

## March Newsletter

# AFSCME LOCAL 448

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March 2021

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 Marie Reck: Revenue-209-5405  
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 Robin Aebly: DCFS-908-9664  
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**Trustees**

Tina Wren: DCFS-590-9350  
 Jeff Bergstrom: DHS-908-2969  
 Greg Duffy: DCFS-994-0502

**People Chair**

Laurie Scudder: Revenue-987-7509

Chris Hooser: Staff Representative-815-968-0447

**Meeting Dates**

<b>ZOOM MEETING</b> Contact Alice for link to Zoom meeting	<b>March 4, 2021</b>
<b>ZOOM MEETING</b> Contact Alice for link to Zoom meeting	<b>June 3, 2021</b>
<b>All Membership meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.</b>	

**SUPREME COURT DENIES JANUS**

The U.S. Supreme Court announced on Jan. 25 that it won't hear a bloc of cases that sought to financially kneecap unions for obeying the law.

The plaintiffs in these cases, one of whom was Mark Janus, were attempting to recoup fair share fees collected from non-members prior to the Supreme Court's ban on such fees in its 2018's

Noting that labor unions had collected such fees for decades consistent with a 1970's Supreme Court ruling (*Abood*) finding them to be constitutional, lower courts have uniformly rejected Janus and company's attempt at legal extortion.

"A federal appeals court explained in one of these cases, 'the Rule of Law requires that parties abide by, and be able to rely on, what the law is.' not what the law may become in the future,"

"The Janus II case [the second case brought by Mark Janus], and the several related cases that the Supreme Court announced it would not hear on January 25, 2021, all involved agency fees that public-sector unions collected prior to the decision in Janus I. Thus, when the unions collected these fees, *Abood* was still good law, and the unions were acting entirely lawfully," Vox reported.

Public-sector unions "had a legal right to receive and spend fair-share fees collected from nonmembers as long as it complied with state law and the *Abood* line of cases," according to the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

**ONLINE WORKSHOP "CARE IN TIMES OF CRISIS"**

AFSCME members are on the front lines of the current COVID-19 public health crisis. Some members have indicated that they are having difficulty coping with the complex and unprecedented challenges we now face—especially when they may also be coping with challenges on the home front. The result is higher levels of stress and anxiety. Sometimes it's hard to give ourselves space to care for ourselves or consider strategies to help weather this difficult period. To provide additional support, Council 31 is hosting an online workshop, "Care in Times of Crisis." This workshop is intended to help members overcome stress and build well-being. The workshop will provide strategies and tools to care for ourselves and strategies for dealing with stressed co-workers during this difficult time.

**The workshop will be held Thursday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in attending, register today:** <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/care-in-times-of-crisis-2/>.

## UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING MARCH 4TH

Don't forget, we will be having a virtual membership meeting on Thursday March 4, 2021. Contact Alice Sutherland at [PresidentAFSCMElocal448@gmail.com](mailto:PresidentAFSCMElocal448@gmail.com) to reserve your spot.

### **AFSCME'S FREE BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM IS HERE TO STAY**

There is good news for AFSCME members looking to pursue higher education. AFSCME Free College has made its bachelor's degree completion program a permanent benefit. That means that AFSCME members and their families can earn a bachelor's degree for free, making an even wider choice of career options a possibility for more people.

Central State University (CSU) in Ohio is now offering five degree completion options in partnership with AFSCME: business administration, early childhood education, education intervention specialist, criminal justice and interdisciplinary studies/humanities (for people who have earned previous college credit in a variety of subject areas).

In order to begin the bachelor's degree program at CSU, students need to have earned an associate degree or 60 credits with a 2.2 GPA. Almost 1,400 people have taken advantage of this free, flexible opportunity through the bachelor's degree completion program.

Just like the free associate degree through AFSCME Free College, the bachelor's degree program is conducted exclusively online, making it tailor-made for those who work full time.

For AFSCME members and their families who have not yet earned an associate degree or do not have 60 credits in hand, AFSCME's Free College through Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC) is a great pathway to earn your free bachelor's degree. You may begin your studies at EGCC then transfer to CSU.

More than 20,000 people have taken advantage of the associate degree option, pursuing education in areas ranging from social work to accounting to criminal justice and more.

Students who pursue EGCC's business management degree program may now earn a specialized certificate in a wide variety of disciplines, like finance, hospitality, cyber security, health care management and more. Certificates are awarded after successful completion of four specialized courses in the subject area. This helps students to demonstrate transferable skills and knowledge of an in-demand area of study to current and future employers.

Remember: AFSCME Free College is open not only to union members, but retirees and family members of union members, including children, spouses, siblings and others.

AFSCME Free College is just one of many ways AFSCME members experience the union difference.

### **PERSONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM**

Throughout this coronavirus crisis, members are feeling isolated working at home, unable to see their colleagues and families. AFSCME's PSP program can help. You can call 1-800-647-8776 Monday through Friday 8:30 to 4:30.

PSP can meet with an office that is dealing with a crisis such as a death of an employee. Call today if you need help.

## **PRITZKER'S BUDGET PLAN PROVIDES PATH FORWARD**

Governor Pritzker's budget plan for the 2022 fiscal year provides Illinois with a path forward. While we will need to review all the details in greater depth before taking a position on this plan, it appears to maintain vital services, continues to battle the coronavirus pandemic and meets the state's pension obligations. In addition, we're pleased to note that the governor has rejected the calls from some quarters to place an unfair burden on state employees in addressing the state's fiscal challenges.

Illinois faces steep budgetary challenges for two reasons: the defeat of the Fair Tax constitutional amendment—which would have allowed higher tax rates for the wealthy—and the devastation of the COVID pandemic that has battered every state.

To overcome these challenges, everyone must do their part.

For big corporations, the time for tax loopholes is over. We strongly support Governor Pritzker's call to end these unfair special deals. Profitable corporations should not get tax giveaways when so many working people have lost their jobs and are struggling to pay their bills.

For Congress, significant COVID relief to states is long overdue. Approve the American Rescue Plan that President Biden has put forward.

For Illinois legislators, consider additional revenue measures. Ideas already employed by neighboring states can help stabilize our state's finances.

For our union, AFSCME members in the public service will continue to serve their communities as they have throughout the pandemic, despite the risk to themselves and their families. We stand ready to work with the governor's office to find efficiencies and innovative approaches that can save money in state operations.

Finally, for Republican leaders who worked to defeat the Fair Tax, it's time to accept responsibility. The depth of the budget shortfall stems from their crusade to defeat the Fair Tax amendment, yet for months they have offered nothing but empty criticism combined with periodic calls to cut the pay of state workers. Now they oppose ending loopholes for big business, without putting forward a single, sensible alternative to help close the state's budget gap.

## **SALTED CARAMEL CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES**

3 cups of flour

1 teaspoon of baking soda

1 teaspoon coarse salt

1 3/4 cups brown sugar

1 cup of unsalted butter, softened

1/4 cup white sugar

2 eggs

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 cups chocolate chips

### **RECIPE CONTINUED**

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees
- Whisk flour, baking soda, and salt together in a bowl
- Beat brown sugar, butter, and white sugar together in a bowl using an electric mixer until creamy. Beat eggs, 1 at a time, into butter mixture until blended; beat in vanilla extract. Stir flour mixture into butter mixture until dough is just combined; fold in chocolate chips.
- Divide dough into thirty six 2 tablespoon-size balls; arrange on a baking sheet. Press 3 caramel pieces into each dough ball.
- Bake in the preheated oven until edges are golden brown, 13-15 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool.

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