



MndOT workers from AFSCME Locals 106 and 868 gathered in Rochester on Workers Memorial Day with staff, building trades members and Olmsted County employees. The chairs draped with yellow vests honor six District 6 employees who have been killed in the line of duty. MndOT has lost 34 employees and 15 contractors on our highways across the state.

Health Coverage at Risk

With a vote of 217-213, the U.S. House has passed the American Health Care Act, which would strip millions of Americans of health care coverage, raise costs for millions more, gut Medicaid, and deny access to preventive and life-saving care at Planned Parenthood health centers. Insurance companies could charge whatever they want for preexisting conditions.

The bill now moves to the Senate. Should the AHCA become law, the effect at the state level will be nightmarish. Massive cuts to Medicaid will blow billion-dollar holes through state budgets, forcing many states to raise taxes or drastically cut funding for education, transportation and essential infrastructure repairs.

“The plan passed by Republicans in Congress only lowers costs for the wealthiest Americans at the expense of everyone else,” Lt. Gov. Tina Smith says. Pres. Trump’s plan

puts health care at risk for millions of Minnesotans with preexisting conditions or who rely on state programs for insurance; raises costs for people with coverage through their jobs; and rolls back consumer protections, Smith says.

Reps. Jason Lewis, Erik Paulsen and Tom Emmer voted for the Republican plan. No Democrats did.

State Parental Leave Update

The state has been offering paid parental leave to workers under a Memorandum of Understanding negotiated last year. But bills in the House and Senate to extend this benefit have not passed yet.

If they don’t pass by the last day of the session, [the benefit will expire May 31](#). If you currently are on paid parental leave or plan to be, the state is encouraging you to stay in contact with Human Resources about the plan’s status. If you can’t afford to take leave without the benefit and must return to work early, let your supervisor know.

PROTECT YOUR PENSION!

The Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement just posted a [draft pension bill](#) that’s harmful to public workers in the MSRS and PERA plans. The bill:

- Includes a 1% Cost of Living Adjustment for five years and then 1.5%. (The Governor and MSRS Board propose 1.5%.)
- Increases the employer contribution rates .75% from 5.5 to 6.25% over two years and the employee contribution to 6% over two years. (The Governor and MSRS Board propose a 2.25% phased-in increase from the employer.)
- Negatively changes the augmentation rates.

Please attend the hearing tonight, May 9, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 123, State Capitol. Call Commission members and tell them to oppose the LCPR proposal and to support the Governor’s proposal.

Senate: Chair Julie Rosen, (651-296-5713)
Sandy Pappas (651-296-1802)
Gary Dahms (651-296-8138)
Dan Schoen (651-296-8060)
John Jasinski (651-296-0284)
Warren Limmer (651-296-2159)
David Senjem (651-296-3903)

House: Vice Chair Tim O’Driscoll, (651-296-7808)
Tony Albright (651-296-5185)
Sarah Anderson (651-296-5511)
Roz Peterson (651-296-5387)
Bob Vogel (651-296-7065)
Mary Murphy (651-296-2676)
Paul Thissen (651-296-5375).

Local Wins Wage Increase

Local 517: In response to a compensation and class study, Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority entered into bargaining mid-contract, which resulted in market adjusted wage increases for most members. Those raises are retroactive to Jan. 1.

Locals Train Stewards

AFSCME Locals 56 and 390 offered steward training to more than 20 members on April 18.

“The purpose was to train people up to understand the importance of being active, the importance of standing up for people’s due process and to understand what just cause means,” says David Ruth, chief steward of Local 390 (DHS-Cambridge).

“It’s time to recruit some of these young folks to prepare to pass the baton eventually,” Ruth says.

“Without a union, there can be no checks and balances,” he says. “Without an active union, without active members, there can be no strength. So many entities are trying to wipe out unions all together. We



AFSCME Local 701 members and retirees Karen Kortgard, Cindy Mertens, April Werkman, Kevin Savchuk and Barb Laidlaw, joined by field representative Eric Halvorson, phone banked in Willmar. They asked members to call their legislators to voice support for Gov. Dayton’s budget and bonding proposals for safe staffing at state psychiatric facilities and prisons.

have to have people understand what the importance of being active is. We have to grow and evolve and become smarter.”

Benner Reappointed to MNsure

Congratulations to Peter Benner, who was reappointed to the MNsure board by Gov. Mark Dayton. The retired executive director of the former AFSCME Council 6 consults on health care, labor relations and public policy.

Franken Introduces Workplace Safety Bill

Sen. Al Franken reintroduced his bill to expand coverage under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. It would hike civil and criminal penalties, increase protections for whistleblowers, require more reporting of injuries, adjust awards for inflation and provide more

rights to victims and their families. “When Minnesotans go to work, they should be confident that their workplace is safe,” Franken said.

Scholarship Deadline Nears

There’s still time to apply for a Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship, which honors the famous labor activist. It’s open to minority students from union families attending a school in the Minnesota State system. At least 30 scholarships will be given out to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the scholarship. The renewable scholarships are for up to \$1,200 a year for full-time students and up to \$500 for part-time students. Applications must be postmarked by **June 1**. <http://www.nelliestone.org>.

Postal Carrier Food Drive

The 25th annual Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is **Saturday**. Leave non-perishable items of food in bags by your mailbox before your carrier’s normal pickup time. Find more information here: <http://ow.ly/py8k30bxvOW>.

Get in on the Action

Action Update publishes twice a month for locals and activists in AFSCME Council 5. Download a copy for your workplace bulletin board at www.afscmemn.org or share news by emailing: Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org.

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place
Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement	Tonight, Tuesday, May 9, 5:30 p.m.	Room 123 State Capitol, Saint Paul
Untold Stories: Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids	May 18, 6 p.m.	Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 Dale St. N., Saint Paul
AFSCME Family Picnic	Aug. 20, 1 to 5 p.m.	Battle Creek Regional Park, Maplewood
AFSCME Council 5 Annual Convention	Oct. 5 to 7	Duluth Entertainment Convention Center