



(From left) MAPE Local 902 president Stephanie Meyer, Lt. Gov. Tina Smith, and AFSCME Council 5 executive director Eliot Seide, secretary Mary Falk (in AFSCME T-shirt) and president Judy Wahlberg celebrate paid parental leave for state workers.

## State Workers Win Paid Leave

All Minnesota state employees can now take up to six weeks of paid parental leave, starting **Nov. 16**. Lt. Gov. Tina Smith announced that mothers and fathers, both biological and adoptive parents, can take the leave. It will save families an average of \$6,200 when they need it most.

The Dayton-Smith administration worked closely with workers and their unions, including AFSCME and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees, which took the lead in winning the benefit.

“The first weeks following birth are a critical time for families to bond and for infants to grow strong and healthy. It’s a time when new mothers and fathers most need financial security and job protection,” says Mary Falk, AFSCME Council 5 secretary, who spoke at an event celebrating

the leave. “That’s why AFSCME is pushing hard for paid parental leave for union members and all workers. We believe paid parental leave should be guaranteed to all hardworking Minnesotans, not just the wealthy few.”

Minnesota becomes the fourth state to offer paid parental leave to state employees, and workers didn’t have to give up anything to get it. In fact, Gov. Mark Dayton and Lt. Gov. Smith recognize that paid parental leave saves employers money and helps them recruit and retain the best and brightest employees. Learn more at: <http://afscmemn.org/story/state-workers-win-paid-leave>.

## Spring Enrollment Open for Free College

AFSCME members and their spouses, children and grandchildren can earn free associate degrees through the AFSCME Free College

## Tell Trump to #StopTheHate

AFSCME is joining the Southern Poverty Law Center and the American Federation of Teachers in calling on President-elect Donald Trump to denounce speech and actions based on hatred and intolerance.

In the months leading up to the election, the petition points out, Trump used “hateful language at people based on what we look like, where our families come from, who we love, how we worship, our abilities, our gender,” which has fueled harassment, vandalism, property destruction and assaults, even on schools and campuses.

Trump says he’ll be the president for all Americans. The petition challenges him to live up to that.

You can join the movement and sign the petition here: <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-trump-to-represent-all-americans-stopthehate/>.

Benefit. Enrollment for the spring semester at Eastern Gateway Community College is now open.

Classes start **Jan. 17**. Along with degrees in criminal justice, arts and business management, AFSCME is now offering Early Childhood Education, too. The online classes are tailored to fit your schedule, with tutors and coaches to help.

Get details at: <http://freecollege.afscme.org/>. You’ll need your AFSCME International number to apply. If you don’t have one, you can call AFSCME International at 202-429-1000.

## Help Keep Kids Safe

Council 5 is starting a new Facebook campaign, [Safe Kids MN](#), where child protection workers can share their stories and help us track their actual caseloads. Counties have received \$52 million for child protection, but caseloads are larger and kids are less safe. We are urging lawmakers to maintain safe caseloads and fund the needed staffing levels. Share your story and see the latest news [@safekidsmn](#).

## Local Ratifies Contract

**Local 517** (Washington County) approved a two-year contract that includes a raise of 2.5 percent a year; range movement of 4 percent a year; increases the life insurance payout; and offers 8 hours more of PTO in exchange for the Christmas leave holiday. The union retains the ability to arbitrate verbal and written reprimands; and to require bargaining proposed changes to medical insurance regarding the Affordable Care Act.

## Union Food Drive

ASFCME Local 638 is co-sponsoring a Unions United



Several AFSCME Council 5 leaders, past and present, got to meet a civil rights icon at the DFL's 11th Annual Founders Day Dinner. U.S. Rep John Lewis was the keynote speaker. Pictured from left to right are: Mike Buesing, Judy Wahlberg, Congressman John Lewis, Eliot Seide and Clifford Poehler. Seide won the Paul D. Wellstone Award, honoring him for a lifetime of commitment to labor.

Food Drive at Minnesota State University, Mankato. They'll be collecting food and money at the Faculty Association, MH240B; ITS Breakroom, ML3010; Library Administration, ML3104; Wiecking Lobby; Biology, TS242; Alumni Foundation Main Lobby; College of Business, MH120; MSSA,

SU280; Career Development Center, WA209; and the College of Education, AH118. It runs through **Dec. 8**, when they'll also be collecting at the President's Chili Feed. All donations benefit the ECHO Food Shelf.

## Council 5 is Hiring

AFSCME Council 5 is taking applications for a field representative position based out of the Duluth office. The deadline is Monday, **Dec. 5** at 4 p.m. Find details at: <http://afscmemn.org/content/field-representative-duluth>.

## Labor Movie Night

In the historical drama *Cradle Will Rock*, Orson Welles tries to stage a musical about a strike, despite pressure from an establishment afraid of industrial unrest. It screens at 7 p.m. **Dec. 16** at the East Side Freedom Library in Saint Paul.

## Get in on the Action

Action Update publishes twice a month for locals and activists in AFSCME Council 5. Download a copy at [www.afscmemn.org](http://www.afscmemn.org) or share an event by emailing: [Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org](mailto:Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org).

### Mark Your Calendars

Unions United Food Drive	Through Dec. 8	Various locations at Minnesota State University, Mankato
Labor Movie Night	Dec. 16 at 7 p.m.	East Side Freedom Library, Saint Paul
AFSCME Family Scholarship deadline	Dec. 31	<a href="http://www.afscme.org/family">www.afscme.org/family</a>