



Ramsey County workers Margaret Berger, Sara Nott and Dawn Flores of Local 151 share a high five after they tally ballots. Members approved their contracts by a wide margin.

Ramsey County Workers Approve Contracts

Five locals in Ramsey County turned out in strong numbers to overwhelmingly approve their new contracts Dec. 6.

The five locals – who bargain together – ratified a total of nine contracts including: Local 8 general unit, professional unit and public health; Local 151 general unit, LPNs and Workforce Solutions; Local 707, Lake Owasso Residence; Local 1076, Ramsey County Care Center; and Local 1935 parks and recreation. The contracts cover 2,180 workers.

The three-year contracts include annual 2.5 percent raises; paid parental leave; increased tuition reimbursement; and largely hold the line on health care costs. <http://afscmemn.org/story/ramsey-county-locals-approve-strong-contracts>.

Locals Ratify Contracts

Local 3857 (Rosemount) ratified a contract with raises of 2.75 percent in 2018 and 2.75 percent in 2019; and an increased employer

contribution to their VEBA or HSA of \$55 a year.

Locals 306 and 693 (Dakota County) ratified three-year contracts with raises of 2.5 percent a year; an additional floating holiday; language protecting workers against volunteers taking their jobs; and an increased evening differential.

Local 66 (Western Lake Superior Sanitary District) approved a three-year contract with annual raises of 2.25 percent; and added language on new employee orientation, vacation donation and more holidays listed in standby.

Republican Tax Giveaways Turn Surplus into Deficit

With the new forecast showing that Minnesota is facing a \$188 million deficit for 2018-19, AFSCME calls on the Legislature to help working people earn a good living and live a good life.

“The Republican majorities put Minnesota in the red by putting big corporations and the wealthy few ahead of everyone else,” says John Westmoreland, executive director

Honor the Best of 2017

It’s been an action-packed year for AFSCME Council 5. Locals across Minnesota made news, held lawmakers accountable, built union spirit and pushed to create better working conditions for themselves and their communities.

What’s the most meaningful or exciting thing your local did this year? This is your chance to celebrate your 2017 accomplishments with members across the state.

Please share a photo on AFSCME Council 5’s Facebook page. If you don’t have a photo, shoot a short video about what you did and share that.

Just go to [Facebook.com/afscmemn5](https://www.facebook.com/afscmemn5) and post your photo or video in the comments section on the top post.

We’ll pick a winner at random to take home an AFSCME swag bag packed with exciting stuff!

of AFSCME Council 5. “They insisted there wasn’t enough to invest in our health care, our children and tax breaks for the middle class. They denied medical care to the most vulnerable, but gave away millions to big tobacco, giant corporations and the estates of multi-millionaires.

“Republicans left work last session with a big mess and no budget, after taking a 45 percent pay raise for themselves. We call them back to approve a cost-of-living raise for hardworking state employees and to pass a responsible budget that protects Minnesotans from economic downturns and federal cuts.”

Ms. Smith Goes to Washington

AFSCME strongly supports Gov. Dayton's appointment of Lt. Gov. Tina Smith for U.S. Senate.

Smith will replace Al Franken, serving until a special election in November, when she plans to run for the remaining two years of Franken's term.

"There is no one more qualified or capable than Tina Smith to represent all Minnesotans in the United States Senate," says Judy Wahlberg, president of AFSCME Council 5. "Tina is a proven champion for women and working families. She has worked tirelessly for paid parental leave and pay equity. Thanks to Tina, parents can bond with their newborns and women are treated as equals in state service. We need her voice in Washington."

Smith says she'll be a fierce advocate for "economic opportunity and fairness for all Minnesotans."

Republicans are reportedly recruiting former GOP Gov. Tim Pawlenty to challenge Smith. <http://afscmemn.org/story/ms-smith-goes-washington>

Minnesota Best-Run State

Here's some proof that progressive policies work for everyone.

A new 24/7 Wall Street report published by USA TODAY just named Minnesota the "#1 Best-Run State in America."

The study cites Minnesota's low

poverty rates, well-funded pensions, above-average median incomes, strong tax base and Rainy Day Fund, and excellent credit rating. Unemployment is at a 17-year low.

State Starts Diabetes Pilot

The state has officially announced its new program to improve care for workers and their families with diabetes. The program will lower the cost of services, diabetic supplies and prescriptions. Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/yxcmeyk2>.

Helping During the Holidays

AFSCME members who give back to their communities every day with the important work they do decided to give back even more through holiday campaigns, too.

Metropolitan Council workers – including AFSCME Local 668 members – raised more than \$88,000 for Community Shares of Minnesota, Community Health Charities, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Minnesota Environmental Fund, Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless, and The UNCF.

Members from several unions including AFSCME donated \$6,052 to the annual Labor of Love program, which helps Catholic Charities, Sponsor a Family MN, the Jewish Community Center and the Saint Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's emergency fund. The \$1,720 raised for the emergency fund helped 13 families and eight single members with food

for the holidays, including AFSCME members.

Unions United at MSU - Mankato, which includes AFSCME Local 638, collected more than \$3,200 and 50 pounds of food, with more still coming in. Their donations will help ECHO Food Shelf.

At its annual steward training, Local 4001 collected more than \$500 in cash and gift cards, plus several toys for Family Promise in Anoka County, which provides shelter for homeless families.

Shop Union for Gifts

Still have some shopping to do? It's easy to support our union brothers and sisters while buying gifts for loved ones. Check out the list of union-made presents at <https://aflcio.org/UnionHolidayGifts>.

Show Union Solidarity

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota members at Mayo in Albert Lea have been working without a contract for more than two years. Members held a one-day ULP strike Dec. 19 at the Mayo Clinic Health System in Albert Lea, and now Mayo is locking them out over Christmas. Show your support and solidarity at <https://www.facebook.com/seiuhcmn/>.

Get in on the Action

Action Update comes out twice a month for locals and activists. Download a copy at www.afscmemn.org. Share news by emailing Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org.

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place/details
AFSCME Family Scholarship	Postmark deadline, Dec. 31	https://www.afscme.org/members/scholarships/afscme-family-scholarship
Enrollment Open for AFSCME Free College	Classes start Jan. 16	https://freecollege.afscme.org/