



Leadership from AFSCME Local 668 (Metropolitan Council) plan for 2017 and AFSCME Strong. Craig Skone (left), Bruce Dreier and Roger Janzig took part, along with Ashley Lokensgard, Kerry Kappel, Art McGrane, Deb Jensen, Joe Bieza, Barb Rossi and Manking Lee.

Save Our Healthcare Coverage

The Republicans in Congress are moving quickly to repeal Obamacare without anything to replace it. They took the first step late last week, passing a budget resolution that lets them draft legislation to gut the Affordable Care Act, and then simply repeal it by a majority vote.

Moreover, Senate Republicans voted down Democratic amendments to keep requiring insurance companies to cover contraceptives, and to prohibit health insurance companies from denying care or coverage for preexisting conditions. They also declined to vote to protect Medicare, Medicaid, rural hospitals, and the children's health program known as CHIP.

Sign this petition that asks lawmakers not to repeal the ACA,

especially with no other plan in place: <http://tinyurl.com/h9bl5kk>.

Legislative News Watch

The Minnesota legislative session is under way, and AFSCME Council 5 is making it easy to keep up to date on the news that most affects workers, our families and our communities.

We're posting regular updates on what's happening at the Capitol. The latest issue features the highlights of Gov. Dayton's tax proposal and the bonding bill. It also lists upcoming lobby days, making it easier to get involved and fight for workers. Find it at: <http://afscmemn.org/2017report>.

Save the Date

Day on the Hill is **Tuesday, March 28**. We'll be back in the newly restored Capitol this year, rallying in the rotunda. Watch this space for details.

PROTECT MINNESOTA'S CHILDREN

AFSCME represents child protection workers in Minnesota's largest counties. We're so short-staffed that we can't respond to reports of child abuse in the time required by law. Our caseloads are so heavy that we live in constant fear that a child will slip through our safety net.

Sweeping legislative reforms in the past two years that directed counties to more aggressively intervene to safeguard children from abuse and neglect led to an influx of cases. The funding that went with those reforms wasn't enough to handle the overload.

Child protection workers report high turnover and low morale. Many workers are quitting or voluntarily taking lower-level jobs with less stress. Costs are rising as counties struggle to fill vacancies and train new workers.

The Legislature must invest in child protection. Reasonable caseloads will keep more child protection workers on the job, leading to improvements in child well-being and cost savings for agencies.

Text **PROTECT** to **237263** to be connected to your state legislators, or call your senator at **1-855-527-7262** and your representative at **1-888-440-2111**.

ASK YOUR LEGISLATORS TO:

Provide funding to help counties hire and retain child protection workers.

Locals Ratify Contracts

Local 66 (Duluth Airport Authority) approved a three-year contract that includes annual raises of 1.5 percent the first year, and 2 percent in years two and three, plus steps; no increase in health insurance costs; longevity pay; a shift differential; and adds long-term disability to PERA.

Local 66 (St. Louis County Basic and Merit units) ratified a three-year agreement that includes annual raises of 2 percent, 2.5 percent and 2.5 percent; a Basic shift differential hike; holds increases in insurance fees to \$15 or less a year; brings back sick leave accrual above the cap during a calendar year; and adjusts pay grades for financial workers and public health nurses. It gives child protection workers who are required to work weekends or holidays due to new state regulations an hourly shift differential of \$4.35 on weekends and \$6 on holidays, and gives these workers who are on-call straight pay of \$4.35 an hour on weekends and \$6 on holidays. New workers who don't have enough sick time can run a negative balance for bereavement.

Local 1129 (Roseville ISD 623, clerical) approved a two-year contract that includes normal step

increases; an improved salary and benefits matrix, which creates a new top step that gets a 2.25 percent increase each year and cuts the bottom step, moving those workers up the second year; hikes the district's contribution to family health insurance by 1.5 percent the second year; allows personal leave in hourly increments; a \$500 district contribution into the Health Care Savings Plan for each year after 25 years of service; improves the reclassification process; and improves language for allowed union time.

Local 1129 (Roseville ISD 623, paraprofessionals and district information technology assistants) ratified a two-year contract that includes a wage increase of 2 percent on the top steps both years and 1 percent on all other steps the second year; normal step increases; and raises wages by cutting steps 1 to 3 the first year and the fourth step the second year, moving up employees on those steps. The district will increase its contribution to single medical coverage by 1 percent and family coverage by 3 percent in the second year; and contribute \$500 into the Health Care Savings Plan for each year worked after 25 years of service. The contract improves language for job

reclassifications, job postings and allowed union time.

March in Saint Paul Winter Carnival

Union members and their families can march in the King Boreas Grande Day Parade on **Saturday, Jan. 28**. Show union pride by wearing your union jackets and carrying local union banners.

Gather at the new Labor Center's Main Labor Hall, 353 West Seventh Street, at 1 p.m. Lineup starts at 2 p.m. Afterward, there's food and fun back at the Labor Hall. The unit is co-sponsored by the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation's AFL-CIO Community Services and Greater Twin Cities United Way. Call (651) 222-3787 ext. 116 or email llwright@stpaulunions.org.

Council 5 is Hiring

AFSCME is looking for a field representative based out of the South St. Paul office. The application deadline is **4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24**. Find details at: <http://afscmemn.org/jobs>.

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 or share news by emailing: Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org.

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place
Child Protection Lobby Day	Jan. 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Starting from AFSCME Council 5, 300 Hardman Ave. S., South St. Paul
Day on the Hill	March 28	Starting from RiverCentre, Saint Paul
Council 5 Annual Convention	Oct. 4 to 7	Duluth Entertainment Convention Center