

AFSCME LOCAL 448



June/July Newsletter

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2024

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July 1 Changes

Just a little reminder that effective July 1, 2024 all bargaining unit employees will receive a 4.0% wage increase. There will also be minor increases in health insurance premiums and co-pays.

Former DCFS Investigator Found Guilty of Child Endangerment.

As many of you are probably aware, on 6-6-24, Carlos Acosta, a former DCFS investigator and AFSCME member was found guilty of child endangerment and received a 6-month jail sentence.

While at the time of the incident Carlos was not a member of our Local, this could happen to anyone. Those of you who know Carlos, know he was a dedicated and caring co-worker who had joined in the Union's decades long fight to reduce caseloads and improve working conditions so that the agency's mission to protect children and strengthen families can succeed wherever possible.

A DCFS workers job is difficult under the best of circumstances. But in Illinois, the difficulty of their work is further compounded by the tremendous burden of unmanageable caseloads. It is critical that the State acknowledge this burden and work to make sure that they have the support and resources needed.

That means hiring and retaining more staff so that their workload allows them to respond to each challenge with the necessary presence, care and attention. Our sisters and brothers on the DCFS Standing Committee, as well as the Council 31 Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Task Force which includes DCFS members, will continue to press for the changes needed to meet that standard.

We want to remind you of the resources available to each AFSCME member. You can contact the Personal Support Program (PSP) website, or call 1-800-647-8776 or TTY 1-800-526-0844 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, to schedule day, evening or, in some locations, weekend appointments.

Help Is Just A

Call Away!

We wanted to take a moment to remind you that if you are experiencing excessive stress, depression or anxiety, help is available through the AFSCME Personal Support Program. It's now even easier to access the help you need as PSP services are available via Telehealth.

You can call 1-800-647-8776 for assistance.





Membership meetings are held at least quarterly and always on the 1st Thursday of the month.

Food will be served beginning at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting beginning promptly at 6:30 p.m.

**Next
Membership
Meeting
9-5-24**

In person.
Location to be determined so watch for updates in the August newsletter.



**Board
Meeting**

Unless otherwise noted, Executive board meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month. Any member who wishes to address the Board regarding a particular issue may do so by submitting a request in writing to an Officer. The request must state the reason you wish to address the Board. You will be notified of your agenda time to address the board.

8-1-24

ZOOM



**UPDATE
CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please advise Local President Alice Sutherland at presidentafscmelocal448@gmail.com or complete the Contact Us form at

www.afscme448.org if you are planning on moving, have moved, need to update your email address or cell phone number with the new information. We want you to remain informed of any union related issues. It's important as we continue to receive many newsletters back each month due to incorrect addresses.

**Don't forget to check
out our website at
www.afscme448.org
and follow us on**



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Contract Books

We should be getting the contract books any day now. Once they are received we will work on getting them out to everyone. Until then CMS has the new contract, including the pay tables, posted on their website. You can use the link below too access it.

<https://cms.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/cms/personnel/employeeresources/documents/AFSCME%20Master%20Contract%202023-2027.pdf>

We are now up to Article IX. in our review of the changes that were made. The text in red is the new language in each section.

Section 9. Electronic Monitoring

Information obtained by the Employer as the result of electronic monitoring via video will not be relied on by the Employer as the sole basis either for initiating or supporting employee discipline. The Employer reserves the right to initiate an investigation based upon information obtained as the result of electronic monitoring only when independent, substantiating evidence has been obtained.

The positioning of electronic monitoring equipment shall be done with the intention of providing a safe and secure work environment and not for the primary purpose of engaging in employee surveillance.

So what does that mean?

In a nutshell, it means that where there is electronic monitoring taking place, the employer can use that information to VERIFY something that has been brought too their attention. They cannot use it to try and catch employees breaking the rules.

ARTICLE X Vacations

Section 5. Vacation Schedules

Subject to Section 6 and the Employer's operating needs, vacations shall be scheduled as requested by the employee in writing. The Employer shall respond to vacation requests within five (5) work days. Where current practice provides for a quicker response, such practice shall continue. Once scheduled vacation is approved it will only be canceled if the Employer's operating needs require that employee's services. The necessity of an overtime assignment shall not be a consideration in the cancellation of approved vacation.

Cont. on page 3



Don't miss your chance to win a \$25.00 gift card by submitting the correct answer to **presidentafscmelocal448@gmail.com**. Winners will be selected by random drawing from all correct answers received by 7-15-24.

Which union leader organized California farmworkers?



To our May winner Melissa Dix. Melissa knew the purpose of Memorial Day is to remember all of our military service members who have lost their lives in service of our country.



OR



Want to stay up to date via email or text?? If so, make sure we have your home email address and personal cell phone number. Currently we only have this information for about one half of our members.

You can send your information to Alice Sutherland at **presidentafscmelocal448@gmail.com** and we will get you added to the email and text list.

Just so you are aware, even if you request to receive your newsletter via email you will still also receive it in the mail.

This is because for meeting notices, nomination meeting or election meeting, we are required to notify all members in writing to their last known address at least 15 days before those events.

Contract updates cont.

Employees selected for promotion shall not have scheduled vacation time cancelled solely due to the promotion.

In any event, upon request, vacation time must be scheduled so that it may be taken no later than twenty-four (24) months after the expiration of the calendar year in which such vacation time was earned. If an employee does not request and take accrued vacation within such twenty-four (24) month period, vacation earned during such calendar year shall be lost. Except that the period of time an employee is on an approved leave of absence pursuant to Article XXIII, Leaves of Absence, shall not count toward the twenty-four-month period.

So what does that mean? Previously, when someone was promoted after a vacation request had been approved, they were often not allowed to take those vacations. They had to re-request the time off from their new supervisor and many times that request was denied because the unit was already at their limit on those allowed off. Or the person is less senior than someone who was denied their 1st choice. With this language change, that is no longer the case. If your time off was approved it cannot be canceled just because you are now in a different position.

Local Constitution Changes

The 2nd reading of proposed changes to the local 448 constitution will be done at the in-person membership meeting on September 5, 2024. These changes will be voted on at this meeting as well.

Convention Attendees

A big thank you to all that came out to the June membership meeting in Freeport and congratulations to those that were elected to represent our local at this year's AFSCME International Convention.

Our delegates are as follows:

Alice Sutherland, Robin Aebly, Laurie Scudder, Tom Soresie and Tina Wren.

Alternates are as follows:

Tanya Burns, Marie Reck, Taquisha Santos Tague and Ayesha Horton.

Guest are as follows: Dawn Chavez, Rocio Alfaro, Cynthia Jimenez, Cynthia Witt and Aaron Sockwell.

We have a week packed full of speakers and workshops scheduled for us along with conducting the business of the International Union for the next two years and the election our international leadership. Check out the August newsletter for highlights!



Recipe of the month

No Bake Turtle Mini Cheesecakes

Ingredients:

- 1 cup ground graham crackers
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 5 tbsp melted butter
- 8 oz softened cream cheese
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- Caramel sauce (store-bought or homemade)
- 6 oz chopped semi-sweet chocolate
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- Chopped pecans and mini chocolate chips for garnish



Directions:

1. Mix graham cracker crumbs and butter, press into cups, and chill.
2. Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, and vanilla until smooth.
3. Gradually mix in heavy cream until thick. Fill cups with the mixture and refrigerate.

For topping:

Melt chocolate, mix with heavy cream, and layer over chilled cheesecakes.
Add caramel, then chocolate ganache, and garnish with pecans and chocolate chips.
Keep refrigerated until serving.

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