



Day on the Hill Fills Capitol

More than 1,000 AFSCME Council 5 members from across Minnesota turned the state Capitol green Tuesday, March 20, for Day on the Hill.

Chanting “Whose Freedom? Our Freedom!” workers stood up for their freedom to form strong unions and to speak up for themselves, their families and their communities. Members visited their own senators and representatives to help shape a legislative agenda that respects hardworking Minnesotans.

Big corporations and wealthy extremists want to strip away decades of union progress.

“They’re here, and they’re going to take our freedom,” said Council 5 executive director John P. Westmoreland. “If you stay home, it’s done. If you don’t vote to protect your rights and freedoms, it’s done. If you don’t stand up, you’ve just desecrated everything

everybody else died to earn and protect.”

Download photos at flic.kr/s/aHsmghazME. Watch the video at tinyurl.com/yd6c3bfr.

State contracts approved

The Minnesota Legislature overwhelmingly approved contracts for state public workers Monday. The contracts are headed to Gov. Dayton for his signature.

Workers in the AFSCME multi-unit, Unit 8 (corrections) and Unit 25 (radio communication operators) will get a 2 percent raise retroactive to July 1, 2017; and 2.25 percent on July 1, 2018; plus steps.

The contracts not only hold the line on health insurance costs for workers, they improve health and dental benefits; include a pilot program for people with diabetes; and offer six weeks of paid parental leave.

FIX TRANSPORTATION NOW!

If we want to grow our economy and ensure all Minnesota families have the freedom to prosper, we must invest in our deteriorating infrastructure. Half of our roads and bridges are in poor condition, with dangerous potholes.

While Minnesota’s infrastructure has aged and crumbled, MnDOT has 500 fewer designers, inspectors and maintenance workers than it did a decade ago. This shrinking workforce makes it impossible to keep up.

We know that having adequate staffing would make our roads and bridges safer. It would save millions of taxpayer dollars by increasing efficiency and lowering costs. Outsourcing costs more, and it creates an accountability problem: Who wants the fox guarding the henhouse?

Text MOVE to 237263 to be connected to your state legislators, or call your senator at **1-877-201-9067** and your representative at **1-888-907-2053**.

ASK YOUR LEGISLATORS TO:

- Budget for investment in our infrastructure and the workers who maintain, design and inspect it. There is no federal funding for plowing snow, patching potholes or inspecting bridges.
- Dedicate new revenue for a 10-year plan to fix crumbling roads and bridges, expand access to transit, and create safer bike and pedestrian routes in communities across the state.

Pension Bill Passes Senate

The Minnesota House is the only thing standing in the way of a historic pension bill that would keep public pensions well-funded and strong for decades to come.

Gov. Dayton included the funding in his budget, and the Senate voted 66-0 Monday to pass the omnibus pension bill.

The House has not scheduled a hearing yet, and GOP House Speaker Kurt Daudt told the Associated Press they likely will wait to address pensions until they've figured out how to divide the budget surplus.

The pension bill would fully fund our state pension plans within 30 years and immediately cut unfunded pension liability by \$3.4 billion.

AFSCME members are willing to sacrifice together to ensure public workers get the secure retirements we've earned. But it's only fair (and effective) if that sacrifice is shared by workers, retirees and the employer.

Local Approves Contract

Local 2032 (Ecumen Scenic Shores) ratified a two-year agreement with a 35-cent increase and a wage reopener; and added language to help with holiday call-ins, for doctor appointments and to restrict when workers can be made to work overtime after picking up an open shift.



HCMC Workers Protest for Fair Contract

About 300 AFSCME Council 5 members picketed a new HCMC clinic Saturday, March 17, pushing management to offer a fair contract and a safe workplace.

After spending more than \$220 million on the new Hennepin Healthcare Clinic & Specialty Center, HCMC management is proposing to cut the benefits and wages of its lowest-paid staff. CEO Jon Pryor wants to replace Local 977 and Local 2474's dental plan with a lesser company plan and cut performance raises by half. The tiny across-the-board raises he's offering wouldn't keep up with the cost of living.

"They don't treat us workers with the dignity and respect we deserve," says Local 977 president Carmen Brown. "They want to keep taking and profiting from us and not giving back."

"This brand new, fancy building is not going to be built on our backs,"

says Local 2474 president Sara Franck. "This is not going to be our raise. We deserve a fair contract and a fair wage. We make this building happen."

<http://afscmemn.org/story/hcmc-workers-protest-fair-contract-safe-workplace>

Appleton Prison Back Again

GOP Rep. Tim Miller has presented another bill to buy and reopen the long-shuttered Prairie Correctional Facility. He wants the state to sell \$139 million in bonds to buy and renovate the prison, \$57.5 million shy of what's needed.

Instead of spending all that money on an aging, shuttered prison, AFSCME members are pushing for strategic investment in our correctional system and for sentencing reform. <http://afscmemn.org/story/reopening-appleton-legislative-agenda-yet-again>

Free Garden Show Admission

Public workers get in free to the Minneapolis Home + Garden Show on **Friday, April 6**. Just bring your government ID to the box office. www.HomeandGardenShow.com

Get in on the Action

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

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place/details
Corrections Lobby Day	April 18	State Capitol
SEPC Annual Conference	April 27	DoubleTree Bloomington hotel
AFSCME Council 5 Scholarships	May 11 deadline	http://afscmemn.org/scholarships