. Only one candidate understands the pressures working families face — and often, the intergenerational nature of those pressures. Hillary Clinton gets it, and not just from a politician’s view, but as a longtime advocate for children, as a working mom and as a doting grandmother. She understands from a personal place how good public policy moves a great country forward.

She’s With Us
She will stand strong for workers’ rights, including the right to negotiate collectively to improve wages, benefits and working conditions. She will oppose any effort to privatize Medicare and Social Security. In fact, she will expand Social Security for today’s beneficiaries, the generations to follow, and also for caregivers — the people who often drop out of the workforce to look after family members. She has a plan for universal debt-free public college, and she will help millions of people refinance their student loans and enroll in income-based repayment.

The stakes are high for everyone — and certainly for our retirees and Next Wave. We have an opportunity to build an economy that provides greater security for working people of all ages. But it will only happen if we work hard to elect a President who believes we owe a debt of gratitude to our retirees, and who believes we have to invest in the workforce of tomorrow. I know Hillary Clinton will be that President.

“The stakes are high for everyone — and certainly for our retirees and Next Wave. We have an opportunity to build an economy that provides greater security for working people of all ages.”

Laura Reyes
Secretary-Treasurer
Why These AFSCME Members Are Voting for Hillary

By Pablo Ros, Tiffanie Bright & Clyde Weiss

Public service workers never stop improving their communities. They work 24/7 to provide the valuable services we all depend on. That’s why they deserve elected leaders at every level of government who respect them, and who show that respect through action.

In this year’s general election, there is only one candidate running for President with a track record of standing for public service workers, fighting for the middle class, and defending collective bargaining rights. That candidate is Hillary Clinton. And that’s why many AFSCME members in the weeks before Election Day will be getting out the vote for her.

Meet a few of the AFSCME members who want this election to be a victory for public service workers. And don’t forget to visit our website, wevotewewin.org.

Patricia Byrd
Retiree, Florida Chapter 79, Subchapter 43

Fighting for the American Dream
My husband and I have more than 65 years of combined union membership. Because of our unions we were able to enjoy great benefits, above-average salary and a pension plan. We were able to buy a house, and we always had reliable cars. We raised three children and put them through college without great debt.

We have lived the American Dream. But the American Dream doesn’t exist anymore for working families. Our children can’t live the American Dream. They don’t even know what the American Dream is. Hillary understands the problems working families face. That’s why she’s fighting for paid family sick leave. Quality affordable child care. Equal pay for women. She has been fighting her whole life for families, for women, for children and she’s not going to stop now. Hillary’s fighting for women like me, that’s why I’m fighting for her.

Tracy Reynolds
Michigan Local 2920, Council 25

Protecting Pensions
My father retired after 25 years as a bus driver for the city of Detroit. He had a good job with good benefits, and that’s why I followed him and wanted to work for my community too. My father was promised health care for all his years of service. And they just took it away, in the name of a bankruptcy. They said they were trying to save money. They did something called a clawback. They said they paid us too much money during the bankruptcy and they took that money back from us. They just went and just pillaged it. And to add insult to injury, Gov. Rick Snyder decided he didn’t like the fact that we voted down the [emergency manager act].* So, in the middle of the night, he signed [two bills to impose right-to-work, and a replacement emergency manager act] regardless of whether we wanted it or not. Where’s the democracy in that?

Hillary Clinton is for protecting pensions. She will fight any attempts to balance budgets on the backs of working families and seniors. Hillary cares about those who have fallen through the cracks of the system. She’ll work hard to plug up those cracks. She’ll help us reach and keep the American Dream.

*The act allowed the state to suspend democracy and collective bargaining, renegotiate union contracts and open the door to pay and benefit cuts.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. AFSCME working and retired members support Hillary Clinton on a whole range of issues.
2. Public service workers never stop improving their communities, and they deserve elected leaders who respect them.
3. Get out the vote by talking to your friends and family.
Michael “Mikky”
Anne Carlson
Retiree, Iowa Chapter 61

Working to Create a Strong Middle Class
When I was growing up, my family lived the American Dream. My parents owned a home and their mortgage had a reasonable interest rate. Child care was affordable. I was able to go to college on a Stafford loan and other programs that just don’t exist today. I’m very concerned that the next generation won’t be able to achieve the American Dream.

When I became an adult I started to see the connection between affordable housing and the middle class. When I became a state worker, the program that I ran helped nearly 3,000 first-time home buyers annually. I am proud of that work to build a stronger Iowa community.

Home ownership is an underpinning of the American Dream. I was able to enjoy a middle class lifestyle in part because I am a union member and a homeowner. Now that I’m retired, I depend on my pension. I support Hillary Clinton because she understands that connection between unions and the middle class. She’ll do the things we need to do to have a strong middle class America. Hillary will protect my pension.

Linda Wise
Pennsylvania Local 1224, Council 13

Making Education Affordable
I support Hillary because she supports college affordability. She knows the cost of college right now is astronomical. It’s so important that young folks attend school, but they can’t afford it. My daughter is a single parent with two loans — she’s almost done paying them, she’s coming through the tunnel. But lots of students still live with their parents because they can’t afford to move away. And their parents or grandparents can’t retire because they’re helping pay off the loans. Hillary knows about the cost of college and she believes in affordable education.

Jerome Richardson
Pennsylvania 1199C, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (NUHHCE/AFSCME)

Caring for People with Disabilities
I work in a long-term care facility, where I help disabled or physically challenged clients. A lot of them have cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis or they’re victims of gunshot wounds. When they come in they’re already mad at the world because their families put them in there, and they take their rage out on the first person they see, who is their caregiver. Our job is to go past all that and realize that we’re giving a service to human beings, people who are in pain. It requires a lot of compassion and mental strength. I support Hillary because she’s shown me that she has a lot of compassion and mental strength, and I respect that. She’s gone through so much, and it takes a strong will to tolerate what she’s been through and still have the will and desire to work hard for the benefit of others.

Carolyn Milhoan
Ohio Local 1252, Council 8

Increasing Wages, Paid Family Leave & Earned Sick Days
My American hero is my mother. She went from being a majorette in the high school marching band to being a divorced mother of two young children. She had to enter the workforce to raise my brother and me. But when she entered the workforce there was no paid family medical leave or sick days. If you missed work when your child was sick you went a day without pay. But she went to work every day and she was glad she had a job because that kept food on our table and it kept us in a home.

That’s one reason why I’m asking my co-workers to stand behind Hillary. Hillary will fight for increased wages, paid family leave and earned sick days. These are the values she’s had throughout her career. She’s fought for families, women and children her entire life, and she’s not going to stop now. Hillary cares about widows and those of us who have to take time out from working to care for our families.

“Hillary cares about those who have fallen through the cracks of the system. She’ll work hard to plug up those cracks.”

– Tracy Reynolds; Michigan Local 2920, Council 25
John Taylor
Retiree, Iowa Chapter 61

Protecting the Safety Net
I’m retired and a disabled veteran. I come from a family of men and women who’ve served our country. My father is a veteran, he’s 96 years old, he’s living in a veterans home in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he’s getting good care. Hillary is the only candidate I can trust to keep these things in place. Some lawmakers want to privatize Social Security, which means give it to their buddies on Wall Street. If you want someone who will have our best interests at heart, as opposed to the interests of the 1 percent, then elect Hillary for the job.

Mark Lawrence
Retiree, Pennsylvania National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (NUHHCE) / AFSCME Chapter 1199C

Strengthening Health Care Insurance
As a retiree, I face so many challenges – medical, dental, vision and pharmacy. Since I lost some of my medical benefits when I left work, I had to purchase outside insurance on top of Medicare. Each time I go to physical therapy or do other things for my health, I’m faced with larger copays, plus premiums have gone up. Hillary is more aware of the concerns and needs of people like me. I’m turning to Hillary because she stands for those 60 and older. She always stands on what she says.

"We need a President who respects public sector workers – and all of us. We need to elect Hillary Clinton President because she said that strong unions make a strong America. That’s why I’m going to go out and vote for her..."

– Patrick Wycoff
President, Wisconsin Local 48
Gerald “Jerry” Jones
Executive Board, Iowa Local 451, Council 61 Secretary-Treasurer

Putting an End to Private, For-Profit Prisons
I’ve been in corrections for 20 years in the state of Iowa. People don’t understand what I do. I deal with people. Somebody’s son. They’re somebody’s father, brother, friend. And someday they’re going to be your new neighbors.

Prisons are really a misunderstood place. There are a lot of strong emotions in a prison — anger, depression and mental illness. And my job is to help the inmates get through their day. By doing that I think I’m adding a lot of value to society in general. My job builds and strengthens communities, and makes the world a better place.

My profession deserves respect. I believe we need a President that values our jobs and that person is Hillary Clinton. She’s promised to put an end to private prisons and detention centers. She knows our sacrifice and our commitment to our communities.

Cynthia Johnson
Secretary-Treasurer, Retiree Chapter 108

Standing Firm on Social Security
The reason I support and will vote for Hillary Clinton is that she is standing firm on Social Security and Medicare. I learned about the importance of Medicare and Social Security because of my father. As he got older, he started having hip problems and went to a surgeon, who asked him, ‘How did you physically get into this room?’ He said, ‘I walked.’ The doctor pointed to the X-rays and said, ‘There’s no way you should be able to walk because you are bone on bone and it’s deteriorating.’

My father had to have both hips replaced. Because he had Medicare, my sister and I didn’t have to take out any major loans for him to have surgery. He was self-employed, so the only thing he has to live on in retirement is Social Security. It’s not a lot of money, but it lets him sustain himself in a moderate lifestyle. It’s important for him, and everyone in the United States who depends on Social Security, that we protect this program.

Patrick Wycoff
President, Wisconsin Local 48 and District 3 State Employee Representative on Council 32’s Executive Board

Helping Strong Unions Stay Strong
I started working for the state of Wisconsin in 1998. I took the state job because I needed the good benefits to take care of my wife, my kids and myself. I was lucky enough to get a job, and because of the benefits that AFSCME had fought for, I was able to have a future and to have dignity.

Fast forward to 2011, and we have a governor who refers to me and all the people that I represent as the ‘haves.’ It was a terrible time in our lives, and the saddest part is that people blamed us for the state’s economic problems.

Now there’s a candidate running for President who’s saying the same things. Only it’s not public sector workers who are to blame — it’s Muslims, it’s immigrants.

We need a President who brings us together. We need a President who respects public sector workers — and all of us. We need to elect Hillary Clinton President because she said that strong unions make a strong America. That’s why I’m going to go out and vote for her and work to elect Secretary Clinton as President of the United States. ■

3 TIPS ON HELPING YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS VOTE ON ELECTION DAY:

1. Make It Personal: Talk about it at the dinner table. Tell your family why you support lawmakers who’ll support public services — so that we can continue to keep our communities safe and healthy.

2. Make a Voting Plan: Double check your polling station and hours of operation. Will you early vote on Saturday before the football game? Or will you vote in the evening after your shift? Will you mail an absentee ballot?

3. Numbers Count: Bring your retired neighbor with you to the polls. Go with your spouse. Invite your co-worker! Bring your children to watch you in action!
Coups de Main
Lending a helping hand in Louisiana

By Erica Nash-Thomas & Clyde Weiss

There is a Cajun phrase, “Coups de main,” that means lending a helping hand to community members in their time of need. AFSCME Volunteer Member Organizers (VMOs) showed their “coups de main” this summer by helping Louisianans in need in flood-ravaged Baton Rouge.

Ina LaBorde of AFSCME Council 17 and her daughter, Lyn Ray, a Catholic Student Organization director at Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LSUA), wanted to find a way to make a meaningful impact in the lives of their fellow Louisianans who are now trying to recover from the disaster.

More than 40,000 people across 20 parishes in southern Louisiana were covered under a federal disaster declaration on Aug. 14 after heavy rainfall turned into record flooding.

Residents whose homes still maintained their structural integrity face an enormous clean-up effort that includes disposing of destroyed furniture and other water-damaged items.

Ray decided to contribute to relief efforts by delivering items that people depend on day-to-day, such as toiletries, clean socks, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer, and comfort items like new bedding — even sweet tea. But she knew she couldn’t do it alone.

Ray would need a dedicated crew of people to power her vision. That’s when LaBorde sprang to action and tapped a source that she knew she could depend on: AFSCME’s VMOs.

They eagerly lent a hand.

Offering Hope — and Supplies
Sheryl Lillya, a correctional officer from Minnesota, had traveled to Louisiana as a VMO in an organizing campaign called “AFSCME Lift Up Louisiana.” But soon it was clear to her that a mission to help the state’s public service...
PHOTOS: SUSAN BARKULIS

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. The flooding, also known as the “Louisiana Flood of 2016,” killed 13 people, destroyed about 100,000 homes and caused $9 billion in damages. The flood is considered to be our country’s worst natural disaster since Super Storm Sandy in 2012.

2. The recovery is ongoing: Buildings and other structures are still in need of repair, and many people remain displaced from their homes, including AFSCME members.

3. You can help AFSCME members by donating to the AFSCME Fallen Heroes Fund, which provides immediate assistance to members who fall victim to natural disasters and other tragedies. To donate, visit AFSCME.org/fund.

workers build a union was now a mission of mercy. “It started raining when I got there,” she said. “In the back of my head I’m thinking, there are union members who can’t even go to work right now. I just felt kind of guilty not doing something.”

So Lilya did something. First, texting a message to whomever would read it that “we should put on AFSCME shirts and help the flood victims,” she said. Then she discovered that LaBorde and her daughter had the same idea, and had already organized a donation drive.

Lilya and approximately 40 other VMOs from several states, plus other AFSCME members and volunteers, assembled at the LSUA Catholic Student Center to unload trucks and sort donated items. They were then delivered to the St. Vincent de Paul shelter in Denham Springs in Livingstone Parish and the Greenwell Springs neighborhood in East Baton Rouge Parish, both hard-hit by the floods.

Despite the oppressive heat, the work was good for the soul. “Just being able to help at all, it just felt so good,” Lilya said. “I just hope this helped somebody.”

It did. Talking to one victim — Alicia Birch, a mother of two children in Baton Rouge and an AFSCME Council 17 member whose home was underwater — “I asked, ‘how are you doing?’” Birch, then sleeping in a rental truck parked outside her damaged home, “started crying” with gratitude, Lilya recalled.

Later, Birch was visited by other union members and received a dose of hope and a donation to help keep her going.

“I can’t tell you how grateful I was to be able to be part of something like that,” Lilya said. “I just hope that they can see that AFSCME was there to help.”

Sheila Conroy, an AFSCME VMO from New York, also was glad to have the opportunity to help people in need. “I was very excited to be involved with something so important to the members and the community,” she said.

Ray expressed deep appreciation for the hard work of the VMOs who helped Louisianans emerge stronger after the flood’s devastation. “I can’t thank you enough,” Ray said. “We couldn’t handle this ourselves.”

CLOCKWISE: VMOs Crystal Kreklow, Local 1349 (MN Council 5); Sheila Conroy CSEA Local 429; Hedi Reller, Local 1349 (MN Council 5); Sheryl Lilya, Local 3887 (MN Council 5). Damage caused by the storm. AFSCME members help deliver supplies to those affected.
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PHOTO: TESSA BERG

Q&A with a Rising Leader

Yvette Silas-Pinson speaks with AFSCME retiree about the upcoming Presidential election.

By Pablo Ros

THROUGH the Women’s Leadership Academy, AFSCME women members develop leadership skills with mentors, creating a community of support and the ability to build power in their local unions.

The eight-month Academy includes a five-day orientation session, completion of a local union or council project or campaign, and a three-day final session. This year’s orientation session was held in mid-August in Columbus, Ohio.

Yvette Silas-Pinson is one of dozens of participants in the Academy. She is a school health aide for the Baltimore City Health Department and member of AFSCME Local 44 (Council 67).

Q: What did you like best about being part of the Academy this year?

A: It was absolutely wonderful! I would say it was life changing. To be in a room with 29 women leaders from different parts of the country, as far away as Alaska, was amazing. I’ve gained a whole new sisterhood.

Q: What did you learn from your AFSCME sisters?

A: I learned to be more confident. These are women who work hard to try to impact and change their role to be able to make a difference. I felt proud of myself and what I’ve done, and at the same time I gained new insight into how to address my problem areas. It showed me that it’s okay to love and care about your co-workers and friends. We spent a week together and none of us wanted to separate.

Q: I know you helped build your union by knocking on some doors and having one-on-one conversations with other AFSCME members.

A: Yes, we talked about our union and many of them recommitted to our union. Some even joined for the first time. I guess I’m kind of good at it!

Q: What leadership role do you play in your local?

A: I’m a shop steward for my local. When I first joined our union I wasn’t active. I didn’t know what a union was; I didn’t know where my dues went to. So I started asking questions and a young lady who was a school health aide said she needed help with union matters. That was three years ago. So she introduced me to the union and ever since then I’ve been rocking and rolling!

Q: What motivates you every day?

A: It’s the fact that somebody helped me. I’m adopted, and that means somebody changed my life. That’s why I always wanted to impact somebody else’s. I’ve got passion, and I can’t turn it off. Even when I want to it’s always there, it’s always present.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. The Women’s Leadership Academy helps AFSCME women members develop their leadership skills.
2. Yvette Silas-Pinson, a Baltimore school health aide and member of Council 67, is an AFSCME leader on the rise.
3. She participated in this year’s Academy in Columbus, Ohio, where she helped build her union by talking to members one-on-one.
Keeping Our Children Safe

By Pablo Ros

Rebekah Wright works for the Ohio State School for the Blind. She’s worn different hats there, including a job in the music department, which is home to the nation’s only blind marching band.

"Those kids are absolutely amazing!” she boasts.

Wright, a maintenance repair worker for the school and member of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (AFSCME Local 11), cares about the children she serves and does her best to improve her community one day at a time.

As a mother of three children who is married to a police detective, community safety is also a top priority for her. When her children’s school several years ago invited parents to fill out kits from the National Child Identification Program, she didn’t hesitate.

“I thought it was a great way to keep track of my children in the event of a crisis,” she says.

AFSCME is partnering with the National Child Identification Program and American Football Coaches Association to provide free ID kits to all of our members nationwide. (You should have received one with a copy of this magazine.) The kits come with easy-to-follow instructions for collecting your child’s personal information, fingerprints and DNA. The completed kit should be kept in a safe place at home.

Peace of Mind
Phyllis Zamarripa’s children are all grown up. But when she heard that AFSCME was sending free child ID kits to all members, she thought of her grandchildren.

“I would feel safer if my daughters did it for their children,” said Zamarripa, a retired social worker who is president of Colorado AFSCME Chapter 76. “It sounds like it would be easier to find them wherever they were.”

Zamarripa said knowing that her children are prepared for a worst-case scenario gives her peace of mind.

"Most likely nothing will ever happen,” she continued, “and I don’t think parents need to live in fear that their children will be abducted. But the fact is, many children do go missing every day in our country, and there’s nothing written in stone that it can’t happen to you. So, why not be prepared and have peace of mind. Especially since it’s so cheap and easy to do.”

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. It is estimated that as many as 800,000 children are reported missing in the U.S. each year.
2. AFSCME is partnering with the American Football Coaches Association and National Child Identification Program to provide free ID kits to all of our members nationwide.
3. A completed ID kit can help law enforcement locate a missing child.

PHOTOS: MEMBER PROVIDED; BRYAN KELSEN
“Hopefully there’s never a crisis, but in the event that there is, you have everything compiled in one place to expedite the process in case a child goes missing.”

– Rebekah Wright, OCSEA (Local 11)

‘It’s Better to Be Prepared’

It is estimated that as many as 800,000 children are reported missing in the United States each year. More than half of these children run away from home, while others are abducted by family members or even strangers. The child ID kits from the National Child Identification Program, first distributed in 1997, have helped law enforcement in their search for missing children. Since the program began, more than 26 million kits were distributed.

“Unfortunately, in this day and age, it’s better to be prepared,” Wright says. “Hopefully there’s never a crisis, but in the event that there is, you have everything compiled in one place to expedite the process in case a child goes missing.”

A completed ID kit can help law enforcement locate a missing child by providing key pieces of personal information, such as fingerprints and DNA. The FBI encourages participation in the program by law enforcement agencies across the United States, and recognizes the child ID program as its preferred method of child identification.

You can order additional, discounted kits at childidprogram.com/order-forms/AFSCME.

Tips for Staying Safe*

Parents should teach their children to:

• Know her/his full name, as well as your name, address and telephone number, including area code. Children should know how to use the telephone.
• Never say they’re alone when answering the phone – instead, offer to take a message or say their parents will be back shortly.
• Never answer the door if they are alone. Never invite anyone in the house without permission of a parent or babysitter.
• Never take candy or gifts from strangers or anyone else without asking a parent first.
• Never play in deserted buildings or isolated areas.
• Move away from cars that pull up beside them if they do not know the driver.
• Know that no one should touch any part of her or his body that a bathing suit would cover.
• Avoid shortcuts through empty parks, fields, laneways and alleys.
• Run home or go to the nearest public place if they are being followed and yell for help.
• Tell you if someone has asked them to keep a secret from you.
• Tell you where they are at all times or leave a message at home.
• Give up money, jewelry or clothing rather than fight.
• Know they can talk to you and call you to pick them up at any time.

*From the website of the National Child Identification Program
By participating in the AFSCME Strong program, AFSCME members across the nation are mobilizing, agitating and organizing to grow and improve their union.

Through one-on-one conversations, AFSCME members are forming a stronger union. That’s why they’ve successfully fought outsourcing attempts in Maryland, faced off with the anti-union governor of Illinois, and signed up new members in right-to-work states like Florida and Texas.

In Maryland, AFSCME Strong Secured an Anti-Outsourcing Victory
Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan should have thought to ask Manisha Patel how she felt about her job before he tried to outsource it to a private contractor. Then he would have learned that to Patel, a food service worker at Springfield Hospital Center in Sykesville, her work is more than just a job.

“I work with patients who have mental problems,” she says. “And I’ve learned how to serve them and how to make them happy. Sometimes only your smile works. They see our faces and they tell us what they need. If you help people and human beings, it’s a kind of prayer. That’s how I feel whenever I work there. I love what I do.”

When the governor tried to outsource Patel’s and 56 other dietary services jobs at Springfield, she and her colleagues rallied. The outsourcing threat extended to 15 positions at Western Maryland Hospital Center in Hagerstown and 11 at the John L. Gildner Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents in Rockville.

Through their union, AFSCME Council 3, the workers organized to fight back the outsourcing threat. They reached out to small businesses in the area to alert them of the governor’s plan and its potentially negative economic consequences. Local elected officials and community leaders also heard from the workers and rallied behind them. And they succeeded.

“AFSCME Strong was already in place before the outsourcing announcement was made, and it was having the program in place that made this fight possible,” said Patrick Moran, president of Council 3. “We were ready for a challenge like this.”

Activist Built a Career in Caring
Before he became a human services case worker for the state of Illinois, Eric Johnson built a career in caring: He was a hospice chaplain, providing spiritual care for the terminally ill. And before that, he was a hospital chaplain and a navy chaplain.

“I moved into case work because I find that I use the same skills,” said Johnson, who is a member of AFSCME Local 1805 (Council 31).

Johnson determines and maintains eligibility for SNAP, Medicaid, and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) for the poor, the elderly and the disabled residents of St. Clair County, Illinois. “I love it,” he says. “I help good people every day who are struggling with difficult circumstances. I focus myself spiritually on treating everyone with dignity and self-worth.”

Just as Johnson brought his past skills as a chaplain to his public service work, to his AFSCME Strong activism he brought a desire to respond with action in the face of challenges.

“We are coordinating with sisters and brothers from other unions to defend legislators who support labor and fight every anti-union initiative that Governor Rauner has thrown at us,” he said.

In Florida and Texas, Right-to-Work is No Obstacle
In Florida, recent threats at the state and federal level have motivated AFSCME members to make internal organizing a top priority for their union.
AFSCME members of Beeville Local 3806 participate in a session at the Leadership Summit in Austin, Texas.

AFSCME Local 1554, which represents employees of the City of Miami Beach, recently completed the first part of an organizing blitz aimed at signing up 60 percent of workers in the unit as full members.

“Our numbers were a little under 50 percent, but after four days of organizing we are above 53 percent,” said Local Pres. Carlos George.

Forty agency fee payers made the switch, including a number of part-timers.

In Texas, members of AFSCME Texas Corrections hosted a highly-attended AFSCME Texas Leadership Summit, kicked off a two-week blitz and held statewide ratification meetings. The result? They’ve signed up new members, developed more leaders and agreed unanimously to support the official AFSCME Texas platform.

“We came together to address real problems that became our platform,” said Sgt. Tanisha Woods of Gatesville. “We want to fix problems like staffing levels that aren’t safe, [and] we deserve quality equipment.”

“We spoke with members at work sites where they had never heard of the union before and we signed up over 70 new members!” said Joseph Bell of Beaumont.

FROM STATE TO STATE, WORKERS ARE JOINING AFSCME FOR A STRONGER VOICE ON THE JOB

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. AFSCME members are fine-tuning their conversation skills to strengthen and improve their union.
2. In Maryland, AFSCME Strong helped Council 3 prevent the outsourcing of public jobs.
3. No anti-union governor or “right-to-work” law can defeat an AFSCME Strong workforce.

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WE CAN DO IT!
Migrant Farmworkers
Jessica Gerlach

WE CAN DO IT!
Domestic Housekeeper
Daisy Patton

We Are Riveting
Kris Sith

Submit your design today!
Despite aggressive opposition from hospital management and outside union-busters, workers at two Connecticut hospitals can now proudly call themselves AFSCME members.

Custodians, maintenance workers, lab techs, nursing assistants and others employed at Danbury and New Milford Hospitals, both managed by the Western Connecticut Healthcare Network (WCHN), voted 409 to 304 to join Connecticut Health Care Associates (CHCA-NUHHCE/AFSCME) on September 1. They’re fighting for respect on the job — for their patients and themselves.

**Fighting for Better Patient Care & R-E-S-P-E-C-T**

*By Olivia Sandbothe*

Despite aggressive opposition from hospital management and outside union-busters, workers at two Connecticut hospitals can now proudly call themselves AFSCME members.

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3 **THINGS TO KNOW:**

1. More than 900 Connecticut hospital workers are new AFSCME members.
2. Workers organized to have a say in the safety of their workplace.
3. CHCA will push for improved safety and standards of care at Danbury and New Milford Hospitals.

"Now that they have a voice, people feel like they’re part of this hospital again."

— Jessica Ellul, CHCA/AFSCME

**Hope for a Better Hospital**

“The main thing we’re hoping to get in the contract is better staffing levels that would make things safer for us and the patients,” says Jessica Ellul, a patient care coordinator at Danbury. “I think people are excited to see a change. Now that they have a voice, people feel like they’re part of this hospital again. We’re hoping to build a better relationship with management.”

Management tried to spread misinformation and divide workers from one another in the lead-up to the election. But hospital workers didn’t waver from their convictions: safety and quality care must come ahead of profits.

“I want to work in a hospital that not only I, but our whole community, can be proud of,” said Melissa Zipparo. Shirnette Noble says she voted for the union because “our work safety depends on it.”

Now that they’re officially standing together as a union, WCHN employees are ready to begin speaking up for better patient care and a fairer workplace.
Outbreak:

Gun Violence Is a Health Crisis

By Pablo Ros

Scott Byington works the night shift in the emergency room at St. Francis Medical Center in Lynwood, California. He is a registered nurse in the Level II trauma center, which serves a large population that includes South Central Los Angeles.

“I became a nurse because I realized at a very early age how precious life is,” says Byington, who began his career as an orderly at age 16 in his native Missouri and has been a registered nurse for more than 25 years. “And I believed I could make a difference in people’s lives.”

To Byington, president of the St. Francis Registered Nurses Association (UNAC/NUHHCE), reminders of how precious life is are all too common. Because of its coverage area, St. Francis gets a large number of victims of gun violence. Hardly a night goes by that he doesn’t treat a person wounded by a bullet.

“I’ll never forget one night when we treated 17 people who’d been shot in separate incidents of gun violence,” he says.

Preventing Gun Deaths

Although the number of gunshot wounds at St. Francis is much higher than the average in California, gun violence afflicts every part of the country. In fact, according to a study published in The American Journal of Medicine, Americans are 10 times more likely to be killed by guns than people in other developed nations.

That’s why delegates to AFSCME’s 42nd International Convention in Las Vegas this July approved a resolution to “support and advance legislation to promote research relating to gun violence as a public health crisis.”

But, because of the influence of special interest groups on Congress, the federal government isn’t allowed to conduct even the most basic research in this area.

AFSCME joined a coalition of labor unions and organizations in a campaign to end gun violence through reasonable gun control legislation. The campaign, called “Hate Bleeds America,” began this summer and will continue through the day before Election Day on Nov. 8.

Gun Violence Is Like a Deadly Disease

“If gun violence were a disease, there’s no doubt in my mind that we as a society would be doing more to treat it,” Byington says. “Well, gun violence is like a disease, and it’s certainly a public health crisis.”

The goal is not to pass judgment on gun ownership, but to help prevent gun violence by better understanding its causes.

Byington knows that such violence can affect anyone. Like the 1-year-old baby rushed into the emergency room with a gunshot wound to the leg: “Luckily we were able to provide fast treatment and the baby survived.”

Or the two young adults, 20 and 21 years old, who had been “playing basketball with their friends when they were hit by stray gunfire,” Byington recalled. “They were innocent kids! The 21-year-old was in better shape and he was going to make it. I was working on the younger one, who kept holding my hand and pleading with me not to let him die. He kept saying, ‘Please don’t let me die, please don’t let me die.’ I’ll never forget that. We did our best, but we couldn’t save him.”

Learning more about the causes of gun violence is not about challenging Second Amendment rights. It is simply allowing research so that policy makers can be best equipped to make decisions about how to reduce many unnecessary deaths from guns.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. Gun violence is like a deadly disease that can affect anyone.
2. During the 42nd International Convention, delegates passed a resolution to treat gun violence as a public health problem.
3. AFSCME is partnering with other labor unions and progressive organizations in a call to action to address the issue of gun violence.
When First Responders Needed Help after 9/11 Attacks, Hillary Clinton Had Their Backs

By Clyde Weiss & Marianne von Nordeck

Driving over the Brooklyn Bridge on September 11, 2001, emergency first responder Renae Mascol and her partner could see flames rising from the World Trade Center twin towers. Hundreds of terrified people ran in their direction, fleeing the terrorist disaster. Still, they drove on toward what would soon become known as Ground Zero.

“I knew people needed help and somebody had to help them, and we had to go,” said Mascol, a member of Local 3621 (DC 37). “That was my job.”

First responder Scott Heinze, also a Local 3621 member, watched the towers collapse on TV from home. Despite being on medical leave for a back injury, he rushed to his car and drove to a temporary medical facility.

“We waited for casualties, but very few came,” he said. “Those that did were mostly first responders.”

Of the 2,753 people killed in New York City that day, 411 were first responders. Many who survived later fell ill or succumbed to diseases caused by exposure to toxic clouds of dust.

Taking a Noxious Breath

Mascol, one of the first to arrive at the towers before they collapsed, escaped serious injury but was in shock, “covered in ash and debris and who knows what kind of toxic chemicals,” she said. “Who knows what you were breathing in at that moment?”

In fact, it was a devil’s brew of lead, asbestos, PCBs and other toxins. Yet, just two days after the attack, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the public was not being exposed to unsafe levels of harmful chemicals in the air.

Mascol knew better. “You don’t have to be a brain surgeon to know the air quality was not good,” she said. Her suspicions were confirmed when many of her fellow first responders developed “strange respiratory ailments” they never had before. “We said somebody has to do something.”

That ‘somebody’ was then-U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton, Mascol said. The New York senator “made me feel that I had someone who cared about me, who didn’t look at me as just a worker – who looked at me as a human being.”

Hillary Had Their Backs

Clinton introduced legislation two days after the attack to expedite benefit payments to public safety officers killed or severely injured in the terrorist attacks. It quickly became law. Clinton and U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut also led field hearings in February 2002 that probed the health hazards of dust from Ground Zero.

“When I saw Senator Clinton at the congressional hearings, it made me feel proud that our senator was standing up for us here in New York,” said Heinze.

Clinton also championed the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program, and the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, which will ensure that people continue to receive monitoring and treatment for 9/11-related health problems for the next 75 years.

Mascol and Heinz say they support Hillary Clinton for President because she had their back when they needed it most.

“One doesn’t know what fork in the road this life is going to take you in,” said Mascol. “But you should only hope that if it takes you in the wrong direction – like on that day of 9/11 – that you would have someone in your corner like Hillary Clinton, who’s going to stand there and say, ‘I got you, I’m here for you, I’m going to do my best to make sure you have everything that you need.’”

Watch an interview with Mascol, Heinze and two other 9/11 first responders who describe how Hillary Clinton has earned their trust at www.AFSCME.org/trust

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. On 9/11, first responders rushed in to save lives, risking their own.
2. Officials misled the public on air quality after the twin towers fell.
3. First responders are thankful Hillary Clinton championed victim compensation and medical monitoring programs.
Federal

In September, before adjourning for a six-week election recess, the U.S. Congress passed and President Obama signed a temporary bill to fund the federal government through Dec. 9. After the election Congress will need to complete this work. The consistent failure of Congress to meet its deadlines impairs states and localities in their efforts to finalize their own budgets, which rely heavily on federal resources.

Rather than invest in the critical state and local government work that AFSCME members do, extreme forces in Congress, under the threat of government shutdown, demanded a 0.5 percent across-the-board cut in all federal programs. Fortunately, for now, this reduction is only temporary.

During the lame-duck session of Congress, AFSCME will continue to press for an up-or-down vote on President Obama's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court, Merrick Garland. In a historic and unprecedented rebuke of President Obama's constitutional authority, Congress has refused to consider this highly-qualified nominee. We also have begun to prepare for a potential battle in the lame-duck session to defeat the highly controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

AFSCME Victories

Even in this hostile political environment, AFSCME’s advocacy helped achieve significant victories during the past several months. Among those successes:

- A last-minute deal pushed by AFSCME provides $1.1 billion in funding to reduce the risk of the Zika virus.

- AFSCME led the fight to win a long overdue bi-partisan agreement on a relief plan to address the lead tainted water supply of Flint, Michigan. However, final action to address the crisis was delayed until after the election when we expect Congress will complete action on the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA).

- AFSCME prevented Congress from rolling back important Obama administration initiatives, such as the “fiduciary” rule that protects families saving for retirement by preventing investment advisors from providing conflicted advice.

- AFSCME blocked Congress from overturning new overtime rules, which help millions of Americans who are required to work long hours, but who receive no pay for the extra work.

California

The Assembly passed Senate Bill 959, which prohibits the University of California from contracting with vendors who pay their workers substandard wages. The university had a practice of hiring “contractors” so that they could be paid less than regular UC employees. AFSCME Local 3299 has been fighting alongside contracted workers to ensure that no one who works for the university has to live in poverty. Antonio Ruiz, a former contract worker at UC Berkeley, campaigned for the bill and has already been brought in-house. “Our work didn’t change,” he says. “But now we all make at least $16.30 an hour, plus benefits. I was able to quit my second job, and now I can see my kids.”

Minnesota

The state’s roads, bridges and other infrastructure have been under intense scrutiny since 2007, when the I-35 bridge across the Mississippi River collapsed, killing 13 people and injuring more than 100. State workers — including AFSCME bridge inspectors — are leading a crusade to repair the state’s most dangerous structures. Yet gridlock among state lawmakers caused another legislative session to pass without an agreement to fund the $700 million needed for the work.
AFSCME Executive Board Summary Report

This report summarizes the meeting of the International Executive Board held July 13-14, and July 22, 2016, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Board launched its pre-Convention meeting with a progress report on our AFSCME Strong program to build strength through member-to-member communication. During the previous 18 months, 438,534 AFSCME members participated in conversations about their union and issues that concerned them. More than 204,000 workers joined with AFSCME during the same period. Nearly 27,000 members indicated they wanted to step up to organize and mobilize their co-workers, while nearly 23,000 members became new PEOPLE MVPs.

Recent organizing successes included 550 members of the Anchorage Municipal Employees Association (AMEA) reaffirming their affiliation with AFSCME in June. Also, 548 workers at two Pennsylvania hospitals joined NUHHCE 1199C.

During a discussion on new contracts and contract fights, the Board approved a motion to give the union’s full support to Council 31 in the event of a strike by the 38,000 state employees represented by the union. Council 31 members have been seeking a fair contract but Gov. Bruce Rauner’s administration walked away from the bargaining table and refuses to return.

The Board also received updates on several campaigns, including one by members of New York City’s DC 37 to reverse state budget cuts in funding for the City University of New York (CUNY). They succeeded in winning back $500 million in funding and the university agreed to a 10 percent wage increase, a $1,000 signing bonus and $15 minimum wage.

A review of the 2016 election season included an update on polling in the Presidential race and key U.S. Senate races. A briefing on the current congressional session included the fact that lawmakers had so far failed to send any annual appropriations bills to the President.

President Saunders thanked everyone for their work on the 42nd International Convention. A post-Convention review included rule changes and adoption of a resolution to establish a working group to review the Constitution, and – if appropriate – to recommend amendments for possible adoption by the 2018 Convention.

President Saunders also welcomed the newly elected International vice presidents.
Just Doing My Job

By Tiffanie Bright

Prince George’s County, Maryland — It was a clear, sunny September day when the unthinkable happened. But for school bus driver Renita Smith, the unthinkable was something she was well-prepared to handle.

Smith, a member of Local 2250 (ACE-AFSCME in Prince George’s County), had just made her third stop of the afternoon, dropping students off at their homes. Then, she said, “My bus started making noise,” and she prepared to pull over and notify her office. It appeared to be an inconvenience, but not a life-threatening emergency.

That’s when she began to smell smoke. And the children did too.

“Miss bus driver! Miss bus driver! We smell smoke!” her students cried out, Smith said. “Miss bus driver, we see smoke!”

Smith immediately pulled over, and saw flames in her rearview mirror. Calling in to her supervisor wasn’t going to help solve this crisis. “I put my radio down and got my babies up and in a straight line in the aisle. I had them hold hands.”

As the fire intensified, Smith led all 20 children safely off the bus and to a neighbor’s yard away from the smoke and fumes. Smith then did the incredible. She went back onto the bus — its windows melting around her — checking every aisle for a sleeping child, making sure all of them had gotten off.

“There wasn’t a bus attendant with me that day to do the count,” she explained of her heroism. “So I knew I had to go back on the bus to make sure I got all my babies.” Because that’s what her instincts and training told her to do.

That’s the “never quit” spirit that AFSCME members bring to their jobs every day, whether they’re bus drivers, first responders or other public service workers. And they do it without expectation of special recognition.

“I was just doing my job and what’s expected of me,” said Smith, herself a mother of two. “Serving my community means that you’re not being selfish. You’re thinking of how to do something for others and not expect anything in return. For God to give me a supernatural power to do what I did and save those babies, I pat myself on the back and say, ‘Job well done.’ I’m proud because my babies are all home.”

And we’re proud she’s a member of our AFSCME family. ■

PHOTOS: CHRIS IDZIK; KEVIN KENNEDY, ACE-AFSCME LOCAL 2250