We Did It!
A Main Street movement stood up for Ohio workers. Across the country, the struggle continues.

PAGE 12
New Challenges, Renewed Commitment.

By now you’ve probably noticed that AFSCME WORKS has a new look. Like you, we’re tightening our belts and we want to deliver the most cost-effective magazine possible. We’re streamlining the magazine, but still keeping you as up-to-date as ever about the tireless work of AFSCME members and leaders nationwide. We’ve also made it easier for you to jump from the magazine to the wealth of resources available at AFSCME.org with the use of quick response, or “QR,” codes. When you see one of these symbols, just scan it with your smartphone and it will take you right to valuable content on AFSCME’s website. (There’s a little more explanation below.) We think you’ll agree that these upgrades to AFSCME WORKS are an exciting step forward. Drop us a line at works@afscme.org and let us know what you think.

HOW TO USE QR CODES. Those little boxes filled with dots are the Quick Response (QR) codes. We’re making it as easy as possible to visit AFSCME online, especially when you’re on the go. Just search “QR reader” in your phone’s app store and install one on your mobile device (most are free). Scan the codes with that reader wherever you see them and you’ll be taken right to exciting content online. Scan this one and check out all the great photos of AFSCME members on the march in the past year. Are you pictured? Head online to find out.
Taking Back Ohio

If you think you can mess with the working middle class, think again! Ohio’s 99% stood up to corporate talking heads and repealed Senate Bill 5 at the ballot box. Our members tell their story in this powerful video.

AFSCME.org/ohio

Happy 75th Anniversary!

We said no to privatizing Social Security. We rallied for health care for everyone. We stand up for workers and their families. Celebrate the Green Machine’s service to America at our new anniversary site. AFSCME.org/75
In November of 2010, voters elected governors and legislators who campaigned on the issue of jobs. Yet instead of creating jobs, these newly elected politicians launched an unprecedented assault on the basic rights of working Americans. They sought to eliminate public sector collective bargaining, disenfranchise voters, privatize vital services and lay off public employees, all while providing unneeded tax cuts to the wealthy. These efforts were designed to reward their Wall Street-backed campaign donors rather than focus on protecting and creating jobs.

Serving the Working Middle Class
Our union took the lead in fighting for our members’ rights, pay, retirement, health benefits and jobs, and fighting for the entire working middle class. We fostered a Main Street movement in states where anti-worker politicians had gained the upper hand, including Wisconsin, Ohio, Florida and Michigan. We mobilized in Illinois, New York and other states where even Democrats have targeted public employee pay and benefits.

But the tide is turning. Amid the cuts and wage freezes and the anti-worker legislation, we have won some crucial battles. In Ohio, voters resoundingly rejected Gov. John Kasich’s attack on collective bargaining. In Wisconsin, we defeated two anti-worker legislators and eliminated Gov. Scott Walker’s working majority in the state Senate. Walker is now in a dogfight to save his own job after more than 500,000 citizens demanded his recall. And, on Capitol Hill, we blocked two assaults against Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. These victories may be little comfort as you struggle to hold on in the face of ever-tightening budgets and politicians who demonize union workers rather than find real solutions. But mark my words: We have begun to turn the tide.

Committed to the Fight
Many beyond our ranks are as committed to the fight as we are. With coalitions such as We Are Wisconsin and We Are Ohio, we harnessed labor and community power for victory. Our opponents have won some short-term battles, particularly in their attacks on pension rights and collective bargaining, but we proved that we can prevail.

The national and state elections this year will profoundly impact our future. In a Presidential election as significant as this year’s is, we will need to be as active as humanly possible. To that end, AFSCME has endorsed Pres. Barack Obama for re-election and we will mobilize our members, to ensure a better future for our country.

This year, we will continue strengthening alliances to fight cutbacks and privatization schemes cascading down to localities from poor budget decisions above. We will fight together and carry the battle into the November elections. This is our message: Jobs must be the priority, not attacks on workers and the programs citizens rely upon in good times and bad.

“Our opponents have won some short-term battles, but we proved that we can prevail.”

Watch the Video
Scan to see President McEntee discussing his retirement.

Gerald W. McEntee
President
We Are AFSCME, We Are the 99%

For many years, our union has called attention to the growing chasm between the super-rich and everyone else. Delegates to our conventions for at least the past two decades have passed resolutions opposing tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and criticizing the corporate greed and short-term speculation that has sunk our economy.

Now that the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” is as wide and deep as the Grand Canyon, the entire nation is finally aware of something we have known for a long time: Income disparity is growing, and it threatens our country’s future.

The Congressional Budget Office says that the gap widened dramatically between 1979 and 2007. According to the CBO, income for the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans grew by 275 percent during those years. But for Americans at the bottom, income grew by only 18 percent.

**Blind to Real Problems**

Who are these “1 Percenters”? Bailed-out bankers, securities traders, hedge-fund managers and others in the financial sector. They also include half the members of Congress. That could explain why so many of our representatives are blind to the real problems affecting everyday Americans. Many Republicans are more focused on unseating President Obama in November than they are on fixing the economy now.

Your elected Executive Board endorsed the President for re-election because he is the clear choice for the 99% of Americans who have seen their incomes remain flat, or even fall. The choice in this election may come down to a President who knows what it’s like to struggle to pay the rent, or the scion of a wealthy family – Mitt Romney – who suggests that you shouldn’t run for office if you need the salary and have a mortgage.

**The Power of a Movement**

Some people say we’re inciting class warfare when we talk about the dichotomy between the haves and the have-nots. But there’s been a war on working families, unions and the right to organize since Ronald Reagan. The rich can buy lobbyists and lawyers who influence politics. Working families, students, the poor, and the unemployed can’t compete with that on their own. But through AFSCME, other labor unions and progressive coalitions, we are harnessing the power of a movement.

As members of a union that was born from the fight for a just economy, we are sick and tired of a country that only works for the 1 percent. We are calling on Congress to close corporate tax loopholes and end the Bush tax cuts, and we are calling on politicians to invest in the public service workers that are the heart of every community.

This isn’t about left versus right; it’s about right versus wrong. And we will hold all politicians accountable, no matter their party. This is a defining moment for our nation, and AFSCME is the last line of defense for the 99%.

Lee A. Saunders
Secretary-Treasurer

“AFSCME is the last line of defense for the 99%.”
The Riches vs. the Rest of Us

The rich got richer during the last three decades and the very rich got very richer. The rest of us? Not so much. The wealthiest 1 percent of U.S. households saw their inflation-adjusted incomes skyrocket 275 percent from 1979 to 2007, while 90 percent of households grew just 18 percent during that time. That's according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. Similar findings by the Economic Policy Institute confirmed this troubling disparity in income growth.

Unions Boost the Middle Class

A report by the Center for American Progress Action Fund finds that strong unions are “a critical factor in creating a middle class society” and “restoring the strength of unions would go a long way toward rebuilding the middle class.” In 1968, when 28 percent of workers were unionized, the share of income going to the nation’s middle class was 53 percent. In 2010, when union membership was less than 12 percent of all workers, the middle class received just 46 percent of all income. That’s 7 percentage points in the wrong direction.

PRIVATIZATION DOESN’T PAY

Government contractors cost taxpayers more than federal public service workers to do the same work, according to a report by the Project on Government Oversight. Each year, the report notes, the federal government spends approximately $320 billion on contracts, whose workers are often paid “at rates far exceeding the cost of employing federal employees to perform comparable functions.” A look at the billing rates for 35 different categories of contractors doing more than 550 types of jobs revealed that the contractors get 1.83 times more than federal workers in total compensation.

VITAL STATS

6

30%

Source: Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics, University of California at Berkeley

Don’t Blame Unions

It’s the recession and housing bubble that caused state budget deficits, not public service workers or their unions. That’s the definitive finding released in a study by the University of California, Berkeley. Titled “The Wrong Target: Public Sector Unions and State Budget Deficits.” The study demolishes one of the myths that too many corporate-backed politicians and propagandists cling to: that public employees are to blame for the problems facing state governments. The report was based on Bureau of Labor statistics and analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

To read these reports and stats, visit AFSCME.org/fyi
AFSCME Convention 2012

Delegates to Stand in Solidarity This Summer

More than 5,000 AFSCME delegates will convene this summer in Los Angeles to set the union’s course for the next two years at the 40th International Convention. Convention delegates will meet June 18-22 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. AFSCME members will get fired up at the Convention to re-elect Pres. Barack Obama, to hold the pro-worker majority in the U.S. Senate and take back the U.S. House of Representatives. They will also prepare to campaign to ensure labor-friendly majorities in various state legislatures (see P. 16 for more) and in Puerto Rico. AFSCME activists will be in the City of Angels, showing their determination to fight like never before for worker rights.

This is a historic gathering, because for the first time in 30 years, delegates will vote for a new union leader to succeed Pres. Gerald W. McEntee, who has announced he will not seek another term.

The Call to Convention will go out in April, and will include a brief agenda, housing forms and other information on hotels, as well as details about special caucuses and workshops.

FREE CLASSES

Are You Taking Advantage of AFSCME’s Great Resources?

The newly redesigned Online Leadership Academy features both live and self-paced classes for leaders, activists, members and staff that are interactive, fun and educational. To learn more about timely topics or to take an engaging course that will give you the inside scoop, visit: AFSCME.org/academy.

These self-paced OnDemand Classes can be taken at any time, seven days a week, and will take less than one hour to complete. Updated and new self-paced classes include:

- Activate Your Union Membership
- Analyzing Public Budgets
- A Guide to Health Care Reform
- Marketing for Child Care Providers
- Respect in the Workplace
- Safe Jobs Now
- A History of Women in Unions
- Robert’s Rules of Order, and
- Financial Standards Code.

To start learning today, register at: AFSCME.org/academy. If you have questions, please contact AFSCME Education Department at 202-429-1256 or education@afscme.org.
From state to state, workers are joining AFSCME for a stronger voice on the job

WISCONSIN

If corporate-backed politicians like Gov. Scott Walker (R) think they can get away with brazenly eliminating dues check-off rights and collective bargaining, they should think again. Soon after a union-busting law became effective in July 2011 that took away workers’ rights to pay their union dues through their paychecks, all three Wisconsin councils launched a bank draft campaign to re-enroll members using bank accounts or credit cards. Through “mini-blitz” campaigns played out in parking lots, staff lounges and at kitchen tables, members reached out to co-workers across the state – determined to rebuild their union.

The response has been heartening, with nearly 10,000 AFSCME members converting their membership as hundreds of volunteer member organizers fan out across the state. The bank draft campaign has so far yielded a 70 percent response rate at first contact.

Paula Branton is among those who spent her after-work hours signing up members. A certified nursing assistant at the Columbia County Health Care Center in Wyocena, Wis., Branton knew early on what it meant to be unfairly treated in the workplace 30 years ago. “I was being written up for a bunch of petty things that were grossly unfair,” she says. “I have since realized why we need unions. Against management, the deck is always stacked against you.”

The experience inspired Branton, a member of Local 2698 (Council 40), to get more involved in labor-management issues. “As chief steward, I have kept several members from being unjustly laid off. It’s all about union power protecting you.”

And it’s a power that Branton and thousands of workers are determined to fight for, now more than ever. “We need to continue to have a voice at work,” adds Dan Meehan, a corrections officer and president of Local 18 (Council 24). “Otherwise, you’re on your own.”

Ron Hart, president of Local 1654 (Council 48), also sees “the fight to win back our rights as an opportunity to renew and build relationships with our sisters and brothers who are the backbone of our union.”

Workers are also organizing with AFSCME in other states. Here is a list of some recent victories.

ALASKA New Bargaining Unit and Union Chapter
Fifty-four supervisors of the Fairbanks North Star Borough are the newest bargaining unit and union chapter of the Alaska State Employees Association (ASEA)/AFSCME Local 52. They expressed an interest in organizing after the local government denied the supervisors’ anticipated cost-of-living adjustment in mid-2011.

IOWA New Affiliation
Twenty uniformed officers, dispatchers and clerical employees of the Webster City Police Department Employees Association have affiliated with Council 61.

NEW YORK Head Start Teachers Join District Council
Twenty-two Head Start teachers at two Preschool of America centers have voted to join District Council 1707. Their victory comes more than a year after the owners of the day care center fired 13 employees after a previous National Labor Relations Board-supervised election. All of the fired teachers were offered their jobs back, and all but one (who found a job elsewhere) accepted the offer. The assistants work at the West End Avenue Center on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and at a center on the Upper East Side.

OHIO Child Support Enforcement Workers
The Cuyahoga Support Workers Union (CSWU), an independent association that represents approximately 260 child support enforcement workers in Cuyahoga County, voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with Council 8. Twenty-four employees at the City of Pepper Pike – dispatchers and a wall-to-wall unit – also voted to form a union with Council 8.

Learn more about becoming an AFSCME organizer at: AFSCME.org/organize
A damning, in-depth report of the private prison industry, issued by AFSCME last year, got another round of support in a new CNBC report detailing violent conditions inside the privately run Idaho Correctional Center (ICC).

AFSCME’s report, “Making a Killing: How Prison Corporations Are Profiting from Campaign Contributions and Putting Taxpayers at Risk,” detailed some of the worst cases of violence and death in the nation’s privately operated jails. It found these prisons had higher levels of violence and inmate and staff deaths than public facilities.

Reporters for CNBC have since turned their cameras on the private prison model in place in Idaho, claiming the prison was so violent it’s called “gladiator school.” Twenty-four inmates filed a class action suit against the prison’s management. Why? “Because of the assaults,” former corrections counselor Todd Goertzen said in the CNBC report. “If you’re going to ICC, you’re going to fight or die, basically.”

What happened inside the Idaho jail, says CNBC reporter Scott Cohn, “is the story of a dangerous business: the billions of dollars that flow into the American prison industry and the companies that profit from it.”

The shocking revelations did not surprise Allan MacLean. A member of Local 3940 (Oregon Council 75) and its president for two years, MacLean has known all along that for-profit prisons are so poorly administered that they jeopardize officers’ safety, and inmates often end up running the show. He considers himself fortunate to work in a unionized workplace at Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario, Ore. The state-run corrections facility across the border is only 68 miles away from the Idaho prison, but they are vastly different in terms of prison conditions.

The difference is that the ICC is operated by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the nation’s largest prison privateer, which oversees some 75,000 inmates in more than 60 facilities. A unionized state-run facility, on the other hand, is a different situation. Safer inside. More secure to the community outside.

Indeed, “There are many reasons to worry about prison privatization,” said Amy Hanauer, executive director of Policy Matters Ohio. Reacting to a recent study which showed that selling off Ohio prisons might also end up costing the state more, she points out that “Private prisons are less accountable than public facilities and may spend less on safety.”

At Privatized Prisons, the Bottom Line Trumps Safety

Where a culture of violence is rampant, public and staff safety come second to profit

BY JON MELEGRTIO

Culture of Violence

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which filed the class action suit on behalf of the ICC inmates, charged that CCA’s management “promotes and facilitates a culture of rampant violence… the direct result of ICC officials turning a blind eye to the brutality and a reliance on violence as a management tool.” Other inmates who joined the lawsuit also complained that proper medical care was routinely denied in an effort to cover the extent of their injuries. CCA eventually settled the ACLU lawsuit and agreed to make improvements.

“Corrections is a very dangerous job,” notes Marty Hathaway, a 32-year veteran at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center in Coralville and a member of Local 2985 (Iowa Council 61). “But these corporations are not concerned about public safety. They want to cut corners to make a dollar. I work for the citizens of Iowa, not for a private company. Only professionals like me can be relied on to protect the public.”
Amid all the sound and fury, it can often be difficult to separate fact from fiction," says New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, the sole trustee of one of the largest state pension funds in America. He points out that less than one-half of 1 percent of New York retirees receive pensions exceeding $100,000. The average annual New York State pension for state and local government employees is $18,300.

"The vast majority of state pension plans are sustainable for the long term," DiNapoli declares. A study by the National Association of State Retirement Administrators confirms DiNapoli’s assertion: Pension contributions from state and local employers amount to just 2.9 percent of state spending. DiNapoli also defends traditional pensions as a basic tenet of retirement security and blames Wall Street’s collapse for cutting into pension holdings.

Rhode Island recently created a mandatory hybrid plan that reduces the traditional pension benefit, known as a “defined benefit,” and adds a higher risk 401(k)-style defined contribution component. A similar proposal has been suggested in California. Other states considering significant pension cuts this year include Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin.

In his State of the State address in January, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he’s determined to push through a pension overhaul. Although he didn’t provide details, he is expected to propose excluding overtime from final average salary and extending the retirement age for new employees from 62 to 65. Cuomo’s move to limit retirement benefits has angered many public workers, especially those in patient care and service occupations.

Workers in physically demanding jobs may not have the ability to continue working for so long. Moreover, the shorter life expectancy of lower income workers also justifies lower retirement ages.

We serve our communities every day, even under life-threatening conditions like those we faced during Hurricane Irene,” says Harry Van Etten, a highway maintenance worker and a member of Local 968 (New York Council 66). “We often work overtime until the job gets done. For all our hard work, we shouldn’t be robbed of the safe and secure retirement we have rightly earned.”

"Americans need more retirement security, not less,” says AFSCME Pres. Gerald W. McEntee. “Our pension systems have continued to be an irreplaceable source of economic security for middle-class, working families. We have a responsibility to make sure retirees get all the benefits to which they’re entitled.”

Approximately 40 states have already made significant changes that they claim decrease costs and reduce their pension liabilities. Proposals include increasing employee contributions, suspending retiree COLAs, switching new hires to a 401(k)-style investment plan and extending retirement ages.

Reactions to horror stories that paint a dire picture of public pension funds as unaffordable and unsustainable, state legislatures nationwide have embarked on sweeping changes and reforms to public retirement plans.

Politicians are blaming an imaginary herd of retirees making six figure pensions for budget deficits, perpetuating the pension crisis theory.

Workers Deserve Secure Retirement

Working to protect the pension security of workers in the face of recent attacks by politicians, AFSCME members in Rhode Island rally to defend their pensions. Workers in every state need to speak up for the security they have earned.

The Sham Pension Crisis

BY JON MELEGIRITO

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JUDITH ARROYO  AFSCME PEOPLE DONOR
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE
New York City, Local 436 (District Council 37)

How long have you been in the health care field?
I was previously an RN working in the hospitals in the 1980s, but I wanted to help prevent the illness and the visits to the hospital, which can be much more expensive, so I've been a public health nurse for the New York City Department of Health since 1994.

How did you get involved in AFSCME?
In my first job I thought that if I was a licensed RN that they would look at me as a professional and be taken seriously. That it would be enough to talk about the issues and things like getting a raise, but I got a lesson in reality. None of that counts when you're dealing with management. You need the union. And if not for the union, I most likely wouldn't have a pension when I retire.

What do you tell others about how the union makes a difference?
Even in the middle of an economic crisis, we in the union were able to get funding from the city to help nurses pay for their bachelor's degree and then they could qualify for the state civil service exam. That's something people see, and without the union, it wouldn't happen.

Why do you donate to AFSCME PEOPLE?
It's important that you make a contribution so that you can be heard.

RODRIGUEZ LOBBINS  NEXT WAVE MEMBER
SANITATION WORKER
Memphis, Tenn., Local 1733

How did you get involved in the union?
My father was a sanitation worker, as was my grandfather, who was one of the workers Martin Luther King came to Memphis to support in 1968. As a kid, I was walking the picket line with my mother, who was organizing the regional medical center. Years later, AFSCME helped me get my job back. It would be a whole lot different without the union, that's for sure.

What do you consider to be important about the union?
As sanitation workers we deal with all kinds of issues, from work conditions to the safety of the trucks. AFSCME is right there, making sure we have our rights. This union speaks for us. We're not the rich people, we're the common folk, working hard, and we have a voice with AFSCME.

What do you tell other younger workers, to encourage them to join the union?
I tell them we need someone who can speak for us. The struggle is not just about what's going on now, but about the future, about having a good job, and a pension when you leave so that we don't have to work 50 years before we can retire.

To find out how to become a part of AFSCME's Next Wave, for members 35 and younger, head to AFSCME.org/nextwave.
We delivered a clear message to corporate-backed politicians across the country that we will no longer stay silent as Wall Street tries to steal the American Dream,” said AFSCME Pres. Gerald W. McEntee.

In the most heated days of the campaign, AFSCME Sec.-Treas. Lee Saunders traveled the state, rallying volunteers. “This is going to be the vote heard ‘round the world,” Saunders told those packing a union hall in Columbus. “We will send a message to folks who want to attack labor and attack the middle class. We’re going to fight like hell for our country.”

It is important to understand why a coordinated attack spurred citizens to come together in Ohio, because their stories of long days canvassing and missed family suppers – and the success that those sacrifices yielded – must be replicated in other states this year. Far from being chastened by Kasich’s resounding defeat in Ohio, his counterparts persist in targeting workers’ rights. (See “AFSCME Takes Fight Nationwide,” P. 16.)

“We knew we had to succeed,” said John Lyall, president of Ohio Council 8, also an International vice president. “Because if they won in Ohio, they were going to march their agenda across the country. Of course, they’re still going to try that. But we showed that you can be ready for them, and you can win.”

Opponents of the working, middle class are counting on their power. They are counting on their money. What they aren’t counting on is a Main Street movement of workers across the country rising up to stop them on behalf of America’s working families. They can be stopped in every state, with relentless organizing by union members and supporters to get out the vote for progressive candidates. Read more about seven AFSCME members who did just that.

What began one year ago, on the steps of an Ohio Statehouse whose doors were locked by elected officials to their own constituents, ended in November with the stunning repeal of the anti-worker Senate Bill 5. Ohio voters overwhelmingly rejected Gov. John Kasich’s bill in a citizens’ veto, saying no to its elimination of collective bargaining and its direct attack on working middle class families’ livelihoods.

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senate Bill 5 hit zookeeper Matthew De Voe where he lives. Literally. The bill demanded that employees pay even steeper contributions to their health insurance and pensions, posing disastrous implications for families on a fixed income like the De Voes. A sudden loss of take-home pay could have meant an inability to pay his mortgage and other bills.

As Election Day drew closer, De Voe, a member of AFSCME Local 2950 (Council 8), knew the fear that had taken up permanent residence in his home was palpable in rural communities, suburbs and cities across Ohio.

“I’m scared for my family,” he said one night near the end of the campaign, seated at the kitchen table in his family’s modest home in west Columbus. He motioned to his three children playing nearby with the family’s pet Chihuahua. “Every penny is budgeted. If I lose income I could lose my house, my car. The impact is just so incredible.”

And the law would have affected every Ohioan. That’s why De Voe spoke out against it, even though talking publicly about politics was new for the 19-year veteran employee.
Each year, more than 2 million visitors come to his workplace, the world-famous Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and he knows that he and his colleagues keep everyone from the visitors to the animals safe.

On election night, when news broke that Senate Bill 5 had gone down 61 to 39 percent, De Voe exhaled for what felt like the first time in months.

“I am breathing a sigh of relief right now,” he said. “I looked at my kids the other night and had this fear that I wouldn’t be able to provide for them. Tomorrow I can go back to work energized.”

A Vote for Solidarity

JAMES BEVERLY, JR.
Corrections Officer,
Next Wave member

In the final weeks of the campaign, James Beverly, Jr., set off on a 12-stop tour of the state, letting Ohio residents know that the collective bargaining attack facing them had happened earlier in the year to workers in Wisconsin, and that if they didn’t take a stand, it would happen somewhere else next.

“We told them to be strong, that the nation was watching,” said Beverly, a member of AFSCME Chapter 7010 (OCSEA) and a corrections officer in Ashland County. “We talked about Wisconsin and how this was all an obvious attack on the labor movement. It opened up people’s eyes that the middle class was under attack.”

On election night, with the Ohio victory just minutes old, Beverly learned from a fellow union member about AFSCME’s effort in Wisconsin to re-enroll members pushed out of their union memberships by Governor Walker’s anti-worker tactics. So a few weeks later, he went to Wisconsin to help re-enroll them.

“A corrections officer in Ohio is a corrections officer in Wisconsin, Michigan,” Beverly said. “We do the same job and we see the same things. We hear the same lies about our pay and our ‘golden nest eggs.’ My message to our brothers and sisters is that we have to stay together.”

A Vote for Retirement Security

JAMIE FANT
Retiree

The reverend would have to forgive AFSCME retiree Jamie Fant for ducking out of the Turner Road Church of Christ a bit early during campaign season to do some preaching of his own.

Fant was one of the thousands of volunteers who gave up their usual free time routines to knock on doors and call voters to urge them to vote against Senate Bill 5. He took a little good-natured ribbing at the union hall when he collected his neighborhood canvassing packet in a pinstripe suit and tie. It was all worth it though.

“If Kasich had gotten his way, “the pension system as we know it (was) not going to exist,” said Fant, an Ohio/AFSCME Retiree Chapter 1184 leader who served 18 years as a corrections officer, until retiring in 2001. “We as retirees need to protect and preserve the rights of those who come after us.”
A Vote to Inspire the Nation

To make sure we didn’t, Simmons-Talley spent nine months fighting Senate Bill 5, testifying at the Statehouse, knocking on doors, feeding other volunteers at campaign sites and collecting signatures to get the law on the ballot for a citizens’ veto. Simmons-Talley knew the 29,000 women in her union would be unfairly hurt if the law left lawmakers and management calling all the shots.

“The majority of my people are single parents,” said Simmons-Talley of her female colleagues at Columbus Public Schools. “All we want are decent wages, good health insurance and to be able to send our kids to college.”

In the 1960s, the Alabama native marched there with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Testifying at the Ohio Statehouse this winter on behalf of public workers’ rights brought back memories of the civil rights struggle. With one noted exception.

“We’re not getting beat down by the police,” said Simmons-Talley. “This time, the police are with us.”

A Vote for Women

BJ SIMMONS-TALLEY
School Bus Driver

I imagine a time when women gave birth and then went back to work driving school buses two days later. BJ Simmons-Talley doesn’t have to imagine it. She lived it, driving in 1970s Ohio when women risked losing their jobs every time they had a baby and needed to take maternity leave.

“Before collective bargaining, if you went on maternity leave, you came back to having lost your place,” said Simmons-Talley, a member of the Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE/AFSCME Local 4), who has three children of her own. “You’d be scared to go on leave, so you’d damage your body because you wanted to get back. You’d stay out two or three days and then you went back to work. We ain’t going back there.”

A Vote for Secure Employment

ADAM RUTH AND MIKE TENNEY
Corrections Officers

Sometimes the strongest argument against an unfair law that targets unions isn’t a speech at a rally or a campaign pitch on a doorstep. Rather, it’s a call reminding workers how important the union is when their employment is threatened by that law.

That’s the call corrections officer Adam Ruth was making one day in late October as he rang a fellow officer about to be unemployed when her prison privatized. He was offering her a lifeline: an alternate job placement made possible by state law and collective bargaining. But there was a catch: if Senate Bill 5 passed a few days later, that lifeline would disappear.

More than 500 employees at the North Central Correctional Institution would have been unemployed as of Jan. 1 if not for the provision known as an “1814” that offered them placement at another facility in the state. It wasn’t just corrections officers about to be out of work. There were secretaries, mail clerks, store keepers, nurses and prison library assistants.

Ruth and his colleague Mike Tenney, both of Chapter 5188 of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA)/AFSCME Local 11, raced against the clock. They needed to reach the hundreds of fellow union brothers and sisters who were affected and get them into new jobs before Election Day.

Tenney saw the privatization of his prison and the push for the union-busting Senate Bill 5 as inextricably linked. During the nine-month campaign, he talked to anyone who would listen about the importance of taking a stand against politicians and corporations more interested in the bottom
line than public safety and workers.

On his phone call, Ruth walked the corrections officer on the other end through the 1814 process. It’s “a safety net,” he told her, answering a few more of her questions then listening as she talked.

“I’m glad I made your day,” Ruth said finally and hung up, allowing himself a quick smile before moving to the next union colleague’s name on his list. Election Day was only seven days away.

“Hey Susan, this is Adam Ruth calling from OCSEA…”

### A Vote for the Next Generation

**KAREN HOLDRIDGE**

School Bus Driver

School bus driver Karen Holdridge knows that she’s going to retire in a few years. So her decision to spend months knocking on doors, urging people to oppose Senate Bill 5 was about those just starting their work at her compound.

“I want a good environment for the young people I work with,” said Holdridge, an Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE/AFSCME Local 4) Chapter 336 member who has been driving for Columbus Public Schools for 16 years. “Many of them are raising families with young children and I want the best life possible for them.”

But Senate Bill 5 was a direct attack on those Ohio working families, especially the youngest members of them.

Holdridge is a consistent presence for these students, giving them leeway when they’re abiding by the rules of Bus No. 70 and making them her “new best friends” up front when they’re not. “I can see the difference I make with them.”

When it came to canvassing for the campaign, her energy was impressive. Her personal best was visiting 159 houses in one day. She collected seven books of signatures during the drive last summer to get the bill on the November ballot.

Holdridge hadn’t always been so vocal.

“If in years past I was always in the background,” said Holdridge. Seven years ago, with her three children grown, Holdridge decided it was time to get active in the affairs governing her life. “Everyone else had had their say so it was time for me to get involved.”

And on Election Night, it paid off.

“We did it,” Holdridge said. “We made history. I am so proud of our unions. We stood up and said, ‘We are Americans and you can not take our rights away.’”
AFSCME Takes Fight for Workers Nationwide

BY PATRICIA GUADALUPE

Just like last year, AFSCME members are standing up for collective bargaining, health benefits, secure pensions and other workers’ rights to multiple states this year. Wherever those rights are threatened by politicians more concerned about answering to their corporate backers than their constituents, a Main Street movement is rising up and saying, “Enough!”

Here’s a look at some of the key battles looming this year.

Minnesota

Although a government shutdown over the budget last summer left state residents without essential public services and shuttered parks and recreational areas at the height of the tourist season, AFSCME members were able to keep their jobs and collective bargaining rights. Even though Republican lawmakers pushed for a cut of more than 10,000 workers, AFSCME members were able to fight back against those who wanted to throw hard-working Minnesotans out on the street. Now AFSCME sets its sights on the state Legislature. Republicans gained control of the state Senate in 2010 for the first time since 1974, and they hold 37 seats compared to 30 for the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. Republicans also control the state House of Representatives, holding 72 seats compared to 62 for the DFL, which is troubling for workers’ rights.

California

AFSCME members are poised for a heated battle this year as some state and local politicians try to gut the pensions and retirement security of public service workers. In San Jose and San Diego, city officials want to change the city’s charter on pension calculations and have workers who have already taken pay and benefit cuts sacrifice even more. The San Diego ballot measure would also take away pensions for all new employees and move them to less stable 401(k) plans, which will increase costs for working families, provide less security and hurt the city’s ability to attract and retain employees. Gov. Jerry Brown is pushing similar “reform” measures that target the retirement of middle-class Californians.

AFSCME is also prepared to fight for the right of the 99% to have their voices heard, pushing back against a paycheck deception initiative designed to keep unions from using dues from automatic payroll deductions for political contributions. The initiative unfairly targets working, middle-class, union members.

To get the latest on more states’ battles, head to afscme.org/blog

Colorado

AFSCME is focusing attention on the state Legislature, particularly the House of Representatives led by Republican Speaker Frank McNulty, a former congressional aide who sits on the board of Coloradans for Employee Freedom. That’s an anti-union group that supports so-called right-to-work laws. AFSCME members are working to ensure that the Legislature returns to labor-friendly hands. Anti-worker legislators hold a one-vote majority in the Statehouse.
Wisconsin

AFSCME used the momentum built last spring during the massive protests against Gov. Scott Walker and his anti-union law eliminating collective bargaining to help collect an unprecedented 1 million signatures to place a recall vote against him on the state ballot. AFSCME was founded in Madison, and Wisconsin became in 1959 the first state in the nation to provide collective bargaining rights to public employees, so AFSCME members have no intention of standing by while the state’s right-wing, corporate-backed governor and legislators target workers’ rights.

AFSCME volunteers and other activists fanned out across the state, using a number of innovative strategies, to collect the recall signatures including “drive-thru” locations where supporters can sign the petition without getting out in the cold. Polls show most Wisconsinites favor a recall of Governor Walker, and a vote could occur this spring or summer.

New York

AFSCME members expect a fight with Gov. Andrew Cuomo over changes to the pension system for public sector workers. Last year he passed a property tax cap that led to numerous layoffs at the county and local level. In his State of the State address, the governor proposed a new plan raising the retirement age and prohibiting new employees from counting overtime pay in the last few years of employment toward their pension. Employees would have to wait two years longer to be vested in the plan. Cuomo demanded state agencies cut their 2012-2013 budgets by nearly 3 percent, which means more layoffs and a grave impact on the state’s already cashstrapped cities and counties. Cuomo’s austere budget plans are backed by the pro-business Committee to Save New York, which raised more than $10 million to battle unions over changes to salaries, pensions and benefits.

Michigan

AFSCME is prepared to fight a law giving state-appointed “emergency managers” the power to unilaterally modify or end public workers’ collective bargaining agreements. That bill was pushed through by Gov. Rick Snyder, who late last year, authorized a state takeover of the City of Flint. It became the fifth city in Michigan taken over under the emergency management law. In Detroit, Mayor Dave Bing is asking for concessions from city workers to close a budget gap, saying that the city is next for takeover if things don’t change. He wants a 10 percent wage cut and a 10 percent hike in employee health insurance payments. Hundreds of AFSCME members collected signatures for a statewide referendum campaign to repeal the “emergency manager” measure.

Florida

Gov. Rick Scott has seen his approval ratings take a dive after he implemented an anti-worker budget that eliminated 15,000 public sector jobs and made substantial cuts to education and public services, while at the same time cutting corporate taxes. But thanks to the hard work of AFSCME members and allies in the Sunshine State, the governor’s plan to convert the state pension system into one similar to a 401(k) was blocked, as were efforts to privatize state mental health facilities, 16 prisons and the Department of Juvenile Justice. In the state’s lower House, legislators could take up more anti-union proposals, including a plan backed by the conservative Foundation for Florida’s Future (chaired by former Gov. Jeb Bush) to eliminate collective bargaining for school employees.

Indiana

AFSCME members and supporters are fighting plans by Gov. Mitch Daniels and his allies in the state Legislature to make Indiana the first state in years to pass “right-to-work-for-less” legislation. AFSCME members rallied and made Governor Daniels reverse a decision to limit the number of visitors to the Statehouse, a restriction critics said was done to try to silence critics of the anti-worker bill.

Daniels has made right-to-work-for-less a centerpiece of his legislative agenda this year, but pro-worker legislators and even the NFL Players Association have stepped in to try and stop it.
AFSCME’s International Executive Board in December unanimously endorsed Barack Obama for a second term as President, citing his achievements on passing a law providing affordable health care for all, his determination to put Americans back to work and improve the economy, and his staunch support for collective bargaining rights.

The board acted after tens of thousands of AFSCME members indicated in a telephone poll that they wanted the union to endorse the President. AFSCME Pres. Gerald W. McEntee vowed to mobilize tens of thousands of AFSCME activists to get out the vote for President Obama in November. “President Obama is the only choice for the 99%,” McEntee said.

Addressing a Detroit, Mich., audience last fall, President Obama declared his support for workers’ rights: “As long as I’m in the White House, I’m going to stand up for collective bargaining.” He has done so repeatedly. For instance, he signed several executive orders to protect the rights of workers, including reversing a Bush administration decision limiting union representation on federally funded contracts, and reversing another Bush order allowing contractors to be reimbursed for the costs of blocking organizing drives.

Also in January, Obama thwarted an anti-union plan to put the National Labor Relations Board out of business by filibustering every nominee for vacant seats on the board. He filled the seats by a recess appointment of two Democrats and one Republican.

In his inaugural address in 2009, President Obama vowed to act, “not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth” through road construction and other infrastructure improvements. A month later, he pushed for Congress to approve the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which was responsible for the creation of at least 2 million jobs nationwide in the first year alone.

“By re-electing President Obama, AFSCME members are standing up to those who demonize public workers and denigrate the services that they provide. They are opposing those who would take away their collective bargaining rights,” said AFSCME Sec.-Treas. Lee Saunders.

President Obama also fulfilled another inaugural promise when he signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law in March 2010. The law benefits millions of Americans by lowering the cost of prescription drugs for seniors, providing insurance coverage despite patients’ pre-existing conditions, and other benefits.

President Obama also is fighting for...
Corrections officer Kyle Spencer credits his time in the U.S. Marine Corps for the conservative political views he held as a young man, and for his vote to elect George W. Bush president. But once the employee of the Henry C. Hill Correctional Center in Galesburg, Ill., began to work for the state and became involved with his union, he worried more about which candidate would support workers, more than party loyalty.

Spencer, a member of Local 1274 (Council 31) said he kept hearing about politicians giving tax breaks to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans while Main Street working families suffered economically. He watched as jobs from a local Maytag assembly plant were outsourced to Mexico and other countries.

“People were struggling to find jobs, pay rent, housing values were declining,” he said. “Nobody’s living the American Dream but the top 1 percent. So you start to look at it all and say, ‘Hold on!’”

Spencer is calling on his fellow AFSCME members to support Pres. Barack Obama’s re-election campaign, to protect the interests of the 99% of Americans who are still struggling. And it’s why he’s also urging them to support the union’s political, grassroots lobbying and fundraising program, AFSCME PEOPLE.

“The PEOPLE program is one of the biggest tools that we have to counteract the big business people who are outsourcing good American jobs, Spencer said. “We’re never going to be able to compete with the big companies monetarily, but we can compete by getting people politically involved.”

During the last Presidential election, Spencer voted for Obama. Today, he maintains his support for the President and urges patience with critics who expected overnight financial recovery in a country struggling with the price tag of Bush-era wars and tax cuts for the rich. “He’s doing better than people give him credit for,” said Spencer, noting the constant refusal by conservative lawmakers in Congress to support Obama’s economic and job recovery proposals.

AFSCME members can support President Obama and other federal candidates through the PEOPLE program.

Red? Blue? It doesn’t matter to this AFSCME PEOPLE donor.

Why Kyle Spencer wants to re-elect President Obama and gives money to do just that.

By Clyde Weiss

his American Jobs Act, which conservative lawmakers have so far blocked. The bill provided an infusion of funding to protect public sector jobs, to extend unemployment benefits, and to modernize public schools, community colleges and other infrastructure projects. To learn more about President Obama’s plans to create jobs, go to: whitehouse.gov/economy/jobs.

for each member’s needs. It’s as easy as going to AFSCME.org and clicking on the MyAFSCME tab at the top of the page. Enter the member ID printed on your membership card and you can set up an account and take control of your own data and communications with AFSCME leadership.
As the Republican primary season unfolds it’s clear that the big losers in the contests occurring nationwide are working families. Leading GOP candidates have demonstrated that they will work to undermine workers’ rights, retirement security, and affordable health care and reverse Pres. Barack Obama’s successful efforts to jump-start the economy.

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

“This year’s GOP field is the fraternity of the 1 percent,” said AFSCME Pres. Gerald W. McEntee. “Once voters get a good look at the candidates it becomes crystal clear that they are desperately out of touch with the real world concerns of America’s working families. How else can you explain Mitt ‘corporations are people too’ Romney’s $10,000 bet, or Newt’s shopping sprees at Tiffany?”

Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, has vowed to overturn the historic health care reform law that President Obama signed in 2010, despite the fact that it was modeled on Romney’s own health care plan for his state. He also wants to convert Medicaid into a federal block grant administered by states – a suggestion that would exacerbate state budget woes by reducing funding for states. And, he proposes to raise the retirement age to receive full Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Romney’s anti-labor positions also offer a chilling prospect for America’s working families. He supported Ohio’s anti-worker law, Senate Bill 5, which would have deprived public service workers of their right to have a voice on the job through collective bargaining. He even went to Ohio and visited a pro-Senate Bill 5 phonebank. By an overwhelming margin, voters last November sided with workers and repealed the law.

Romney also backed Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker’s campaign last year to deprive public service workers of their collective bargaining rights. His political action committee donated $5,000 to that effort.

Give to the Rich, Take from the Poor

Or take Rick Santorum, the former U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, who said he “would actually support a bill that says that we should not have public employee unions for the purposes of wages and benefits to be negotiated.” Moreover, he wants to cut $5 trillion in federal investment within five years and cut the corporate tax in half, a plan that will put even more people out of work and devastate America’s fragile economic recovery. He also supports passage of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution that would be an economic disaster, favors repeal of Obama’s health care reform law, and wants to roll back Dodd-Frank consumer protections intended to prevent another Wall Street meltdown.

“The GOP candidates do not have a single proposal that will help middle-class Americans struggling to get ahead,” adds President McEntee. “We need to create jobs, not tax cuts for millionaires. Americans are looking for leaders like Barack Obama who will pull this nation together to solve the jobs crisis.”

Top to bottom: ROMNEY, SANTORUM, GINGRICH
AFSCME: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

BY JON MELEGRITO AND TIFFANIE BRIGHT

From October 2011 to October 2012, AFSCME is celebrating its 75th Anniversary. All year long, AFSCME WORKS pays tribute to the union's history with special features about the key moments in our past. In this issue, we look at the union’s role in fighting for equal pay for women, organizing workers to gain collective bargaining rights and winning a voice at work for child care providers.

Demanding Pay Equity

It was 1981. A study initiated by the City of San Jose, Calif., showed that women were grossly underpaid, as men earned $6 an hour more for the same work. When the city refused to address the obvious disparity, members of Local 101 went on strike to win pay equity. The nine-day strike was the first time workers there had walked off the job to demand equal pay. And they won. As a result, members received a contract that included $1.5 million dedicated to wage increases for jobs held by women.

Two years later, AFSCME's landmark lawsuit against Washington state resulted in the largest pay equity court settlement to date. It provided more than $480 million in pay equity adjustments to 35,000 employees. This ended AFSCME Council 28’s decade-long struggle to get the state to end pay disparities revealed by the state’s own job evaluation studies.

In 1991, AFSCME won a $7.5 million settlement, bringing wage increases and back pay for predominantly female and minority police communication technicians in the City of New York. And in 2001, AFSCME settled the first class-action lawsuit under the Congressional Accountability Act, winning $1.5 million in back pay for 300 women employed or formerly employed by the Architect of the Capitol.

AFSCME continues to be on the frontlines in the fight to end wage discrimination. Throughout the years, thousands of other AFSCME members have benefited from more than half a billion dollars in pay equity adjustments, resulting from negotiations at the bargaining table, agreements by state and local legislatures, and through political action.
Organizing for Power

AFSCME continued to grow throughout the 1960s and 1970s, adding 1,000 new members a week to its rolls. In 1969, a young Pennsylvania organizer, Gerald W. McEntee, led a successful effort to secure passage of a collective bargaining law. Pennsylvania’s public employees at the time worked under the patronage system – they were hired and fired at the whim of politicians. The law’s enactment spurred a large-scale organizing campaign that earned AFSCME more than 75,000 new members. With the creation of Pennsylvania Council 13, AFSCME won comprehensive statewide public employee contracts that guaranteed members full health coverage and other benefits.

The photo above shows jubilant AFSCME organizers celebrating their victory after winning a runoff election for 20,000 employees of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot). McEntee (in striped tie, right of center), who was a staffer at Philadelphia’s AFSCME Council 33 a few years earlier, was then an International union area director. In 1975, he organized the largest public employee strike in U.S. history when more than 70,000 state employees walked off their jobs demanding wage increases. The state settled by the third day of the strike, paving the way for a successful three-year contract.

Winning a Voice

For many years, home-based child care providers were largely unorganized, geographically dispersed and, despite their significant numbers, often lacked a voice in government decisions that affected them. They could not form a union and meet collectively with state officials to negotiate improvements to their reimbursement rates or to the services that they provided. Today, they have that right.

At AFSCME’s 1974 International Convention, delegates adopted a resolution supporting comprehensive child care. Delegates also resolved to promote the best possible care for America’s children by bargaining for child care provisions in contracts and by winning decent wages and benefits. For more than half a century, AFSCME has been organizing child care workers, representing approximately 150,000 family child care providers in California, Iowa, Kansas, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Pennsylvania. AFSCME is now the leading union in the field of child care.
ACROSS AMERICA

PUERTO RICO

Members Negotiate Solid Three-Year Contracts

Following a momentous win regaining collective bargaining rights for the thousands of AFSCME members represented by the Servidores Públicos Unidos (SPU) of Puerto Rico, three units successfully negotiated three-year agreements with the government.

Puerto Rico workers were stripped of their collective bargaining rights before similar attacks throughout the U.S. Council 95 and the national union fought back last year and regained those rights.

Council 95 has been actively negotiating new contracts with the state agencies. “The passage of these agreements marks a significant win for the workers of Puerto Rico, but should also serve as an example that when you fight you win,” said Annette González Pérez, president of Council 95.

In recent months, worker’s rehabilitation administration unit employees, who are members of Local 3251, approved a three-year contract providing for wage increases, bonuses and modest increases in employer health care contributions. Local 3584, representing the parole board, unanimously ratified the three-year agreement including bonuses and wage increases. Local 2099, representing the Institute of Forensic Sciences, ratified another three-year agreement that offered similar benefits to the parole board agreement.

“We remain positive but vigilant in our fight to pursue justice for all members of SPU – workers deserve no less,” González Pérez said.

ERIE COUNTY NEW YORK

Working Together to Beat Anti-Worker Incumbent

For the first time in 12 years, a worker-friendly candidate won election to the county executive’s seat in Erie County, N.Y., last fall.

AFSCME members from Council 35, Council 66 and Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000 came together to defeat Erie County Executive Chris Collins – who had a long history of opposing workers – and replaced him with county Comptroller Mark Poloncarz.

The national union ran an independent expenditure campaign, including radio and TV ads and canvassing to the general public, under the AFSCME for Erie County banner.

Many labor organizations worked together to support Poloncarz in addition to the AFSCME affiliates. The victory was especially sweet for Council 66 and CSEA, as both represent county employees.

AFSCME members, including retirees from Council 35 and CSEA, helped get out the vote by canvassing and phonebanking, and knocking on thousands of doors in the final days of the campaign.

Sean Lauck, a rodent control investigator and a member of the executive board of Local 1095 (Council 66) in Erie County was excited to campaign and spur voter turnout.

“I hadn’t volunteered on campaigns in 10 years, but I put my time in for Poloncarz because I felt he was the best candidate,” Lauck said. “It comes naturally with the work that I do with the health department, to knock on doors and talk to people.”

At a food drive this winter, Pueblo, Colo., workers, members of Local 1335, collected for needy families and rallied for Congress to create jobs. “People in our community are suffering,” says local Pres. Josette Jaramillo. “We are telling our congressman that the best way to help folks is to create jobs.”
PHOTO: LARRY DORMAN

AFSCME Members Give Generously to the Fallen Heroes Fund

“Please direct the enclosed check to one of the neediest members,” wrote Vera June Kluge in a handwritten letter to AFSCME Pres. Gerald W. McEntee, as she sent in a check for the AFSCME Fallen Heroes Fund. The 93-year-old Retiree Chapter 31 member from Edwardsville, Ill., was about to move to a nursing home, but she took the time to send $100 for the fund, which assists members who are victims of storms, wildfires, floods and other disasters. Through this fund, we have been able to help relieve their suffering and get their lives back on track.

In October, the union distributed contributions from this fund to members in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont who were victims of Hurricane Irene. As a result of the hurricane, more than 2,000 members received assistance to help recover.

Please contribute to the fund online at AFSCME.org/fund.

Or, send a check made payable to “AFSCME Fallen Heroes Fund,” to AFSCME Fallen Heroes Fund, c/o AFSCME, 1625 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5687. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible.

AFSCME.org 25
OREGON, NEW YORK

AFSCME Mourns Four Tragic Deaths

OREGON

Buddy Ray Herron, 42, a corrections officer at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution and a member of Local 3361 (Council 75), was killed in November while trying to help an apparent stranded motorist. While driving to work shortly before midnight, he stopped to help Charles Weeks of Portland, 22, a drifter with a long criminal history. Weeks allegedly stabbed the father of four and stole his pickup truck. Herron managed to call 911 but died later at the hospital. More than 700 mourners attended his memorial service, including corrections officers, fire and law enforcement officers, paramedics and public safety workers from throughout the Northwest.

Stanley James McCall, 63, an equipment operator with the Umatilla County Road Department and a member of Local 1393 (Council 75), died in December while working with a grader spreading gravel on a road along a railroad track. An oncoming train hit the grader and the grader subsequently hit McCall. He was killed instantly.

NEW YORK

Robert DelVecchio Jr., 35, a highway worker for the town of Mamaroneck, was killed in November after he was struck by a recycling truck at the town’s sanitation and recycling center. Results of a Public Employee Safety and Health review of the incident are pending.

John Lattimore, 62, a state bridge maintenance worker, was killed in October during an inspection of the Glen Bridge at the Warrensburg/Thurman town line. Lattimore was a state Department of Transportation employee and member of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000. Results of a Public Employee Safety and Health review of the incident are pending.

PHOENIX ARIZONA

Score Another Defeat for Union-Busting Efforts

Like their sisters and brothers in Ohio and Wisconsin who are battling corporate-backed politicians, Arizona workers are just as relentless in standing up to union busters. Last year, Local 2960, Local 3282 and Local 2384 stopped measures that would have privatized vital services in Peoria and Phoenix. Also last year, Local 3111 spurred an aggressive campaign blocking yet another brazen attempt to silence public workers’ voices. And they won. A federal court judge ruled that Arizona’s paycheck deception law is unconstitutional. The judge also directed the Arizona Attorney General not to enforce it. “This law is just one of several anti-worker bills passed last year by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Jan Brewer,” says Sheri Van Horsen, president of AFSCME Local 3111. “They are modeled after legislation written by the conservative national group, American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which promotes union-busting measures and corporate tax breaks in state legislatures across the country. Arizonans need to know just who their politicians are working for.”

Paycheck deception laws ban payroll deductions for political purposes from state and other public workers, while exempting other organizations that use payroll deduction. They have popped up in numerous state legislatures last year as part of a concerted attack on the rights of public service workers.

In his ruling, District Court Judge G. Murray determined the law was unconstitutional because it imposed burdens solely on unions collecting dues. By exempting other organizations, the government was attempting to suppress the political speech of those whose views may be unfavorable to them.
CONCORD
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Anti-Union Bill Defeated by Labor Coalition

A well-coordinated, aggressive campaign by AFSCME, the AFL-CIO and dozens of other unions and organizations led to the defeat of so-called right-to-work legislation designed to undermine union strength in the Granite State.

The labor coalition kept a constant vigil for six months, educating lawmakers and the public that the bill’s proponents’ real purpose was to break the power of workers. The measure would have prohibited collective bargaining contracts that require workers who are not members of a union to pay union dues or fair share fees for the representation they enjoy.

Supporters, including the corporate-funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), falsely claimed that some workers are forced to pay union dues. Currently, unions may charge non-member workers a reasonable ‘fair share’ fee, as they fully benefit from the wage increases and improved benefits and working conditions secured through union negotiations.

The state Legislature approved the measure, but Gov. John Lynch vetoed it. His veto was upheld in November.

“This is a great victory for New Hampshire’s middle class,” said Bobby Jones, vice-president of Local 3657 (Council 93). Jones was one of the many AFSCME members who kept watch at the Statehouse.

Council 93 Exec. Dir. Anthony Caso, also an AFSCME International vice president, lauded the work of the coordinated labor campaign. “Given the deceptive and well-financed message of right-to-work supporters, AFSCME members and the entire labor community did a phenomenal job,” he said.

Employees of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans – members of Local 261 (Michigan Council 25) – demonstrated against a scheme to privatize their facility.

GRAND RAPIDS MICHIGAN

Judge Blocks Privatization of Veterans Home, Preserves Quality Care

A judge’s ruling last fall blocking the privatization of a Michigan veterans’ home did far more than save the jobs of 170 employees. The decision preserves a higher quality of care for more than 650 residents who depend on those workers every day, said Mark Williams, president of Local 261 (Council 25).

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield declared in October that the home’s residents would suffer “irreparable injury” if the privatization plan took effect.

“This issue has always been about the quality of the care we provide,” says Williams, a resident certified nurse aide who has worked at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans for 17 years. “We do the work better than anyone. We are sometimes the only family these veterans have.”

That family would have been broken up had the state prevailed in its effort to turn the facility over to a private contractor that currently provides some of the nursing aides.

Local 261, representing the home’s nursing aides, battled the privatization scheme before the state Civil Service Commission. The lawsuit resulted from the commission’s failure to act.

Tony Spallone, a Vietnam veteran who lives at the home and is the lead plaintiff, alleged that the private contractor’s employees were responsible for improper care at the facility. He said the state workers provide better care.

Williams contends the state was more worried about money than about the quality of care. “You can’t just farm out that work to the cheapest bidder,” he says. “You get what you pay for. The veterans who live at the home deserve quality care, and it finally took a court ruling to make sure they get it.”
The overwhelming defeat in November of Senate Bill 5 – preserving collective bargaining for Ohio’s public service workers – is credited with encouraging the state to reach a quick contract agreement with the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA)/AFSCME Local 11.

Before OCSEA negotiators sat down with state officials to work out an agreement for a new three-year contract, Gov. John Kasich said he would force the union to swallow S.B. 5-type provisions in the contract if voters supported the measure. But when voters rejected it by 61 to 39 percent, Kasich retreated. The state extended the current contract for three years. OCSEA members later approved the deal.

The new contract retains all current provisions, but does not include furlough days that were part of the earlier agreement, nor a freeze on personal leave and step increases.

“Our members wanted us to retain those benefits we currently have and we did that,” said OCSEA Sec.-Treas. Kathy Stewart. “This agreement continues the 15 percent employee premium share of health care, maintaining step increases and an education benefit.”

OCSEA Pres. Christopher Mabe added, “Our negotiating team understood the difficult economic recovery this state continues to face and made the decision to forgo any wage increases.”

“The citizens of Ohio voted overwhelmingly to give us back our seat at the table,” said OCSEA Vice Pres. Kelvin Jones. “This agreement proves that collective bargaining works and that frontline state employees want to move forward in a way that benefits us all.”

Taylor Rogers, a leader in the historic 1968 strike to win recognition for 1,300 African-American sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn. and who later became president of Local 1733, passed away Nov. 12. He was 85.

Their 64-day struggle, marked by their iconic protest signs that simply said, “I Am a Man,” ignited a movement that uniquely merged the labor, civil rights and religious communities. Today it inspires a Main Street movement of citizens across the country joining together to fight for workers’ rights wherever they are threatened.

“We will always remember Taylor for his role in waking up a nation to the evils of economic injustice and racial discrimination,” said AFSCME Pres. Gerald W. McEntee.

Describing himself as “just another guy” with eight children to support and a mortgage to pay, Rogers and his co-workers tried to organize, but were rebuffed by the city. They decided to strike after two co-workers were killed in a trash compactor. “We had no union, no vacation, no benefits, no pension, no overtime,” he said in an interview 14 years ago. “We had to be united to get where we wanted to go. The union helped us do that.”

During their strike, Rogers and his fellow workers were beaten, gassed and jailed, as was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was killed in Memphis while supporting the strike. But the workers won their collective bargaining rights and recognition of their union. Last year, the 1,300 strikers were officially inducted into the U.S. Department of Labor’s Labor Hall of Fame – the first time a group of workers has been included for taking collective action.

After he retired, Rogers continued to advocate for workers’ rights, and helped workers in Richmond, Ind., organize and successfully form Local 1791 in 2000. Later, he also established a unit for AFSCME retirees, which he served as president.
AFSCME MEMBER MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Corrections Officer Saves Colleague’s Life

The assault inside the Somers, Conn., Northern Correctional Institution happened more than two years ago but Corrections Officer Michael Whitehead still remembers vividly the incident that almost cost his fellow officer’s life. During a routine shakedown at the state’s maximum security prison, an inmate violently attacked Peter Kuhlmann, slashing his neck with a handmade weapon. Whitehead, a member of Local 391 (Council 4), quickly jumped in, held down the inmate and prevented what could have been a fatal injury to Kuhlmann.

“Until that night, I had never encountered a life-threatening situation like this,” recalls Whitehead, who had been on the job for only two months. “But I expected a certain level of stress and danger when I chose law enforcement as a career. We always have to be on guard.”

To Whitehead, 29, mental preparation and the skillful use of force are very important.

“When stuff happens, it happens in the blink of an eye. All that training kicks in as you’re reacting and figuring out what to do.”

Before the near-fatal attack, Whitehead and Kuhlmann had never met or spoken to each other. “He was brand new to an incredibly dangerous job,” Kuhlmann points out. “But he stuck it out there for the fight like a warrior. I thank Michael for saving my life.”

For his courage and heroic action, Whitehead was honored with the Connecticut Department of Corrections’ Medal of Valor. He was also given a standing ovation by his comrades at last year’s AFSCME Public Safety Congress.

AFSCME MEMBER MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Corrections Officer Saves Colleague’s Life

U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis applauded female AFSCME members gathered in Milwaukee, Wis., in September for the union’s National Women’s Conference and she issued them a challenge: Get organized and get active for American workers.

“We know you have a track record of getting things done,” Solis said, urging members to send messages to their members of Congress via e-mail, Twitter and Facebook, calling for job-creating legislation.

It was that grassroots activism that was the focus of this year’s conference. Speakers energized AFSCME women for this year’s legislative battles in Congress and in states where right-wing, corporate-backed politicians are targeting collective bargaining and hard-earned public employee benefits.

It’s a fight that AFSCME women take very personally, and they make up 55 percent of the union’s 1.6 million members.

“When AFSCME is attacked, working women are attacked,” Pres. Gerald W. McEntee said, calling out Republican governors in Florida, Indiana, New Jersey, Ohio and beyond. “We will not relent until the right of all public workers to collectively bargain is restored.”

Attendees also met their union sisters from across the country, sharing experiences and developing leadership skills. Panel discussions included “Women’s Voices from the Frontlines,” and “Courage, Cash & Coalitions: Three Keys to Political Power,” and regional roundtables and workshops included “Strategic Tools for Women Activists” and “The

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AFSCME Women Get Organized

AFSCME Women’s Conference attendees rally in support of collective bargaining in downtown Milwaukee, Wis.

Attack on Retirement Security.” Check out inspiring videos and photos from the Women’s Conference at AFSCME.org/women2011
Pres. Gerald McEntee reported that 2011 was a year of enormous challenge. “We fought the anti-worker, anti-union forces that put a bulls-eye on public services and we emerged victorious in the court of public opinion and at the ballot box,” he said.

That included defeating Ohio Gov. John Kasich’s union-busting Senate Bill 5 legislation in a November referendum. The IEB noted the need to build upon the work done in Ohio and Wisconsin to fight back against extremist governors leading the attacks on public employees and working families.

“We know the battles will continue in 2012, but we are confident that, united, we can prevail,” McEntee said.

Noting that this year’s U.S. Presidential election will be crucial to fighting for public service workers’ jobs, benefits and the services they provide, the IEB voted unanimously to endorse Pres. Barack Obama for a second term. (See P. 18 for more on the endorsement).

McEntee formally informed the board that he would not be a candidate for president at the AFSCME International Convention in June. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve as a member for 54 years and as president for three decades. To prepare for the election of new union leadership at the convention, McEntee appointed a committee comprised of International Vice Presidents Sherryl Gordon, Salvatore Luciano and Joseph Rugola. The committee, unanimously supported by the board, will review all issues relating to the 2012 officer elections and report back to the board.

The IEB unanimously passed the union’s 2012 budget, funding AFSCME’s efforts to do the following:

- Fight for American jobs
- Protect and expand the right to unionize
- Defeat privatization efforts
- Sustain and broaden member activism
- Turn around the public dialogue about government
- Block attacks on retirement security (including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and pensions)
- Build a Main Street movement by engaging families, friends and neighbors to join with us to preserve the middle class and the American Dream
- Win the 2012 elections

AFSCME Executive Board Summary Report

This report summarizes the December 2011 quarterly meeting of the AFSCME International Executive Board, held in Washington, DC.

Notice of Legislative District Review – Central District

The International Executive Board, at its Dec. 6, 2011, meeting, received a report showing the number of members within each of AFSCME’s 25 Legislative Districts that are established for the purpose of electing International Vice Presidents. The report showed that the combined membership of all local unions in the Central District (composed of local unions in the states of Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee) had fallen below 1 percent of the total membership of the Federation. In accordance with Article IV, Sections 29-30 of the International Constitution, a committee, chaired by International Vice President Eddie L. Parks, was appointed to undertake a review and develop a plan for addressing the situation.

ARTICLE IX, SECTION 14 OF THE AFSCME INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTION

POLITICAL REBATE PROCEDURE

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. 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, 2012, 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: Lee A. Saunders, 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.

If dissatisfied with the Judicial Panel’s ruling, a member can appeal to the next International Convention.
We talked with the host of MSNBC’s The Ed Show about the big win in Ohio, fighting for the 99% and being unapologetically pro-worker.

You are an outspoken critic of politicians who attack the working middle class. You’ve broadcast live from Wisconsin and Ohio to highlight the fight for workers. What made you decide to take on the plight of the 99%?
The economy and its effect on working-class Americans. They’re under attack from right-wing extremists who want to take rights away from workers, who want to reduce their benefits and send jobs elsewhere. We all know public sector workers had nothing to do with the economic downturn.

Do you think the 2011 protests in Wisconsin and last year’s stunning defeat of Senate Bill 5 in Ohio will have an impact this year in the voting booth?
There is no doubt in my mind that it will have a significant impact. I believe there will be a record turnout in the elections this year. Those attacks on working-class Americans have woken people up to fight for their rights, and it has rejuvenated voters. They are motivated to go to the polls. This is going to be a crucial election for wage earners.

How about the labor movement? Will the win in Ohio help galvanize union members?
Yes, definitely. Wage earners get it. They see Ohio and Wisconsin, and that dreadful financial emergency law in Michigan. They see cuts to education and other programs and services. They see what is happening to their standard of living. There is a real undercurrent of attacks on workers in this country. They understand the obstruction; they understand the radical agenda of Republican governors in Ohio, Wisconsin, in Michigan, and in other states, and they’re fighting back and not taking it anymore.

You didn’t always consider yourself a progressive. How did your politics evolve to what they are currently?
In the mid-1990s this country started to change. I saw what was happening to wage earners, deregulation, the concentration of wealth in a small number of hands; it was a direct attack on working-class Americans. I didn’t like it.

How is your show helping highlight the issues of working-class Americans, particularly labor union members?
We’re undoubtedly staying focused on the plight of the workers, on outsourcing, privatization, the loss of collective bargaining rights, cuts to wages, on the attacks on workers, and working on solutions that will help the working-class in this country.

— PATRICIA GUADALUPE

The Ed Show airs on MSNBC at 8 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday.

TOP PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ED SHOW; BOTTOM: JOE WEIDNER

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AFSCME Honors Dr. King with Fight for Jobs, Justice

Thousands came to the National Mall this past fall to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy with a new memorial. They pledged to continue his life’s work toward justice for workers.

Before the official unveiling, thousands of AFSCME members and other unionists, civil rights activists, and members of faith organizations participated in a Jobs and Justice rally.

Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968 while supporting 1,300 striking sanitation workers represented by Local 1733. “He understood the connection between workers’ rights and civil rights,” AFSCME Sec.-Treas. Lee Saunders said at the nationally televised dedication ceremony. “Those striking sanitation workers weren’t simply fighting for better pay and safer working conditions. They were asserting a claim on our democracy.”