Workers Are Joining AFSCME for a Stronger Voice on the Job

Welcome to the AFSCME family! More than 6,600 public service workers from Public Employees Union, Local 1, joined the Green Machine.

#NEVERQuit #AFSCMEStrong | Page 6
We’re Going Digital!

Our days move lightning fast in 2017. When we’re not hard at work or getting our families where they need to go, we’re emailing, skimming the web, Facebooking and maybe even tweeting or Snapchatting. Our time online gives us a window into the world. Our co-workers, families, friends and neighbors, and the people who make decisions that affect our jobs and our communities — they’re all online, too. That’s why there’s no better place for AFSCME members to tell our stories and share information to strengthen our workplaces and our union.

While it’s the end of one era, a new one is already unfolding with possibilities. We know that as AFSCME members we never quit on our communities, and by telling our stories online — through AFSCME.org and Facebook, for example — we have a more powerful, modern megaphone to talk about the vital services we provide.

Communicating through the web, email and texts puts the power of AFSCME right in your hands. So take a second now to make sure you are included in that conversation at AFSCME.org/digital.

Our lives aren’t two dimensional. We don’t communicate that way anymore either. Now the power of AFSCME — the power you bring to your community as someone who never quits — is just a click away.

Keep the conversation going. Visit: AFSCME.org/digital
Did You See This? ►

An AFSCME member from New Jersey has accomplished what millions have been unable to — compete on Jeopardy! on television. Wendi Rottweiler, vice president of AFSCME Local 2923 (Council 73), appeared on the show.

To read more, visit: AFSCME.org/blog

◄ Public Service Workers Are Our 'People of the Year'

We choose public service workers as ‘People of the Year’ because they #NeverQuit serving their communities.

Know a public service worker who never quits? Nominate them for AFSCME’s Never Quit Awards at neverquit.AFSCME.org/awards
Navigating Change with High Stakes

There’s a lot on the line for AFSCME members in 2017 and in the years to come. In AFSCME’s 85-year history, I’m not sure we’ve ever faced a political landscape quite this rocky.

President Trump was elected on a promise to champion the interests of working people, but his actions so far suggest that his campaign rhetoric was nothing more than that. Look at the people he has surrounded himself with.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services is eager to privatize Medicare. The Education Department will be led by someone who doesn’t believe in public schools. And the Labor Secretary nominee is a fast food magnate who doesn’t just want to keep workers’ wages down but wants to replace them with robots. Before long, we expect a Supreme Court majority to overturn our rights as public service workers to bargain together for fair pay and benefits.

The climate is tough in the states, too. Kentucky and Missouri recently became the 27th and 28th right-to-work states.

Fighting for Our Future, Emerging Stronger
Challenging times call on all of us to double down on our commitment to our union and to each other. Our opponents are more emboldened; we need to be resourceful and resilient. We need to fight for our future.

We need to put pressure on our elected representatives, pushing back against policy proposals that undermine retirees and working people. We need to identify and take advantage of new organizing opportunities, like the successful campaign where more than 6,600 members, of the Public Employees Union, Local 1, in Northern California, joined with AFSCME.

We need to redouble our AFSCME Strong efforts, connecting one-on-one with our Sisters and Brothers as never before, to make ours an even more activist, member-driven union. We need to make the case clearly about the value of union membership. Everything we care about and all the progress we’ve made over so many years is at stake.

This is a time of enormous change — political change, economic change, technological change, changes in the labor movement. (We’re even changing the way we communicate, moving to an all-digital format, so we can efficiently deliver more personalized and relevant content to each member). But we can and will navigate all of this change. We can embrace it and be on the leading edge — and emerge even stronger.

“Never Quit” Never Changes
But as pervasive as change is, some things are constant — like the will of public service workers to make a difference in our communities. In our health clinics and our prisons, on our roads and our college campuses, AFSCME Sisters and Brothers lift up their neighbors every day. Never quit means no matter what, even in the face of adversity and strong headwinds.

When Renita Smith of Prince George’s County, Maryland, a member of Local 2250, went up and down the aisle of a burning school bus, she wasn’t thinking about who was winning or losing the election. She just knew she had to make sure the kids in her care were safe. When Sergeant Allen Brandt of Fairbanks, Alaska, (Public Safety Employees Association, Local 803) responded to the call that would lead to his fatal shooting, nothing mattered but protecting his community.

With so much at stake and so much change in the air, it’s the courage and constancy of AFSCME members that will see us through, that will ensure our union continues to thrive.

"Never quit means no matter what, even in the face of adversity and strong headwinds."
Women Have Always Made History

March is Women’s History Month, when we honor the vital role women have played in shaping our country.

This month, we celebrate great progress on gender equality, and we also resolve to correct the injustices that persist. Last fall, a woman earned 65 million votes in a race for president of the United States, winning the popular vote by a margin of more than 2.9 million votes. At the same time, women still earn substantially less than men for doing the same work, with an even greater wage gap for women of color. We must continue to speak out for change.

Some of our boldest changemakers are women, and many chose workers’ rights as the vehicle for their activism. Around the turn of the 20th century, pioneering labor advocate Mother Jones, and Frances Perkins, the first woman to serve as a cabinet secretary, emerged alongside influential labor leaders like Samuel Gompers and Eugene Debs to give voice to the injustices of the day. Respect for human dignity, equal rights for all, empowering our most vulnerable people — these are the values both women and the labor movement have always fought for.

Overworked and Unacknowledged

My own experience in AFSCME reflects the proud but often unrecognized role that women have played in American life. As a home health care worker in San Diego, I knew that my job was an important one, but it wasn’t until I joined my union — United Domestic Workers (UDW) Homecare Providers Union, Local 3930 — that I found my voice. I met other unsung heroes — union sisters who were struggling to stay afloat. It was at that moment that I knew I — we — could make a difference.

We can’t forget about the millions of women still trying to raise their voices and improve their families’ lives. Just as there was a time when women had to fight for the right to vote, women must still struggle to receive fair pay. Minimum wage earners — working in restaurants, at airports, as home health aides and more — are disproportionately women, many of them single mothers and their families’ sole breadwinner.

Fighting for Our Future

The playing field isn’t level yet, but AFSCME women have fought and won in the past, and we’ll continue to answer the call for women in the future. In 1981, we battled successfully on behalf of San Jose’s municipal workers to achieve equal pay for women. More recently, AFSCME launched the Women’s Leadership Academy, an eight-month program that recruits and prepares women for prominent roles in the union. And by empowering hardworking AFSCME sisters, the Women’s Leadership Academy bolsters our entire union, building power for all members.

The power of women’s voices strengthening our union — that’s how bold change happens.

"The power of women’s voices strengthening our union — that’s how bold change happens."

Laura Reyes
Secretary-Treasurer
AFSCME is better positioned than ever to thrive and grow despite the tough political territory in which labor unions will have to operate in the next few years. We’re stronger than ever because as AFSCME members, we never give up.

Not to mention, we are persistent and patient in our quest to protect more working people.

Consider:

- Last year, we grew by almost 12,000 members.
- In the past two years, we’ve had nearly 600,000 one-on-one conversations with our co-workers — many of whom joined our union for the first time.
- Many more recommitted to our cause; nearly 35,000 members became contributors to our political action fund, PEOPLE, strengthening our efforts to elect candidates who stand with working families.

- In just the last few months, we’ve welcomed thousands of new members in California, Indiana and Ohio, proving that workers around the country are trying to make their voices heard. And through our AFSCME Strong campaign, we’ll continue to reach out to them.

More than 6,600 Workers in California Join AFSCME

More than 6,600 city and public service workers represented by Public Employees Union (PEU), Local 1, voted to unite with AFSCME. The affiliation offers public workers across eight Northern California counties a path to improve the vital services they provide every day.

“We don’t do this work for fame and glory,” said Local 1 Pres. Mike West, a printing-services coordinator at Los Medanos Community College in Pittsburg. “We do it to

Welcome to the AFSCME family! Just some of the more than 6,600 public service workers represented by Public Employees Union (PEU), Local 1, who voted to unite with AFSCME.
keep our communities strong. Joining AFSCME helps make sure we have the tools we need to advocate for quality public services for all.”

PEU Local 1 represents workers employed by cities, counties, community colleges, school districts, libraries, courts, Head Start and special districts that provide clean water and other services.

Lynda Middleton has worked as a Head Start teacher in Contra Costa County for 21 years and serves on the Local 1 board of directors. She believes the affiliation with AFSCME will make her union stronger.

“Our do the same work; we share the same issues,” she said. “It makes sense that we stand together in the same union.”

Marion County Workers Join AFSCME

Some 230 Marion County employees in Indianapolis joined AFSCME after newly-elected officials granted them the right to bargain collectively.

Workers from the Marion County Clerk’s, Auditor’s, Assessor’s and Surveyor’s offices had worked without collective-bargaining rights or raises for far too long — at least eight years in many cases. With newly elected, pro-labor Mayor Joe Hogsett taking office in 2015, county employees decided the time was right to form their union with AFSCME Council 962.

Council 962 organizers facilitated the process by meeting with them in each office; identifying supporters; answering questions and concerns during after-work meetings, at lunches and over the phone and via emails; and training key leaders. As a result of all this hard work, a majority of the employees signed membership cards and each office voluntarily recognized AFSCME.

“It was exciting to organize our offices,” said George Farley, an accounting coordinator in the Assessor’s office and a member of AFSCME’s bargaining team. “It was satisfying convincing people to join together and sign union cards, knowing that we are standing together to make our jobs better.”

The bargaining team is training and preparing to negotiate its first contract with the county, and AFSCME members are looking forward to founding their own local union.

Volunteer Member Organizer in Ohio Is Committed to Her Union

Karen Holdridge is a Volunteer Member Organizer (VMO). A retired school bus driver and former secretary of the Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE)/AFSCME Local 4 in Columbus, she worked hard in a campaign to get Local 1, an unaffiliated union of school and other employees, to join with AFSCME.

Local 1’s members were skeptical that their voices could be heard, and at first they seemed wary of AFSCME organizers. For example, when Holdridge and other organizers asked for access to the schools where the employees worked, they were relegated to the library, which few employees ever visited.

But Holdridge and the other VMOs didn’t give up. And their persistence paid off.

Over time, the conversations became friendlier. The organizers moved from the library to the staff lounge where they were able to talk to the staff more frequently. Members were especially excited about AFSCME’s new free college benefit. “A lot of them were thrilled with that prospect,” Holdridge said.

She knew that the members of Local 1 were warming to them when they invited organizers to a cookout to thank them for their work.

Last fall, Local 1 voted to join AFSCME.

Olivia Sandbothe contributed to this story.
WE NEVER QUIT ON THE PEOPLE WE SERVE.

“I can’t imagine doing anything else.”

– Fairbanks, Alaska, Sexual Assault Investigator Anne Sears, winner of the AFSCME Never Quit Service Award

Just like Anne Sears, AFSCME members serve the public because we know our communities need us.

Visit AFSCME.ORG/NeverQuit today to read Anne’s story and to nominate someone you know for a Never Quit Award.
It’s a simple yet powerful truth: AFSCME never quits. It’s not in our DNA. We don’t quit when times are good or when we’re faced with adversity. Because during good times and bad, schools need cleaning, families need caring, neighborhoods need security.

Just as our communities never rest, the women and men who form AFSCME will never rest in our quest to provide the highest-quality service to their friends and neighbors. We believe that public service employees who sustain and improve our communities deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

AFSCME connects public service employees like you across the country. Our union honors solidarity but doesn’t require conformity. We fight to improve the working lives of AFSCME members and employees throughout our country. Since we’ve dedicated our lives to public service, we deserve better pay and benefits.

AFSCME Members in Their Own Words
Here are some of AFSCME’s voices — our voices:

Marcia Vela, Local 449, lead custodian, Tucson Unified School District, Arizona: “We’re actually the support system for the school district. If (the) custodian is not there, things don’t get done. If you don’t clean your restrooms and pick up the trash, you’re talking about disease.”

Amanda Lowrey, Local 152 (HGEA), sanitarian, Hawaii Department of Health: “You are working with the public. You’re going out there to ensure the safety of food, the quality of things. … We are ready at any time to fight the fight, whether it’s for the public or for our rights.”

Tyler Moroles, Local 551 (Council 5), analyst, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority: “My work reaches about 16,000 people and 5,500 families. How much they get in rental assistance is determined by my analysis. … These are families that could be you.”

Macgandra Ray, Local 1805 (Council 31), child welfare senior specialist, state of Illinois: “The work is really dear to my heart because when you have children in the juvenile system, people tend to forget about them. So that’s where I come in, to have their voice and be their advocate and make sure that they’re getting the resources and the things they need.”

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. Hear how AFSCME members are embodying our union’s “Never Quit” spirit: neverquit.AFSCME.org/voices.
2. Get a copy of our inspiring “Never Quit” poster: neverquit.AFSCME.org/pledge.
AFSCME’s first national publication launched in August 1937, five years after AFSCME itself began in Madison, Wisconsin, and one year after the American Federation of Labor (AFL) granted a charter for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Volume 1, No. 1, of the Journal of State and Local Government Employees chronicled our union’s battles, victories and goals — and the stories of AFSCME members. It morphed, through the decades, into Public Employee, a full-color newspaper and, later, a full-color magazine. It, too, changed with the times, becoming AFSCME WORKS.

No matter the format, the stories of AFSCME members are always the heart and soul. Meanwhile, look back at some of the editions published through the years.

**AUGUST 1937**
Where We Began:
AFSCME’s very first issue of our national publication, in August 1937, began with a statement of purpose to “promote our aims with greater strength and greater unity.”

**OCTOBER 1942**
Working for Victory:
AFSCME members were engaged in a different kind of battle – the one to win World War II – by taking the lead in civilian defense and Red Cross volunteer programs.

**MARCH 1968**
Historic Struggle:
The 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike by 1,300 African-American workers – members of AFSCME Local 1733 – was one of our most historic victories.

**NOVEMBER 1985**
Evils of Outsourcing:
Contracting out “opens the door to loss of public control and invites in crime and corruption,” we wrote on an issue that remains relevant to this day.
In Katrina’s Wake:
Two years after the historic storm and flooding battered New Orleans, on Aug. 29, 2005, we went back to learn from the residents about their struggles.

MARCH 2006
Pensions in Peril:
Nationwide, a “growing and ruthless corporate attack on pensions” threatened the retirement security of millions of American workers.

MAY/JUNE 2007
In Katrina’s Wake:
After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, AFSCME recounted the heroism of our first responders.

OCTOBER 2009
Health Care for All:
AFSCME was on the front lines of the fight to pass health care reform, including our “Highway to Health Care” RV bus tour which took our message nationwide.

NOVEMBER 2008
We’re with Them:
AFSCME’s endorsement of Barack Obama for President and Joe Biden for Vice President was based on their agenda, including affordable health care for all and opposition to privatizing Social Security.

OCTOBER 2009
Health Care for All:
With AFSCME members in the trenches getting out the vote, Ohio Gov. John Kasich lost his effort to deprive public-service workers of our right to have a voice on the job through collective bargaining.

JANUARY 2012
Victory in Ohio:
In the face of unprecedented attacks against public service workers, AFSCME members across the country launched the AFSCME Strong organizing campaign.

FEBRUARY 2015
AFSCME Strong:
From corrections officers and sanitation workers to school bus drivers and home care providers, AFSCME members never quit because we take pride in our work.
Times of Change, Times of Challenge

No matter what challenges we face, AFSCME can grow stronger

By Jesse Berney

Even in times of great change, some things will always stay the same.

Kids still need a ride to school on the bus in the morning. Garbage still needs to be cleared off the streets. Prisons need to be kept safe. Our cities and states still need dedicated public service workers who go out every day and make the sacrifices we’ve always made to ensure that our communities are healthy and strong.

That’s who AFSCME members are. And no matter what comes our way, that’s what we’ll always do. Like Rachel Cooper, (Local 1644), who talks about giving hope through a meal to the Atlanta school children she feeds every day (Visit neverquit.AFSCME.org/stories/rachel-cooper to see her story). Or Officer Jonathan Cahill, (Local 787, Council 93) of Boston, a former Marine who saved a man’s life when he rushed to the scene of a shooting even though he was off-duty.

AFSCME Members Stand Firm

Their commitment to helping their communities doesn’t change no matter what happens around them. AFSCME members never quit.

But change is here, and so are new challenges. AFSCME members fought hard in 2016 to elect a president and candidates up and down the ballot with the same strong commitment to public service that we all share. We weren’t successful despite all our efforts, and now we face a vastly changed landscape for working families.

Some of the dangers we face are familiar.

We faced the looming threat of a Supreme Court decision that would weaken public service unions like ours, and would rob us of the power we have to bargain together for the wages and benefits we’ve earned. Now that threat has returned, and it puts our livelihoods, our families and our secure retirements at risk. A negative
ruling by the Court in another case like Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association, the case that threatened to turn every state into a so-called right-to-work state for public workers, would be enormously destructive to our ability to stand together. We also face right-to-work legislation in states all over the country and maybe even at the federal level.

Workers’ Rights Under Attack
It’s not only right-to-work laws that could cost our families and communities dearly. The new administration is filled with officials who oppose workers’ rights, like a fast-food CEO who wanted to replace his workers with robots as our new Secretary of Labor.

We also face privatization, with our jobs given to contractors who try to squeeze a profit out of public services, doing less and paying their workers less. The overtime pay promised to millions of Americans may be lost. They’re threatening our health care, our public schools. Retirees are being targeted, too. “Attacks against Medicare and Social Security are coming,” said Gary Tavormina, chair of AFSCME Retiree Council. “We have to be ready to fight against them.”

These are not new challenges. Attacks on our right to bargain together and build better lives for ourselves and our families have been going on for decades. And no matter how much things change, one thing remains the same: AFSCME members will continue to fight for our fellow Sisters and Brothers, for our families and for our communities.

Now it’s time for us to take action.

We Are Stronger When We Stand Together
Our first and most important goal must be to organize to strengthen and grow our union. Now more than ever, it is vitally important that every member of AFSCME recommit to supporting our Sisters and Brothers, and standing together to make our voice heard.

Those efforts are already underway, as these threats to our union are not new. AFSCME Strong organizing has seen tremendous success in the past few years as we’ve added thousands of new members to our union.

In just one recent example, volunteer member organizers went to the unaffiliated Public Employees Union (PEU), Local 1, which represents, more than 6,600 public service employees across communities in northern California. Local 1 embraced the AFSCME members who told them what it would mean to them to be part of the AFSCME family.

We are stronger when we stand together. We are stronger when there are more of us. The more we talk to our co-workers about sticking together in the union, the more opportunity we have to fight harder and secure our families’ futures.

And just as important, the more we stand together, the better we can serve our communities. No matter what challenges we face, serving the public will always be what unites us. Some things change, but that never will.

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. AFSCME members are facing big challenges in the year ahead, including so-called right-to-work laws, privatization and outsourcing, and reductions in pay and benefits.

2. We will always fight for our Sisters and Brothers, for our families and for the communities we serve.

3. The best way to fight back is to organize, to strengthen and grow our union and ensure working families know AFSCME will always be there for them.
What’s at Stake for Our Country

We stand ready to defend the gains made over the past eight years.

By Clyde Weiss and Raju Chebium

Our resolve is sharpened, our defenses are strengthened and we are prepared for the fight ahead. So what’s at stake? To start with, our nation’s character.

Here are four issues at stake:

- Health and retirement security
- Working people’s struggle for equity and fairness
- Our economy
- America’s infrastructure

Working families gained immensely during the past eight years under President Barack Obama. His legacy is one of job creation, affordable health care for all, equal pay and support for workers’ rights on the job. AFSCME and other unions helped President Obama achieve his legacy, which President Donald Trump and his allies in Congress are bent on dismantling. We can’t let that happen.

Protecting Health and Retirement Security

Labor groups are pushing back against plans by President Trump and extremist congressional leaders to devastate programs that provide health and retirement security for hundreds of millions of retirees and working people.

Trump and his allies are ready to repeal the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. But they have no viable alternative. That means 30 million working people who gained health coverage for the first time under Obamacare may be forced to return to a dark past of health insecurity.

5 THINGS TO DO:

1. Talk to your co-workers about your union. Let them know how important it is to stay active.
2. Text AFSCME to 237263 to stay up-to-date.*
3. Call your members of Congress at 202-224-3121. Tell them you’ll be watching to make sure they always put the interests of working families first.
4. Run for office. It’s one of the best ways to effect change.
5. Make sure your contact information is current at AFSCME.org/digital

*Message and data rates may apply. Reply STOP to quit. ~ 5 messages/month
“Our union will hold President Trump accountable on his promise to restore the American Dream ... for all working people, from affordable health care for all, to reducing student debt, to rebuilding America’s infrastructure.”

— Lee Saunders, AFSCME President

They also plan to gut and privatize Medicare and Medicaid, shifting more costs onto seniors, people with disabilities and low-income Americans. For 50 years, these safety-net programs have been the difference between life and death for untold millions. Gutting these programs is unconscionable and we will make sure these lawmakers hear that message loudly and clearly.

Right-wing lawmakers want to “save” Social Security by eviscerating benefits and have no plans of raising one dime of new revenue through higher taxes on the wealthy.

Workers’ and retirees’ organizations are already hard at work to protect Obamacare, Medicare, Medicaid, veterans’ health care and Social Security. Protecting them is one of our top priorities.

**Defending Against Hostile Courts**

Organizations are determined to stop Trump from packing the U.S. Supreme Court with right-wing ideologues who will blunt labor’s drive to protect and expand working people’s rights. We will resist efforts to revive attacks on public service workers. We will not stand for judicial erosions on collective bargaining rights, labor protections or worker safety laws and regulations.

The next Supreme Court justice will likely cast the deciding vote in cases that will affect our ability to wrest fairness, equity and justice from a system that’s increasingly stacked against us.

The people Trump nominates and appoints at all levels of the federal judiciary are likely to rule against working Americans and public service employees, not for them. This is not a fight we will ever give up.

**Saving the Economy**

When Obama took office in January 2009, the nation was in an economic freefall caused by the excesses of Wall Street and policies that favored the wealthiest 1 percent. The country was losing 700,000 jobs a month, teetering on the brink of a second Great Depression.

Obama got Congress to pass the $787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the largest economic stimulus and jobs program in U.S. history. It saved or created 3.6 million jobs by the end of 2010 and sparked the creation of millions of new jobs during the rest of Obama’s tenure. ARRA also included $210 billion for state and local governments, which helped save public workers’ jobs.

Obama’s support for measures to rescue the domestic auto industry not only restored 160,000 jobs but rescued the economies of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. “Those states would have been wrecked if the auto industry went down,” Ross Eisenbrey, vice president of the Economic Policy Institute, said in an interview. “The tax base would have been decimated and public employees would have been laid off in the tens of thousands.”

**Improving Our Infrastructure**

During the campaign, Trump said fixing our nation’s crumbling infrastructure is a top priority. AFSCME will hold him to that promise.

Any plan to address our infrastructure needs must include investments in roads and bridges, rail, airports, water and sewer systems, and schools. The American Society of Civil Engineers has estimated the country’s infrastructure needs at more than $3 trillion.

AFSCME worked with Washington lawmakers to pass a two-year, $105 billion bill for surface transportation projects in 2012. We will continue to press for spending that improves our nation’s transportation system the right way. Our philosophy is simple: Public infrastructure belongs to the public. We will oppose privatization schemes.

AFSCME retiree members were vocal about protecting Social Security and benefits for seniors back at a rally in 2006. Ten years later, the fight continues.
Donald Trump’s cabinet is a world away from the people who elected him.

By Pablo Ros

STEVEN MNUCHIN
Treasury Secretary*

- Former partner at Goldman Sachs, a Hollywood financier and hedge-fund manager.
- Profited from the 2008 financial crisis by foreclosing on the homes of working class families who could no longer afford payments on their mortgages.
- Expected to push for rolling back regulations put in place to prevent another recession and rewrite the tax code to favor the wealthy.

ELAINE CHAO
Transportation Secretary

- When she served as labor secretary under Pres. George W. Bush, her agency was criticized for failing to investigate numerous complaints of labor-law violations.
- The ultimate Washington insider has worked in various federal departments and is married to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.
- Worked for the conservative Heritage Foundation, member of the board of directors of News Corp., which owns Fox News.

BETSY DeVOS
Education Secretary

- Once called public schools “a dead end.” Neither she nor her children have attended public schools.
- At her confirmation hearing, refused to commit to prevent the privatization of public education.
- Refused to say whether allowing guns in schools is a good idea.

ANDREW PUZDER
Labor Secretary*

- CEO of CKE Restaurants, which owns fast-food chains Carl’s Jr. and Hardee’s. The U.S. Labor Department investigated thousands of complaints against these companies and found violations in 60 percent of the cases.
- Opposes raising the minimum wage and expanding eligibility for overtime pay.
- Supports replacing workers with machines.

*Confirmation pending
Chris Carrera was inside City Hall in Atwater, California, where he works as a janitor, when he spotted flames outside.

Unknown to Carrera, a member of AFSCME Local 2703 (Council 57), somebody had doused the front of the building with gasoline and set it ablaze. Carrera acted quickly, using a portable extinguisher to put out the fire. Then he saw a man walking away from the building.

“I yelled out to see if maybe he’d seen who started it or something, but then he took off running and I thought, ‘Well, that looks pretty guilty,’” Carrera told the Merced Sun-Star.

He chased the arsonist for half a mile.

“We both got tired and he gave up,” Carrera said.

He detained the suspect until police arrived. Police Chief Samuel Joseph praised Carrera.

“He likely prevented serious damage to the building and very likely prevented the suspect from causing harm in other places,” Joseph told the Merced Sun-Star. “If he’d gotten away, who knows what he’d have done? I’m extremely grateful to Chris for taking action until our officers arrived to make the arrest.”

Asked if he feared for his personal safety, Carrera said he’d wondered if the confrontation might turn physical. Luckily, it didn’t.

Not everyone would’ve reacted the way Carrera did. It takes more than courage and the ability to run fast to chase after someone who may be dangerous. It takes a certain selflessness that must be cultivated, a certain devotion to something bigger than yourself.

Carrera has been a part-time janitor at City Hall for nine years, and it’s his job to maintain the building, not just for the workers inside but for the community.

“I felt compelled to stop that guy because this is my building,” he said.

More than a spontaneous hero, Carrera was a hero in the making. His devotion to his job and the community he serves is what made him ready to react.

AFSCME is made up of public service workers around the country who put our communities above ourselves. Like Carrera, we’re heroes in the making who do our jobs not for the money or the limelight, but because serving the public is our calling. ■

**3 THINGS TO KNOW:**

1. Chris Carrera, a janitor for the City of Atwater, California, was inside City Hall when he spotted flames outside and chased an arsonist.
2. “I felt compelled to stop that guy because this is my building,” he said.
3. AFSCME is made up of public service workers who put our communities above ourselves.
For Pat Austin, a corrections officer at the Ohio State Penitentiary, the chance to go back to college using AFSCME’s free college benefit with Eastern Gateway Community College has been a blessing.

“Eastern Gateway has gone out of its way to make 30-year-olds feel like they’re important and that we can learn again,” says Austin, who has been so impressed with his experience so far that he’s recruiting friends from work to join him.

Money in the Bank
As he pursues his associate degree in business management, Austin is able to focus on what matter the most: his work and his studies. He wants to knock out as many prerequisite courses as possible. An Eastern Gateway counselor simplified the process of getting through the bureaucratic hurdles. “He even helped me get my school deferment for the college loans I already had,” says Austin.

One other advantage of AFSCME’s program is that by earning an associate degree for free, Austin will end up saving a lot of money if he decides to continue his higher education. “You take that degree to a four-year college and you already have two years paid for,” he says.

A Helping Hand
One person who makes AFSCME’s free college program work is Lois Carson, who works as a coach to help prospective and current students navigate their college experience.

“I say I’m a cheerleader,” says Carson, a secretary in the Columbus City Schools for 29 years who also serves as OAPSE’s state vice president. “I encourage them to stay motivated, to keep going.”

Carson understands the challenges the students face: Full-time work and family life can take a heavy toll. Moreover, for a number of returning students, it’s the technology that poses the biggest problem. Not having attended school in years, some students aren’t computer savvy, which can be intimidating.

“I have students who’ve never touched a computer,” notes Carson.

However, she doesn’t let that, or anything else, stand in her way. Whether walking students through required paperwork, helping people schedule classes or reaching out to Eastern Gateway on students’ behalf, Carson is more than just a cheerleader, she’s a mentor. It’s just another example of how AFSCME members have each others’ backs.

Though Eastern Gateway is in Ohio, students anywhere in the U.S. can earn two-year associate degrees entirely online. For more information on AFSCME’s free college benefit, visit freecollege.AFSCME.org •

3 THINGS TO KNOW:
1. AFSCME’s college benefit is free. Visit: freecollege.AFSCME.org to learn more.
2. Take classes online, anytime, anywhere there’s an internet connection.
3. Credits can be transferred to a four-year school.
“This Is My Home!”

Jessica Ellul Honored for Organizing at Danbury Hospital

By Clyde Weiss

Jessica Ellul grew up at Danbury Hospital in Danbury, Connecticut. Her parents met there four decades ago and her mother retired from the hospital after a 38-year-career. Her grandmother, aunts and uncles worked there.

When she was old enough, Ellul applied for a job at the hospital. Today, 11 years later, she works with cancer patients as a unit coordinator on the oncology ward. “For anyone who needs assistance, I’m the hub of the floor,” she explains.

She was also the hub of a three-year-long effort to organize a union for 900 custodians, maintenance workers, lab techs, nursing assistants and others employed at Danbury and at New Milford Hospital.

After the hospital’s hired union busters tried to intimidate her, Ellul confronted Danbury’s administrator last year. “I said, ‘This is my home, and you’re allowing them to treat me this way? I literally grew up in this place!’”

Victory and Personal Recognition

On September 1, 2016, her years of effort to bring a union to Danbury — and her dedication to her job — paid off when a majority of the employees voted to join Connecticut Health Care Associates (CHCA/NUHHCE/AFSCME).

“When I knew we won the election, I literally just sobbed. I couldn’t speak,” she said.

Ellul again found herself nearly speechless in January when she learned that she was one of three winners of the Kate Mullany Courageous Young Worker Award given by the Berger-Marks Foundation. The award honors women, age 35 or younger, “who have stood up for workers’ rights and organized their own workplaces in the face of overwhelming opposition.”

The award acknowledges Ellul’s “three years tirelessly fighting for — and ultimately winning — a union for the service and maintenance staff at the hospital.” AFSCME nominated her for the award.

“I’m just so thankful and so grateful, and so appreciative that someone acknowledged the amount of work I had put in” to organize her fellow workers, she said.

“Jessica’s dedication to her fellow workers through her efforts to organize a union was tireless,” said Mary Florio, president of CHCA. “She poured her heart and soul into helping them gain respect on the job through a union. Now they’re working for their first contract. With Jessica at the center of this effort, too, we know we’ll win a contract we can be proud of.”

3 THINGS TO KNOW:

1. For her efforts to build a union at Danbury Hospital in Connecticut, Jessica Ellul received the Kate Mullany Courageous Young Worker Award.
2. Ellul never quits — not on her job, her “family” — nor her efforts to build a union.
3. Some 900 fellow workers now have respect on the job through CHCA/NUHHCE/AFSCME.
Ken DiPerna is a janitor at Massasoit Community College, the Brockton campus, and a member of AFSCME Local 1067 (Council 93). Of late, he’s been gone from his job, undergoing treatment for a serious illness. But on some days, especially Sundays, he just can’t stay away.

What keeps him coming back to Massasoit, according to his colleague Denise Gomes, is a family of feral cats that lives in a wooded area on campus.

He began feeding them several years ago when he took a custodial job at the college. Many people, including students, didn’t know the cats even existed. True to his quiet personality, DiPerna befriended the cats, who came out only at night, and fed them for years without anyone making a fuss.

A Tough Choice

But then the cats had kittens. One day, a person reported a litter of kittens in one corner of a building, where their mother may have taken them to keep them safe.

That’s when management told DiPerna he had to stop feeding the cats.

“They were afraid of rabies and such,” he says. “They said it wasn’t healthy to keep feeding the cats.”

DiPerna was in a tough spot: The warning was stern enough that he wasn’t sure if his union could intervene. On the other hand, he feared that the cats might die under his watch.

“I actually didn’t feed them for an entire week,” he says. “And I had to watch them meowing. They kept meowing.”

That’s when Gomes, a colleague who is an administrative assistant in the maintenance department, stepped in.

“I was dealing with outside organizations trying to get them to come in and humanely remove the cats,” Gomes says. “But they said that removing them would be the worst thing. … These cats are probably being managed by a tom cat and if you remove the cats, then all the wild cats from the area will come down and you’ll have a bigger problem than before.”

肯迪爾納是馬薩索義社區學院布魯克頓校區的清潔工，也是AFSCME 1067（理事會93）的成員。最近，他已經離開他的工作，接受治療嚴重的疾病。但在一些日子，尤其是星期天，他只是不能走開。

讓他在馬薩索義大學回心歸意的原因，根據他的同事丹尼斯·戈梅斯說，是一群生活在校園林地的野貓。

幾年前，當他在學校擔任清潔工時，他開始餵養這些野貓。許多人，包括學生在內，甚至都不知道這些貓的存在。真正的肯定他性格內向，迪爾納和野貓們交朋友，這些野貓們只是在晚上出現，而迪爾納用多年來沒有引起騒動的方式來餵養他們。

一個困難的選擇

但是當這群貓們有了小貓時，有人在一個角落報告了一窩小貓，這位母親可能把小貓們帶到這裡來保護他們的安全。

當管理層告訴迪爾納他必須停止餵養這群貓時，他處於一個困難的境地：警告夠嚴重到讓他懷疑他的工會能否介入。另一方面，他擔心這些貓會在沒有他的看著的情況下而死。

“我實際上有一個星期沒有餵貓了，”他說。“而且我得看著他們的啾啾聲。他們不斷地啾啾聲。”

那是當戈梅斯，一位在維護部門的行政助理，幹涉進來。

“我在處理外面的組織想要把貓群趕出去，並人性化地除去貓們，”戈梅斯說。“但是他們說，除去貓群會是最糟糕的事情。……這些貓們可能被一隻公貓管理的，如果你移除這些貓，那麼整個區域的所有野貓都會下來，你將會有比之前更大的問題。”
The possibility of making the situation worse encouraged the administration to seek an alternative. With the help of DiPerna and Gomes, a Free Roaming Cats Committee was set up and a non-profit organization, Bay State Animal Cooperative, Inc., came in to do a presentation.

"They said it wasn’t healthy to keep feeding the cats."
— Ken DiPerna, Local 1067 (Council 93)

In the end, it was decided that the cats would be immunized, spayed and neutered, and released back on campus. A feeding station was set up so they could be fed at regular intervals and monitored. Any new kittens were socialized and then given up for adoption.

An Illness Won’t Stop the Care
DiPerna continued to be the cats’ main caregiver, feeding them every day.

Then came the day when he called to say he was ill. He wouldn’t be able to take care of the cats any more, he said, but he wanted to make sure somebody would. Two people have stepped up to do that in DiPerna’s absence, according to Gomes. Donations of cat food were collected, and there is plenty to keep the animals fed for the foreseeable future.

Asked about his role in saving the cats’ lives, DiPerna says, “I don’t think I deserve a lot of the credit here. I was just a grunt putting the food out. I’m a blue-collar worker that goes to work every day. I take care of business and I go home. I follow the rules. That was just an everyday thing for me.”

Gomes disagrees.

“Ken saw a need and filled it,” she says. “He received no recognition, spent his own time and money, fought for what was right and humane and never gave up.”

Tiffanie Bright contributed to this story.
Blocking a Bad Trade Deal and Fixing Flint

Working people won legislative battles last year with AFSCME’s help.

Victory on Trade

As a result of a strong grassroots effort by labor and other allies, President Obama and Congress were forced to shelve plans to approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade deal involving 12 nations and 40 percent of the world’s economy. The agreement would have exported good jobs overseas, reduced workers’ wages, driven up Medicare and Medicaid costs, and eroded American food safety standards.

During the last two years, AFSCME members and retirees met with members of Congress, wrote letters, made phone calls and participated in demonstrations aimed at blocking the deal. While this was a huge victory, we will need to be prepared to spring into action again, as there is no doubt that corporate backers of TPP will plot to revive the deal.

Aid for Flint Water System

Congress — after months of urging by AFSCME — finally relented and sent emergency aid to Flint, Michigan, to help get rid of the lead toxins in the drinking water system. Lawmakers also reauthorized the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which AFSCME supported. The bill authorized nearly $11.7 billion in new spending for water infrastructure projects and $170 million specifically to help solve Flint’s long-running water crisis.
AFSCME Executive Board Summary Report

This report summarizes the meeting of the International Executive Board held Sept. 14-15, 2016, in Washington, DC.

President Saunders opened the Board meeting with a moment of silence to commemorate the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The Board received a presentation on the use of membership information gathered from the national union and affiliates. The goal of our AFSCME Strong program is to build strength in the workplace by engaging members in one-on-one conversations. This included ways to better identify potential activists, PEOPLE contributors and the non-members and fee payers who are most likely to join AFSCME.

Board members were also updated on the presidential election, key U.S. Senate and governor’s races, and state legislative races, including extensive polling of AFSCME members’ views. In addition, the Board was briefed on TV ads paid for by AFSCME’s independent expenditure campaign.

A discussion followed of joint efforts by the Political Action and Communications departments to improve communications with members, including the use of direct mail, digital advertising around our Never Quit campaign and an online political toolkit. In addition, the Board was briefed on the Communications department’s plan to wholly move AFSCME WORKS to a digital format. This edition of the magazine is the final print issue.

Political Rebate

Article IX, Section 14, of the AFSCME International Constitution includes a rebate procedure for members who object to the expenditure of union funds for partisan political or ideological purposes. The rebate is not available to those who are members under a union shop or similar provision — or to non-members who pay agency shop or similar fees to the union.

The timing of the rebate procedure is tied to the International’s recent fiscal year, which ended December 31, 2016. The procedures, including the requirements for submitting a proper rebate request, were adopted by delegates to the International Convention and are spelled out in Article IX, Section 14, of the International Constitution and summarized below. THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

Eligible members who object to the expenditure of a portion of their dues for partisan political or ideological purposes and want to request a rebate must do so individually in writing. Written requests must be postmarked between April 1 and April 16, 2017, and must be sent via registered or certified mail to BOTH the International Secretary-Treasurer AND the council with which the member’s local is affiliated (or if no council affiliation, to the member’s local union).

The request must contain the following information: the member’s name, Social Security number or member number, home address, e-mail address, if available, and the AFSCME local and council number to which dues were paid during the preceding year. This information must be typed or legibly printed. The individual request must be signed by the member and sent by the individual member to: Laura Reyes, International Secretary-Treasurer, AFSCME, 1625 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-5687, AND to the council with which the member’s local is affiliated (or if no council affiliation, to the member’s local union).

Requests from more than one person may not be sent in the same envelope. Each request must be sent individually. Requests must be submitted in writing each year.

Upon receipt of a valid rebate request, an application for partisan political or ideological rebate will be sent to the objecting member. The objecting member will be required to complete and return the application within 30 days of its issuance. The application will require the objecting member to identify those partisan political or ideological activities to which objection is being made. In determining the amount of the rebate to be paid to any member, the International Union and each subordinate body shall have the option of limiting the rebate to the member’s pro-rata share of the expenses for those activities specifically identified in the application.

Any member who is dissatisfied with the amount of the rebate paid by the International Union or any subordinate body may object by filing a written appeal with the AFSCME Judicial Panel within 15 days after the rebate check has been received. Appeals should be sent to the Judicial Panel Chairperson at the AFSCME International Headquarters at the address listed above. The Judicial Panel will conduct a hearing and issue a written decision on such appeals, subject to an appeal to the full Judicial Panel. If dissatisfied with the Judicial Panel’s ruling, a member can appeal to the next International Convention.
Leaders in Washington want to gut Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security and the Affordable Care Act.

Visit AFSCME.org/NoCuts to join the fight to protect our benefits, our families and our future.

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Join the Fight to Stop the Cuts!
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