



AFSCME Capitol Update



February 21, 2017

Support Local Control, Stop Corporate Interference

Last week, AFSCME members left 266 voice messages asking legislators to support local control and stop corporate interference. It's a threat to our democracy and an attack on working people.

House File 600 and Senate File 580 – known as Local Interference bills – aim to repeal Minneapolis and St. Paul's new Earned Sick and Safe Time ordinances – and to prevent other Minnesota cities from passing their own work standards. This summer 150,000 people in our two largest cities are due to start receiving earned sick and safe time, a paid benefit, passed at the local level. It would allow them to take time off when sick or dealing with domestic abuse.

The bills could also block cities from passing a higher minimum wage.

We have testified to stop corporate interests from robbing workers of their paid sick leave. Despite fierce opposition, House and Senate Republicans are moving the bills quickly.

Fix Transportation Now

Two weeks ago, AFSCME members left 206 voice messages for their legislators urging them to fix transportation now with new revenue for roads, bridges, transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure. We reminded legislators to budget for AFSCME maintenance workers who plow snow, patch potholes and inspect bridges.

AFSCME MnDOT members were also at the Capitol to support new revenue for transportation and to oppose the Republican plan to gut the general fund as a substitute for new revenue. Raiding the general fund is simply wrong.

Pensions

The Pension Commission will meet again on Tuesday, February 21 at 5:30 pm on Room 15 of the Capitol. Legislators will consider a MSRS proposal to increase funding and reduce benefits. The combination of increased employer contributions, increased employee contributions, and reduced post-retirement increases is designed to lead all plans toward full funding. AFSCME supports the MSRS reform proposal because it will guarantee that there are sufficient funds to pay promised benefits.

Child Protection Funding

AFSCME continues to work with Representative Rena Moran on a bill for additional funding for child protection workers and for upstream services.

Governor's Tax Proposal

AFSCME testified last week in support of the Governor's Tax Bill in the Senate Tax Committee. We emphasized support for the \$20 million of new money added to the base budget for Local Government Aid and \$10 million added to the base for County Program Aid. In addition, the bill expands the Working Families Credit.