



ACTION UPDATE

One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

afscmemn.org

Health-Plan Tax Delayed

AFSCME and our allies have successfully delayed a 40 percent excise tax under the Affordable Care Act that would have hit many of the strong health plans we've negotiated, often in lieu of larger pay hikes. We've pushed the tax back to 2020, made it deductible and raised the threshold so plans will have to cost more to trigger the tax. Outright repeal remains an AFSCME priority. Contact field staff with questions.

Tentative Agreement Reached

Local 3532 and Walker Methodist Health Center have a two-year tentative agreement that includes raises from 3 to 8 percent retroactive to Jan. 1; new wage minimums that will provide increases as high as 40 percent, depending on job classification and years at Walker; and preserves overtime rules. Negotiators will be back at the table in the fall to talk about further wage increases.

Local 668 and the Metropolitan Council have a tentative agreement that includes 2 percent raises for everyone in 2016 and 1.25 percent on April 1, 2017, plus step or performance increases for those who are eligible. Health care premiums will be adjusted, and members may get backdated refunds.

Back Pay for State Corrections

Unit 8 will see back pay retroactive to July 1, 2015 and a 2.5 percent pay hike from its new contract on paychecks dated Feb. 19.

MSRS Candidates Endorsed

Four positions are open on the Board of the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS), which provides retirement benefits to state employees, Metropolitan Council employees and many non-faculty employees at the University of Minnesota. Active members should have received a ballot in the mail last week.

AFSCME Council 5 has endorsed four candidates who will protect our defined benefit pensions: **Michael Schweyen** and **Joe Sullivan** for the General/Unclassified Plan; **Joe Strunk** for the Correctional Plan; and **Wes Skoglund** for the retiree seat.

Postmark ballots by **Tuesday, March 1** or vote online.

Questions? Email sally.kupferschmidt@state.mn.us of MSRS or call 651-284-7882.

Precinct Caucuses Approaching

Mark your calendars for 7 p.m. on **March 1**. That's when the Democratic and Republican parties in Minnesota are hosting precinct caucuses. It's your chance to work for labor-friendly policies and show support for AFSCME-endorsed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. State law lets people take time off without pay to attend if they give their employer at least 10 days of advance written notice. Find your precinct location through the Minnesota Secretary of State.

AFSCME Endorses Candidate

Council 5 has endorsed **Angie Craig** for Congress in the Second District. The Eagan DFLer is facing Republican Rep. John Kline, who is seeking an eighth term. Craig would be Minnesota's first openly LGBT member of Congress if elected in November.

Special Elections Coming Up

AFSCME has endorsed former state Rep. **Jim Abeler** for state Senate District 35. The district includes Anoka, Ramsey and parts of Andover and Coon Rapids. We've endorsed **Andrew Carlson** for House District 50B in Bloomington. The elections are **Tuesday, Feb. 9**.

Racial and Economic Justice Tour

Union members, especially those of color, are invited to share concerns about racial disparity with the AFL-CIO Labor Commission on Racial and Economic Justice at two free events: a town hall dinner **Feb. 11**, 6-9 p.m. (with free child care); and a breakfast **Feb. 12**, 7:30-9:45 a.m. Both are at the United Labor Centre, 312 Central Ave. SE., Minneapolis.

An RSVP is required: kerry@minneapolisunions.org.

Ease Your Student Debt Load

Do you have student loans? The AFSCME Council 5 Education Department is holding clinics to help members learn how to consolidate loans, apply for income-based repayment programs and learn about public service loan forgiveness. Find out if you qualify to reduce your monthly payment and get some of your debt forgiven. Attend on **Feb. 24 or 25** from 5-6:30 p.m. at Council 5's South St. Paul office. Space is limited. RSVP to Melinda.pearson@afscmemn.org.



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Bring Labor History to Life

Governor Dayton and the Legislature have authorized a bust of Nellie Stone Johnson, a nationally known labor leader and civil rights activist, in our state Capitol. She was the first African-American elected official in Minneapolis and helped found the DFL Party. Her statue will be the first of a woman or an African-American at the state Capitol. We need your matching funds to make it happen. Please help us recognize labor's legacy. Make checks to the NSJ Capitol Fund and mail them to: Union Bank and Trust, 312 Central Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

State Master Contracts Available

Are you the president of a state local? If so, you can order copies of the contract for your members [online](#).

Financial Training for Locals

AFSCME Council 5's Education Department is holding a training for anyone in a local who signs checks or conducts audits. The \$20 cost includes lunch and materials. The trainings run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Details: Feb. 23, AFSCME Council 5, 300 Hardman Ave. S., South St. Paul
May 18, AFSCME Council 5, South St. Paul
Aug. 4, Holiday Inn – Duluth, 200 W. 1st St. (To arrange for a hotel room in Duluth, call 218-727-7492 and ask for the AFSCME Council 5 rate.)

Nov. 16, AFSCME Council 5, South St. Paul
Register: Call Melinda Pearson at 651-287-0524 or email melinda.pearson@afscmemn.org.

Apply for Labor Scholarships

Applications are open for several scholarship funds.

AFSCME Council 5 offers two awards for high school seniors, and one for members continuing their education. The awards range from \$250 to \$1,000.

The deadline is **May 6**. Find details at afscmemn.org/afscme-council-5-scholarships.

The Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship is open to minority students from union families who are attending or will attend a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities school. The renewable scholarship is \$1,200 a year for full-time students and \$500 a year for part-time students. Learn more at <http://www.nelliestone.org> or call 866-738-5238. Applications must be postmarked by **June 1**.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO is giving out several \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are union members or the dependents of members and two \$500 Martin Duffy Adult Learner Scholarships for union members affiliated with the AFL-CIO. The application deadline is **April 30**. Learn more at www.mnafcio.org or contact Lori Williams with questions at 800-652-9004.

Get in on the Action

Action Update publishes twice a month for locals and activists in AFSCME Council 5. If you have an event people should know about, email Lynette Kalsnes at Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org. Download a copy or see the latest news at www.afscmemn.org.

Keep Your Calendar Up to Date

Labor Movie Night: Feb. 19, 6 p.m., East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier St., St. Paul

Precinct Caucuses: March 1, 7 p.m.

AFSCME Council 5 Day on the Hill: April 5, St. Paul (RiverCentre)

Council 5 Retirees United Convention: April 19

SEPC Spring Conference: April 29

AFSCME 42nd Annual International Convention: July 18-22, Las Vegas, Nevada. Council 5 will be staying at the Paris Hotel, 3655 Las Vegas Blvd. S.