



Local 66 paraprofessionals from ISD 709 huddle before a recent Duluth School Board meeting, where they told the board about the important work paras do and their commitment to it. Fifteen paras came out, showing their growing strength as a unit.

Republican Tax Giveaways Turn Surplus into Deficit

With today's forecast showing 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. 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.

Locals Ratify Contracts

Local 3558 (Viewcrest Health Center) approved a three-year contract with a 5 percent raise the first year and 3 percent in the second and third years; a 35-cent increase in the shift differential; new member orientation language; labor management committees; improved language for grievances and attendance-related discipline; and no takebacks on continuing education or insurance benefits.

Local 517 (Washington County Community Development Agency) approved a three-year contract with raises of 2.2 percent, 2.3 percent and 2.4 percent respectively. It holds the employee share of health care costs to just 0.9 percent in 2018; and offers a \$0 dental premium for employees and \$116 a month for family coverage.

We Can Still Stop the Tax Bill!

The GOP tax bill is one step closer to reality: The U.S. Senate just passed its version, which will raise taxes on 87 million working families and rob our nation of resources needed for quality public services.

To pay for massive new tax breaks for big corporations and the super rich, the Senate GOP would:

- Slash Medicare by \$400 billion over a decade.
- Cut the individual health care mandate, which would cause insurance premiums to rise, leaving 13 million Americans uninsured.
- Take away deductions for state and local income taxes and sales tax, which would increase federal taxes owed for many Minnesotans.
- Add \$1.4 trillion to the deficit.

Keep an eye peeled: Republicans are already using the deficit, *which they are making worse*, as an excuse to go after Medicare and Social Security next.

There is time to fight: The Senate and House still must hammer out the differences in their bills, which would then go to Pres. Trump.

Sign a petition at <https://www.afscme.org/now/stop-the-money-grabbing-disaster-of-a-tax-bill>.

Local 450 (Dakota County Community Corrections) ratified a three-year contract with an annual 2.5 percent raise; an added floating holiday; language protecting workers against volunteers taking jobs; and a 10-cent increase in the evening differential.

Welcome MPRB Members

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Professional Unit voted unanimously to transfer representation to AFSCME. These workers manage recreational centers and programs in areas ranging from youth violence prevention and community engagement to environmental education and athletics. Welcome to our new Local 3729!

Paras Push for Respect

Local 66 paraprofessionals in ISD 709 have been building new strength that will make them powerful going into negotiations (see photo on page 1).

Before school board elections, they met with AFSCME-endorsed candidates, who demonstrated their investment in the struggles facing paras and their eagerness to work with paras to improve conditions. Paras helped the candidates sweep the election.

That series of meetings helped create a new culture within the bargaining unit: Paras implemented a communications structure built around new contact people at worksites; they're talking with each other; and they're turning out to represent their needs.

Free College Enrollment Open

The free two-year associate degree program for AFSCME members, their families and retirees now includes an expanded list of majors. Classes start **Jan. 16**. Get details and apply at <https://freecollege.afscme.org/> or call 1-888-590-9009.



Photo courtesy of Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council

Retirees Protest Tax Bill

More than 60 people who are part of the Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council protested the tax bill outside Rep. Erik Paulsen's district office Nov. 15. Republican Paulsen voted for the tax bill; no Democrats did.

"A lot of us would see a tax increase," says Lucille Olson, a member of AFSCME Retirees United who helped deliver a letter to Paulsen's staff. "It would be cruel and heartless to take out deductions for health costs and student loans and to pay for it by cutting Medicare that retirees count on, Medicaid that poor people count on, to fund massive tax breaks for the very wealthy and large corporations."

Olson says retirees walked away invigorated.

"It's important we took action and rattled some cages, to let people who support this bill know they will be held accountable, especially lawmakers like Paulsen who try to avoid facing the public at all costs," she says. "Seniors have the power

and capability to engage politically and to make a difference."

Seide Honored by Congressman

Eliot Seide, who recently retired as executive director of Council 5, was honored by U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison for his years of service.

Ellison read a tribute to Seide into the Congressional Record, which said in part: "The state of Minnesota will long remember the work of Mr. Eliot Seide as a leader of not only Council 5, but for all Minnesotans around issues of fair taxes, decent wages, responsible investments in transportation, clean water, a strong education system, and healthy families. He believes deeply that we all do better when we all do better. I thank Mr. Seide for his many years of service to Minnesotans."

Get in on the Action

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

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place/details
Enrollment Open for AFSCME Free College	Classes start Jan. 16	freecollege.afscme.org