YOUR UNION-MADE SUMMER

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DROWNING IN STUDENT DEBT?
Our Union Can Help!

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We’re On the Move!

Fortified by the work we do in our communities and the strength we derive from standing together, AFSCME members are always looking to the future with determination and pride.

Take Monica Berkowitz, for example. A teacher’s aide committed to building strength in her workplace, Monica helped 100 co-workers recommit to our union (page 20). Alvin Williams is a lifeguard at a neighborhood pool who once saved a drowning child (page 8). And then there’s Louise Lex, a public health worker with 37 years of service (back cover).

AFSCME members never quit doing the work that keeps our communities safe, better and thriving.

No matter how steep the challenges thrown at us by our enemies, we’ll continue providing the best public service to working families throughout this country.

We’re at a turning point in our union’s history. As we prepare for our 42nd International Convention and our growth for the years to come, let’s renew our resolve to protect the rights and benefits we’ve earned in the workplace, so that we can continue providing quality service to our communities.

Together, we are a force for good for America’s working families. We are AFSCME.
Video: Recipe For a Strong Middle Class

A strong middle class is as American as homemade apple pie! And a strong middle class starts with Hillary Clinton. Get involved at wevotewewin.org and check out more videos at AFSCME.org/video.

Free Poster!

This new poster version of the Winter 2016 AFSCME WORKS magazine cover helps tell our story in an easy way. Visit NeverQuit.AFSCME.org and download your copy.

We Never Quit

Read stories about your AFSCME sisters and brothers, like you, who never stop working to make their communities better. Nominate a co-worker for the Never Quit Service Awards. Visit: NeverQuit.AFSCME.org
Thriving communities are not accidental. Communities thrive because of you: the women and men who maintain roads, care for the sick and seniors, and keep our neighborhoods safe. So your work should come with a paycheck that can help you feed your family and save for a rainy day.

While it has never been easy to make sure the rights you’ve earned are protected, we faced an especially egregious and politically motivated attack brought to the Supreme Court two years ago. The wealthy special interests behind those attacks were not content to make representing you more difficult — they wanted to make representing you impossible.

The future did not seem to hold much promise for us. But we remembered this truth about ourselves: AFSCME always looks to the future with resolve.

Whether it is members of Indiana/Kentucky Council 962 who rallied before the Jefferson County School Board in Kentucky to highlight low wages, short-staffing and increased classroom responsibilities, or Local 3299 in California helping nearly 100 subcontracted custodians and parking attendants at the University of California-Berkeley campus, we never shrink from a battle.

We Are AFSCME Strong
We also answered with a campaign to be strong — AFSCME Strong — to help us better address your needs. Through thousands of one-on-one conversations, we listened to what you discuss at the dinner table after the kids are excused, and what keeps you up after you’ve tucked them in at night.

The hard work is paying off. To date, we welcomed more than 276,400 new members into our union. And we are growing, even in right-to-work states. We are stronger now than even a year ago in states like Florida — for example, where more than 1,000 new members statewide signed up with Council 979 — and Georgia and Texas.

A Spirit of Confidence, the Will to Grow
So while we still feel the torrential downpour, we are withstanding the winds and moving through the storm.

To be clear, we still have battles to win to protect the rights we earned. And I know about some of the challenges you face. I’ve crisscrossed the country, meeting with you at work sites to listen to your stories, and your worries. You’ve told me about facing layoffs. You’ve shared how you’ve taken on outsourcing like members of Local 1179, who fight those attempts in Narragansett, Rhode Island. And all while you raise and sustain your families.

It is a tall order, but we’ve faced and overcome adversity before. We can either mope — or mobilize.

And we made a clear choice. AFSCME, let’s proceed with a spirit of confidence and a spine of steel, and seize this opportunity to put our adversaries on notice.

AFSCME will never quit fighting so that our families will thrive.

Lee Saunders
President
We’re Winning the Fight for $15!

When fast food workers walked off their jobs in 2012 to demand $15 an hour and a union, many dismissed their demands as unrealistic and unattainable. But what the skeptics failed to see was the workers’ resolve. Today they’re winning in city after city, and in state after state.

Their latest victories include California and New York, which in April became the first states in the nation to raise their minimum wage to $15, a gradual change that will be accomplished by 2022. In doing so they followed the lead of cities like New York, San Francisco and Seattle, and they are likely to set the example for other states to follow.

Also in April, thousands of workers infused the Fight for $15 with new life when they hit the streets in cities all over the country, keeping the issue central in the Presidential campaign and making it clear that they’re strong, relentless and unstoppable.

A Spirit of Resolve

You know who else is strong, relentless and unstoppable? AFSCME members. And labor unions have played a key role in the Fight for $15. Last year we joined together with restaurant workers for the largest-ever national strikes aimed at increasing the minimum wage. What we share with these workers is a spirit of resolve that will help guarantee future victories.

When workers join together in union, the strength of their will simply can’t be ignored!

As we continue the fight, it’s also important to keep making the case for why increasing workers’ salaries will help end poverty in our communities. Together, we must take the Fight for $15 to the ballot box to show candidates of all political stripes that there are nearly 64 million Americans who make less than a livable wage.

For California Home Care Workers, Other Victories, Too

Home care providers in California achieved another important victory as well. Today, they will finally be paid overtime and travel time thanks to new rules issued by the U.S. Department of Labor. These new rules will bring home care under provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. States who are currently dragging their feet on implementing the new rules should take note.

What this means to people like Lidia Rodriguez is big. Rodriguez, a UDW Homecare member profiled in the Alliance for Justice film, “The Right to Unite,” will finally be compensated for the 60 hours a week she works with her son, paralyzed from a drive-by shooting, and two other clients who love her dearly. She will now be paid for traveling back and forth between clients.

“This will mean so much to me and other home care providers,” Rodriguez says. “I don’t have to worry about buying gasoline to travel to see Vivian and Barbara (her senior clients).”

“\text{Our recent victories remind us of what we can accomplish together if we never quit.}”

Laura Reyes
Secretary-Treasurer
The evidence of a student loan crisis is in the numbers. Americans owe a whopping $1.3 trillion in student loans. For comparison, that’s equal to the total value of all currency circulating in the United States right now.

With many AFSCME members among those facing this massive debt, our union is seeking to help people by spreading the word about programs like Public Service Loan Forgiveness and by advocating for more sensible education policies. The fact is it’s not just young people facing this deficit as they begin their careers, mid-career and even retirees are increasingly feeling its effects.

Taking Debt into Retirement
There are 2.2 million people in the United States over the age of 60 who hold student loan debt. According to the Government Accountability Office, the average borrower in this demographic owes $19,521.

That money has to be paid back one way or another, and for a rising number of seniors that means painful costs. In 2013, about 160,000 seniors had their Social Security checks garnished because of student loan defaults. That number has tripled since the start of the recession.

Some of these retirees have taken out loans for their children’s education, but 80 percent borrowed to cover their own educational expenses.

The situation is a glimpse into the squeeze that middle-class Americans are facing from all sides. Today, workers are trying to pay down debts during the years that they otherwise might spend building their retirement nest eggs.

“I will be paying for this till I’m old and gray,” says Yvette Silas, a school health aide with Local 44 (Council 67) in Maryland. She has been working in the health field for 15 years, but recently decided to return to school for a masters in administration so that she can move forward in her career. “Public workers are working so hard just to cover the basics. After those day-to-day costs, what’s left over for the big expenses?”

Jobs that offer strong retirement benefits and pensions are hard to come by these days. As a result, many Americans must count on their individual savings and Social Security benefits to last through retirement. But when you’re already struggling to make your loan payments and your $1,200 monthly Social Security check can be garnished by hundreds of dollars a month, how do we get to real retirement security?

Planning for the Future in a World of Debt
People under the age of 30 are less likely to be saving for retirement, and are less likely to be saving at recommended rates, than young people in earlier generations. In fact, the median millennial worker has no retirement savings at all. It’s tough to set aside money for savings while the interest on your loan ticks higher and higher every month.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. There are debt relief options available for public service workers.
2. Today’s workers are struggling to plan for retirement while paying back student loans.
3. More and more seniors are struggling with student loan debt.
That’s certainly the case for Kristen Corey, a member of Local 3450 (Council 61) in Iowa. Since she and her husband are already struggling to balance the day-to-day costs of child care with their student debt, saving for the future is tough. “We recently had a second child, and honestly, we have no idea what we’re going to do to save up for retirement and save up for college for them,” she says. “They will potentially be in the same situation that we’re finding ourselves in now.”

**How Our Union Is Helping**

If we want to protect retirement, we can’t forget about student debt. We need more affordable education, more sensible lending practices, and more robust retirement options for all Americans.

District Council 37 in New York City is hard at work to make sure every AFSCME member is up-to-date when it comes to the student debt issue. Partnered with the non-profit group Jobs with Justice and AFSCME Next Wave, DC 37 is hosting workshops where members can learn how to enroll in debt management and relief programs.

They’re also making student debt activism a part of the larger AFSCME Strong program that’s strengthening our union. When members talk to their co-workers about union power, they’re also talking about the debt forgiveness options that are available for public service workers.

In Ohio, union members are making dramatic strides toward a more accessible educational system. The Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA) and Council 8 partnered with the Eastern Gateway Community College system to provide free education to members and their families. All OCSEA and Council 8 members, and their spouses, children and grandchildren, can get their two-year associate’s degree for free simply by completing a financial aid application. The program is just starting now, but hundreds of working families have already applied. You can find more information at ocseaeducation.org. You can also visit AFSCMEcouncil8.org/scholarship-opportunities.

Nationwide, AFSCME is advocating for policy solutions and working to ensure that all public service workers have the resources and information they need in order to manage their student debt. You may be eligible for federal debt forgiveness or refinancing. Learn how your union can help by going to AFSCME.org/student-debt.

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**In Debt? AFSCME and Union Plus Can Help!**

For AFSCME Local 88 member Danielle Jediny-Racies, getting a master’s degree wasn’t just about advancing her career. It was about better serving the children and families that she helps as a mental health counselor. But those qualifications came at a big price.

“Student debt has profoundly affected me,” Danielle says. “I am overwhelmed with how my debt has increased with interest rates.”

Luckily, Danielle applied for a **Union Plus Debt Reducer Grant**. The money she received helped her catch up on her debt payments so that she could spend her time focused on her work, not her bills.

Check out these resources to help with the costs of education and student debt:

For a list of scholarships available to AFSCME members and their children, visit: [AFSCME.org/scholarships](https://afscme.org/scholarships)

AFSCME can help you lower your student loan payments through programs like **Public Service Loan Forgiveness** or **Income-Based Repayment Plans**. To learn about options to help reduce student debt, check out: [AFSCME.org/student-debt](https://afscme.org/student-debt)

Through a partnership with Union Plus, AFSCME members have access to additional scholarships, discounts on college prep courses and financial aid advice. Visit: [unionplus.org/education](https://unionplus.org/education)

For AFSCME members in Ohio, visit: [ocseaeducation.org](https://ocseaeducation.org) or [AFSCMEcouncil8.org/scholarship-opportunities](https://afscmeconference8.org/scholarship-opportunities)

And for New York DC 37 members, learn more at: [dc37.net/studentdebt](https://dc37.net/studentdebt)

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“I am overwhelmed with how my debt has increased with interest rates.”

— Danielle Jediny-Racies, Local 88, Oregon Council 75
We all know that union members are the folks that brought you the weekend. But how about summer vacation? With temperatures rising, many of us are dreaming of a longer getaway. But for some AFSCME members, summer fun is all in a day’s work.

Sun and Sand
You can’t get much closer to real-life paradise than the beaches of Maui. But even paradise has its dangers. It’s lifeguard Rick Patrizio’s job to make sure that beachgoers stay safe while they have fun in the sun.

“I always tell people to never turn your back on the ocean and never climb on slippery rocks. No matter how strong a swimmer you are, Mother Nature is stronger.”

Patrizio is a lieutenant with Hawaii’s Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division. He’s also a chair for Unit 14 of the Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152. The 700 members of the unit may spend their days at the beach, but that doesn’t mean they get to relax.

“In our line of work, no business is good business,” says Patrizio. “If you see us up and working, that means somebody is in trouble.”

If you’re headed to the beach this summer, don’t forget to protect yourself from the sun and stay hydrated. Coppertone sunscreen and Rubbermaid coolers are both union-made in the United States.

The Pool
Alvin Williams, a lifeguard in Hallandale Beach, Florida, and member of AFSCME Local 2009 (Council 979), says he became a lifeguard more than 15 years ago and what he likes most about his job is “the satisfaction of knowing you may be the reason someone survives in the water.”

He teaches survival skills to children.
who already know how to swim but may not know their limits. Several years ago, he saved a child who jumped into the deep end of a swimming pool not realizing what he was getting himself into. “I saw the look of panic in his eyes,” Williams recalls. “I ran toward him and told him I was going to get him out of there.”

To stay out of trouble, Williams advises children to always swim with a buddy and near a lifeguard stand. If they’ll be out in the sun, they should also drink plenty of water to avoid muscle cramps.

Back to Nature
Can’t swing a ticket to Hawaii? No problem. No matter where you live, you’re probably not too far from some beautiful public land.

In central Pennsylvania, Edward Wileman of AFSCME Local 2245 is hard at work making sure that the great outdoors are accessible to the public. He’s a maintenance supervisor in the Tuscarora State Forest, which covers more than 90,000 acres of rolling Appalachian wilderness.

Wileman’s job is to make sure that more than 100 miles of trails and roads are clear and well-maintained for hikers, cyclists and horseback riders. “This is the place to come if you want to get back to nature,” he says.

Even when he’s not on the job, Wileman is passionate about the outdoors. He even visits local schools dressed as Smokey the Bear to teach kids about fire safety.

His advice to vacationers is to play it safe. “There’s not a ton of dangerous wildlife, but we do have some rattlesnakes and bears,” he says. “Be careful, because you’re a visitor on their property.”

Rattlesnakes aside, Tuscarora State Forest is a friendly place to visit. “If you see us, feel free to ask questions,” Wileman says. “We’re public employees and that’s what we’re here for.”

Before you head into the wilderness, be sure to pack your Danner hiking boots and your Weber grill — both union-made in the USA. If you’re looking for union-made hunting and fishing gear, the Union Sportmen’s Alliance can help you find it. Visit unionsportsmen.org.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. There are AFSCME members working at beaches, parks and museums across the country.
2. Remember to look for the union label when you prepare for vacation.
A Day at the Museum
The school year is drawing to a close, but at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, members of AFSCME Local 1559 (DC 37) are preparing an educational experience for kids and adults alike. They're building the displays for an exhibit called "Dinosaurs Among Us," set to run through January 2017. The exhibit traces the evolutionary links between prehistoric giants and the birds we can see in our backyards today.

“We show transitional animals,” says Tory Ferraro, a senior principal preparator. “These are strange-looking big birds, dinosaurs that range from the size of a chicken to a four- or five-foot ostrich.”

Teams of skilled museum preparators and assistants tend to every detail for an experience that brings dinosaurs to life. Rebecca Meah, a senior principal preparator, explains the process. “We spent months on molds and built steel skeletons that we coated in spray foam, layered on silicone and rubber and finished with hand-painted feathers.”

These are only a few of the summer activities that are brought to you by union labor. Whether you're traveling far from home or just looking for a weekend outing, be on the lookout for your AFSCME sisters and brothers.

More AFSCME-Made Vacation Destinations

- **Florida**: Vizcaya Museum and Gardens: This stunning Italianate mansion, built by a millionaire in 1916, was acquired by Miami-Dade County in the 1950s. **AFSCME Local 199**.

- **Michigan**: Mackinac Island State Park: Stroll the beaches of Lake Superior and the charming downtown district from bike, horseback or on foot. **MSEA/AFSCME Local 5**.

- **California**: East Bay Regional Park District: A system of parks and nature preserves to hike among giant redwoods and take in stunning views of the San Francisco Bay and surrounding landscape. **AFSCME Local 2428**.

- **South Dakota**: Dinosaur Park: Built by the Works Progress Administration in 1936, this reptilian roadside attraction is a fun stop on the way to Mt. Rushmore. **AFSCME Local 1031**.

- **Louisiana**: Let a union sister or brother get you home safely after a night on Bourbon Street. **New Orleans Cab Drivers for Justice/AFSCME Council 17**.

Save More This Summer with Union Plus

Save money on your vacation through **Union Plus**. Visit **unionplus.org** and select “Travel and Entertainment.”

- Union members save up to 25 percent on car rentals when you support your fellow union members at **Alamo, Avis, Budget, Hertz and National**.

- From ride operators to hotel housekeepers to the actors who portray your favorite princesses, many of the workers at Disney Resorts are also union members. Choose from several discounted **Disney vacation packages**.

- You can also save **as much as $30 per ticket** at Six Flags locations across the country. That’s a discount of nearly 50 percent at certain parks!

- Make sure to **look for a union hotel** before you book. You can find the union-staffed hotel closest to you destination at **fairhotel.org**.
Thousands of AFSCME delegates will gather at AFSCME’s 42nd International Convention in Las Vegas, July 18-22, to set the course for growing our union during the next two years. Our theme for this year’s convention is: Never Quit. This is the reality of our daily lives as AFSCME members who work hard at keeping our schools clean, taking care of our families and keeping our communities safe.

Convention delegates will attend workshops, elect leaders and get fired up to get out the vote to elect worker-friendly candidates in November’s general elections.

REGISTRATION
Delegate registration will begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 16, in Central Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center, and will close at 1 p.m., Tuesday, July 19.

RECEPTION
A Delegates’ Reception will be held Sunday, July 17, at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel from 6-8 p.m.

CONVENTION DELEGATES
Convention Delegates: March 20, 2016, was the earliest date for the election of Convention delegates, except for those from affiliates that meet less frequently than quarterly.

CREDENTIALS
Regular credentials must be postmarked no later than June 28. Credentials postmarked after that date are considered irregular, and those delegates will not be included in the initial Report of the Credentials Committee. They will be included in any reports after the Convention votes to seat them.

WORKSHOPS
Workshops will be held on Monday afternoon, July 18 and Tuesday morning, July 19. Workshop topics will be posted online by July 1.

ORIENTATION
An orientation for first-time delegates will be held on Sunday, July 17, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

AFSCME’S GOT TALENT: THE KARAOKE & LIP SYNC EDITION
Returning for its second International Convention, AFSCME’s Got Talent adds a touch of Las Vegas showmanship to the competition. The PEOPLE fundraising event welcomes lip-syncing acts in addition to karaoke, so pack your boa, channel your inner Beyoncé or Elvis and give it all you’ve got to help raise money for our AFSCME PEOPLE fund.

CONVENTION ONLINE
Learn more about the week’s events on the convention section of our website: AFSCME.org/convention
For years, they’ve worked to destroy us. Funded by massively wealthy special interests, supported by politicians who think public service is something to be ashamed of, the anti-union movement has targeted AFSCME members.

They’ve passed so-called right-to-work to gut our wages, benefits and pensions, and to undermine public services. In their rhetoric, they’ve treated those of us who proudly serve our communities — nurses, librarians, bus drivers, the people who keep our streets safe and clean — as public enemies.

They’re trying to use the courts to declare our unions illegitimate, to take away the power we fought so hard to win so we could stand together and bargain collectively, winning better lives and a secure retirement for our families.

**Standing Together**

We know better. We know what our cities and towns would look like without the dedicated people who work tirelessly to serve the public interest. We know that the work we do is largely unsung, but we do it because it must be done. We work hard and deserve respect for the work we do, not relentless attacks from special interests.

That’s why we fight back. And that’s why we’re turning the corner.

We’re turning the corner in New York, where tens of thousands of city workers will now make a $15-an-hour living wage. DC 37 Exec. Dir. Henry Garrido called it “a moment in history where working people won a major victory in our city.”

We’re turning the corner in Oregon, where corrections officers won a fight to correct inequities stemming from the Great Recession eight years ago.

We’re turning the corner in Florida, where Local 199, working with other unions and community allies, helped pass a paid parental leave ordinance.

We’re turning the corner in Ohio, where a group of AFSCME firefighters convinced fee payers, trainers who also work for the state, to become full union members. “We protect our jobs and negotiate for better pay and benefits,” said Greg Wells, a state employed firefighter.
trainer through OCSEA Local 11, “so once that was clear, everybody understood the value of signing up as members.”

By standing together, AFSCME members are turning the tables on anti-union forces everywhere they’ve attacked us: in the courts, in the voting booth, and at the bargaining table. Our recent victory at the Supreme Court in the Friedrichs vs. California Teacher’s Association, where the court ruled against anti-union organizations who wanted to destroy our union by banning fair-share fees, will ensure working people can continue to join together and have a voice on the job.

**Having Our Voice Heard**

In the early primary states, union members have determined the outcomes. AFSCME members have come out in force for Hillary Clinton’s campaign, knocking on thousands of doors to make sure union members’ vote drives her victories. In close primaries like Massachusetts, AFSCME member engagement meant the difference between winning and losing. And every candidate in both parties can hear how powerfully organized workers voices are speaking at the ballot box.

Every day, we hear more stories of success at the bargaining table. Negotiations stalled for months or years are finally breaking through. New contracts are bringing higher wages or long-sought benefits that workers had been fighting for years.

A two-year campaign by Local 3299, to make custodians and parking attendants at the University of California permanent university employees, succeeded, meaning nearly 100 people will now receive the wages and benefits they deserve for their hard work. “I’m not asking for special treatment — just for the dignity and respect that my 20-plus years of service demands,” said Antonio Ruiz, a parking attendant.

In July, AFSCME’s elected delegates and leaders will gather in Las Vegas for our 42nd International Convention. Delegates will strategize and plan for more victories in the year ahead.

When we win, we win because we stick together, and because we never quit. Our commitment to public service, to our communities and to each other ensure our co-workers, our families and our union will only continue to grow stronger.

“The I’m not asking for special treatment — just for the dignity and respect that my 20-plus years of service demands.” — Antonio Ruiz, California Local 3299

**3 THINGS TO KNOW:**

1. Public service workers are facing withering attacks from wealthy special interests determined to destroy our union.
2. These extremists are using city councils, state legislatures and the courts to gut our wages, benefits and pensions.
3. By fighting back, we’re turning the corner and winning in states and cities across the country.
Laura Leavitt remembers the first time she met Hillary Clinton, in 2008, during the Nevada caucus. Leavitt, an AFSCME Local 4041 member who worked in a program for children with special needs in the state’s Department of Health and Human Services, went up and introduced herself to Clinton and thanked her for her work for children.

Then-Senator Clinton, who began her public service working for the Children’s Defense Fund before creating the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) as First Lady, said “No, no … Thank you! You’re the one making a difference in children’s lives today.”

It’s no wonder that Leavitt, now retired, continues volunteering her time to help Clinton in her campaign to become President. “I really appreciate how Hillary Clinton worked for families throughout her public career. I want to make sure the people we elect care about our families and will work to improve our lives.”

AFSCME members like Leavitt have made a huge difference for Clinton. Union households made up one-quarter of the caucus goers in Nevada, and Clinton won 54 percent of them. Leavitt described her affection for Clinton as she was writing out personal notes on postcards that were sent to Nevada members ahead of the caucus in February. That personal touch not only buoyed Clinton in Nevada, but also in the Iowa caucuses, where she also won the majority of union members.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. Members across the country have rallied to support Hillary Clinton for President.
2. The majority of union households, which make up one-quarter of voters, are voting for Secretary Clinton.
3. AFSCME retirees are a critical part of the election campaign, volunteering their time to help elect Secretary Clinton.
She Will Listen to Us

“Clinton will listen to us, and that’s important,” said Jessie Vroegh, a member of Council 61 in Iowa who works as a nurse at the Mitchellville Correctional Institute for Women. Vroegh met Clinton during a campaign stop in Iowa earlier this year, explaining that he had been denied insurance for an operation to complete the transition to the male gender.

“She was so understanding,” Vroegh said. “She said, ‘That’s got to change, and it will change,’ promising to make sure that transgender operations are available under the Affordable Care Act. Vroegh, who has been undergoing counseling for two years as he prepares to make the change, also has enlisted help from the ACLU to help him fight the Iowa state insurance program. But he is most grateful for the support that Clinton has offered.

“She is a powerful political leader, and she will stand up for me, that makes me feel good,” he said. “I’m looking forward to the opportunity to support her at the convention, where I expect to be a delegate.” Vroegh has been married for five years, and his wife was selected to be an alternate delegate.

Chris “Tiger” Stockbridge, a code enforcement officer (Local 1631, Council 93), was one of the AFSCME members who helped Clinton eke out a narrow victory in Massachusetts, knocking on doors, making phone calls and working the polls. Her experience and leadership will make a big difference, he said.

“Hillary will be able to enforce regulations on Wall Street and beyond to protect everyone from the disastrous practices that led to the financial crisis,” Stockbridge proclaimed.

In an April 6 speech to the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO convention, Clinton praised unions for building the middle class, declaring that “right-to-work is wrong for America” and calling for a “strong and vibrant labor movement that is supported in the White House and across the country.”

A Record of Achievement

As a U.S. senator from New York, Clinton not only stepped up to help first responders and the families of victims in the wake of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, she introduced legislation to improve her signature children’s health care program and to support families dealing with home care.

Mike Ebersole, who works for the Florida state highway department, is convinced that Hillary Clinton would make a great President. “She’s very strong,” he said. “She’s on our side and she’ll get things done. Hillary won’t back down and she doesn’t sugar-coat her arguments. That’s what I like about her. She’s real. She will do amazing things as President.”

Ebersole also directs AFSCME’s PEOPLE program in the state for the past eight years, and he’s been working hard not only to elect Clinton and worker-friendly members of Congress, but also candidates to the Legislature in Tallahassee who will listen. PEOPLE is AFSCME’s political action fund, in which members’ voluntary contributions are used to help elect allies across the country.

Retirees Pitch In

In Florida, perhaps more than in any other states, AFSCME retirees help drive the campaign. “I don’t know what we’d do without our retirees,” Ebersole said. “They do everything. They even stamp and address envelopes while they’re working the phone banks!”

“Secretary Clinton has fought for working families and organized labor her whole career, so the response we have been getting has been overwhelmingly positive,” said retiree Dave Jacobsen, a former state employee and president of AFSCME Retiree Subchapter 43, as Clinton opened her state office in Tallahassee. “No flashy speakers or gimmicks, just classic word-of-mouth organizing got everyone from retirees like myself to some of our college and high school activists out as well.”

In Ohio, Patricia Cartwright was out door-knocking on a Saturday ahead of the March 15 primary, and getting good responses from members who greeted her at the door. “People understand that Hillary has experience and that she will fight for the middle class, and those less fortunate. She’s the only one with international experience!”

Cartwright, who retired from the Warrenville Heights School District where she was a school secretary and president of AFSCME Local 318, said she is a longtime Clinton admirer. “She has this fire when it comes to health care, and she’s really fierce in fighting for pay equity. And even though she’s being attacked by candidates in both parties, she is taking the high road. That’s who she is.”

Sec. Hillary Clinton takes a “selfie” with retiree Laura Leavitt.
Public Workers Battle Zika Virus in Puerto Rico

By Pablo Ros & Michael Byrne

With more than 100 reported cases of the Zika virus in Puerto Rico, AFSCME members who work for the government are busy helping to fight the virus and prevent its spread. Health officials predict as many as one in five residents of the island will be infected by year’s end, increasing the chances of the virus’ spread on the mainland.

To make matters worse, Zika could not have arrived at a worse time for the people of Puerto Rico. The government is undergoing a financial crisis related to its more than $70 billion in outstanding debt. In February, a U.S. Treasury official urged Congress to help the Commonwealth restructure its debt quickly, warning that “Puerto Rico’s very survival is at stake.”

Since the debt crisis’ beginning, the Puerto Rican government has cut back on public programs, including health and environmental control services, needed to fight the virus. Qualified health care professionals have sought jobs elsewhere in the United States. And there’s no money to pay for basic protective measures, such as installing window screens in homes, medical facilities and schools that currently lack them, or creating a more effective spray to kill the mosquito that transmits the disease.

Although Zika is a mild illness with symptoms of fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes, it has been linked to brain damage in unborn children, including microcephaly. In adults, there is a suspected link to Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can lead to temporary paralysis.

President Obama has asked Congress for $1.9 billion to fight the Zika virus, including $250 million in aid to Puerto Rico. But Congress has yet to act.

‘Doing Everything We Can’
The Department of Consumer Affairs (known as DACO, for its acronym in Spanish) has frozen prices on medicine used to treat Zika symptoms and items used to prevent infection, such as mosquito repellents. The order is intended to fight Zika as much as to control an outbreak of Influenza that has affected many more people. It covers a freeze on prices of prophylactics, mosquito repellents, disinfectants, analgesics, and the Influenza vaccine, among other things. There is no vaccine for Zika.

Workers for DACO are also visiting residential communities, schools and...
How to Prevent Spread of Zika Virus

1. Avoid keeping water in any outside containers.
2. Clear any drain pipes of stagnant water.
3. Remove trash promptly in closed plastic bags and containers.
4. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.
5. Use adequate mosquito repellents.
6. Sleep under mosquito nets.

Source: Puerto Rico’s Department of Consumer Affairs

seniors’ centers to educate the public on the risks of Zika and how to prevent becoming infected with the virus.

“We are doing everything we can to help prevent the spread of the Zika virus and the Influenza virus,” says Eduardo Martínez, a purchasing agent for DACO and president of AFSCME Local 3986 (Servidores Públicos Unidos de Puerto Rico/Council 95). “We’re working around the clock, even on evenings and weekends. We are educating people about Zika, what its symptoms are, how to prevent it, and how to keep their homes free of mosquitos.”

Mikey Rivera, a computer programmer for the Department of Education and president of Local 3840 (Council 95), says he and his colleagues have been part of the effort. “We’ve been visiting schools and talking to school staff, educating them on the Zika virus and how to prevent contagion,” he said. “The idea is to try to reach parents through their children.”

Rivera and Martínez say austerity measures have thus far not hindered their efforts, and they remain hopeful that preventive measures will help contain the spread of the virus. But that may change with the beginning of the rainy season and the onset of warmer weather.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. AFSCME members are leading Zika prevention efforts in Puerto Rico, where more than 100 people have contracted the virus from infected mosquitoes.
2. The virus generally causes a mild illness, with fever rash and joint pains, but it has been linked to birth defects and paralysis in adults.
3. For current updates on the Zika virus and how to stay safe, visit the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov.
Flint: Undrinkable

The water smelled bad. It tasted bad. It gave them rashes. It was poisoning the children of Flint. The cause: lead.

An unelected city manager appointed by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder made the decision to switch Flint’s water supply to the Flint river. It was supposed to save the city $13 million. Flint’s mayor estimates the crisis could cost the city $1.5 billion.

The river water corroded the pipes, leaching lead and other contaminants into the city’s water.

Pediatrician Dr. Mona Hanna-Atisha urged the city to stop using the water because of high lead levels in her patients’ blood. Snyder officials told her the water was safe.

"Three weeks after we made the switch to river water, we noticed something was wrong. We told our supervisors, but we were told the water was fine." — Jon Mochty, AFSCME Local 1600; water distribution operator.
This wasn’t an accident. When Rick Snyder was inaugurated, he started cutting budgets. He also cut hundreds of millions in corporate taxes.

Snyder, along with the legislators, starved cities like Flint and sent unelected managers to make things worse.

At least 10 people have died from Legionnaire’s disease connected to the switch, and countless children have lead poisoning.

When Snyder came to Washington with empty apologies, shifting blame, Flint families were there to meet him.

Their brains damaged by lead, Flint’s children face a lifetime of hurdles.

"This is a catastrophe that has decimated our city and hurt families," said Tyrone Wooten, an AFSCME Council 25 member.

The Snyder plan to save Flint $13 million could cost Michigan and American taxpayers billions. And Flint’s children will be paying for Snyder’s arrogance their entire lives.

You can help the children of Flint. Go to AFSCME.org/helpflint and donate now.
What's On Your Mind?

Asking Questions Makes Connections

By Clyde Weiss

As a teacher’s aide for special education in Nassau County, New York, Monica Berkowitz has been making a difference in the lives of the children in her care for more than three decades. Her empathy and communications skills are essential to her success. Those same qualities also are the foundation of her strength as president of Nassau Education Local 865 of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000. This February, they served her well as she sat down to talk with some of the teachers’ aides, clerical and custodial employees and other workers in her wall-to-wall unit.

Most are members of her union. Their concerns, she learned in her one-on-one AFSCME Strong conversations, are common to many. AFSCME Strong is our program for building stronger solidarity by increasing membership through recommitments, and turning agency fee payers into full-time members. It’s being done, one conversation at a time.

Lessons in Listening

For Berkowitz, listening is key to building relationships across the local, covering 56 school districts in Nassau County. What she heard from her co-workers did not surprise her.

“Because of the population we work with, very often people get hurt,” she said. So safety is on their minds, especially as the districts have so many aging buildings. Air quality and other health-related issues are a big concern. Others wanted to talk about the reduction in the number of months that school bus drivers operate.

“I told them we’re here to listen,” Berkowitz said. “People were very grateful” that she took the time to meet
PHOTO: MEMBER PROVIDED

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

"People are appreciating more what it means to be part of the union."

— Monica Berkowitz, CSEA/AFSCME Local 1000

with them and hear their questions, she added.

What she’s learned from her co-workers over the years is that they all share a passion for improving the lives of the learning-challenged children in their care. “Many of our kids are non-verbal,” she explained, “so when you can get them to attend to a task that’s relatively difficult for them, and they finally get it, it’s all worth it.”

She’ll Never Quit

That’s why it’s more than a job to Berkowitz and her co-workers. “It’s the sense of being able to help someone really be a citizen, to be able to function,” she said.

Because of that passion, she will never quit on a child in her care. She brings that same passion to her union, knowing her efforts make it stronger. Her members sense that. It’s why approximately 100 co-workers signed CSEA’s “Never Quit” re-commitment cards after sitting down with her to talk about their issues and the challenges confronting public service workers.

AFSCME members nationwide are listening to their co-workers — members of our union and agency fee payers alike — and because of people like Berkowitz, our union is stronger. “I think people are appreciating more what it means to be part of the union,” she said.

Learn more about AFSCME Strong at afscmestrong.org •

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. When it comes to her special needs students or her union, Monica Berkowitz never quits.
2. Passion for her students and her union is at the heart of what drives Berkowitz.
3. Asking questions and listening to co-workers builds a stronger voice in the workplace.

CSEA/AFSCME members Laura Martinez and Susan Hernandez
**Federal**
Perhaps the most important issue facing Congress this session is the approval of a new Supreme Court justice to replace Antonin Scalia, who passed away in February. On March 16, President Obama nominated Merrick Garland, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, to fill the vacant seat. But Republicans in Congress continue to block the process. The vacancy was a key factor in the outcome of *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, the case that threatened to make America's entire public sector right-to-work. The eight-member Court was split 4-4, affirming the lower court's decision to uphold the rights of public workers.

Congress is also considering aid measures for the city of Flint, which faces a major public health crisis as a result of a deteriorating and underfunded water system that leaches lead into the drinking water (see page 18). A bill before the Senate would set aside $600 million in federal funds for infrastructure improvements and health care. In March, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder used a congressional hearing to try to deflect personal blame for the crisis, while calls continue for his impeachment.

**California**
In a significant victory for the United Domestic Workers (UDW), AFSCME Local 3930, Gov. Jerry Brown signed historic legislation to increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour during the next six years. The deal also includes a gradual addition of up to three new paid sick days for In Home Supportive Service (IHSS) providers and ensures that the minimum wage provisions apply to them. The statewide wage rate would increase incrementally until it reaches $15 in 2022.

“We’ve been denied paid sick leave and a livable wage for far too long.”
— Edith Adams, UDW Homecare president

“This a huge victory for all working Californians, but especially IHSS providers,” said UDW president and home care worker Editha Adams. “We’ve been denied paid sick leave and a livable wage for far too long.”

This victory comes after a year of efforts by home care workers across the state to make their voices heard.

**Illinois**
Gov. Bruce Rauner continues his outrageous attacks on public workers and their unions. As a result of his actions, the state is operating without a budget and public employees, including members of AFSCME Council 31, are working without a contract. In January, he called an impasse in contract negotiations while refusing to allow interest arbitration.

**Missouri**
A paycheck deception bill that passed both chambers of the state Legislature with a slim veto-proof majority would require public workers to provide written authorization each year for dues to be taken out of their paychecks. Gov. Jay Nixon vetoed the bill, and legislators have until the end of the session in May to override his veto if they can. ‘Paycheck deception’ laws are a scam attempt to limit a union's ability to collect dues by setting up unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

**Oregon**
Anti-worker groups are collecting signatures for a ballot initiative that would make Oregon the 27th right-to-work state in the nation. Right-to-work, which makes the collection of fair share fees illegal, is a tactic that seeks to silence the voices of working people by targeting their unions’ resources. If the groups succeed in gathering enough signatures, it would be placed on the November ballot.

**West Virginia**
Working people in the Mountain State are reeling after a right-wing Legislature overruled Gov. Earl Tomblin’s veto of a right-to-work law. West Virginia was traditionally a labor-friendly state, but it’s now the 26th state to place burdensome limits on union activity.

Meanwhile, Council 77 members are calling for the state to fully fund the Public Employees Insurance Agency, which provides medical coverage for public service workers in the state. Steep cuts are expected if the Legislature does not act, but lawmakers in Charleston have yet to respond to the workers and retirees who rallied for better funding.
AFSCME Executive Board Summary Report

This report summarizes the meeting of the International Executive Board held Dec. 15-16, 2015, in Washington, DC.

Pres. Lee Saunders opened the meeting with a status report on the Friedrichs case pending before the Supreme Court. The Board also heard presentations on the success to-date of our AFSCME Strong internal organizing campaign, which included assessments made by affiliates and members reached by the national union’s phone bank.

The Board also was updated on our new branding campaign, “Never Quit.”

AFSCME Strong trainings were the focus of a report. The Board learned that numerous affiliate staff and leaders assisted in the trainings; and members participated at several conferences, including Nurses, Next Wave, Public Safety and Women’s.

Sec.-Treas. Laura Reyes described plans for the 2016 Women’s Leadership Academy, noting that applications to attend the Academy are available on the AFSCME website by Jan. 15, 2016, and are due on March 15. The program will launch in August and will run through March of 2017.

The Board received a review of Presidential primary and caucus polling, a summary of key 2015 elections, and a review of the next round of redistricting, which AFSCME is working to make an impact at the state and national levels.

A review of AFSCME’s accomplishments at the federal level included defeating dozens of controversial policy riders in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, and working as part of a broad coalition that helped prevent deep “sequestration” cuts in federal spending over the next two years. AFSCME and our allies also succeeded in winning relief for both AFSCME retirees and state budgets from an impending spike in Medicare Part B premiums.

Pres. Lee Saunders recommended, and the Board, approved, the reappointment of Richard Abelson as chairperson of the Judicial Panel, and the reappointment of Sheila Hill of Maryland Local 1319, Steve Preble of Minnesota Local 940 and Jim Tucciarelli of New York Local 1320 as members of the Judicial Panel. The appointments, which are for three years, were effective Jan. 1, 2016.
Never Quit: Louise Lex, 86, Just Wants to Help People

By Clyde Weiss

Des Moines — Louise Lex, a longtime member of Local 3450 (Iowa Council 61), epitomizes AFSCME's motto, “Never Quit.” Lex, 86, has been working in public service as an Iowa state employee for 37 years. Her current position — health planner for the Iowa Department of Public Health — puts her in the center of the state’s efforts to keep its citizens healthy.

Lex’s interest in AFSCME, and particularly how our union has championed social justice in the workplace and in society, goes way back. She wrote her Master’s thesis on AFSCME’s leadership role in extending Social Security to state and local public service workers. It is called “The AFSCME: A Study of Public Employee Unionism.”

That was 59 years ago, in 1957. Lex was 27.

A graduate student in political science at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Lex chose AFSCME as the subject of her thesis because AFSCME’s national headquarters at the time also was in Madison. “I was able to look at all the records, and I was able to interview all of the people who were there,” including Arnold Zander, then-president of AFSCME. “That’s just a treasure trove.” AFSCME’s leadership in the campaign to extend Social Security “was fascinating to me because there was one heck of a lot of resistance,” Lex said. Other unions — and even some AFSCME affiliates — opposed the effort, fearing it would undermine their local retirement systems. AFSCME prevailed in 1954.

“For the first time,” Lex wrote in her thesis, “public employees who were under a state or local retirement plan (exclusive of the firemen and policemen) had the opportunity of coming under the old age and survivors insurance provisions of the federal Social Security law.”

After Lex earned her degree, she taught political science at Iowa State University, then took a job with the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, working with unions to get women into building trades apprenticeship programs. Later, at Iowa State University, she studied the women’s movement’s impact on state elections and earned her Ph.D. Then she entered the field of public health, working on substance abuse.

Today, Lex coordinates the state’s health improvement program and serves as state coordinator for a federal program called Healthy People 2020. Lex also volunteers with the Iowa Public Health Association and the American Public Health Association, and has dinner each night with her husband at a nursing home.

“I want to be able to do something of value, and government work — it’s an ability to be able to help people. It’s more than just a job. That’s what makes me passionate about working as a public servant.”

Will she ever quit? Not likely. Her mother stayed active until she was 100. “Genetically, I should be able to live for quite a while,” said Lex.