



ACTION UPDATE

One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

www.afscmemn.org

This is Our Time – Get Out the Vote!

We can take back the Legislature. Put Barack Obama back in the White House. Defeat the amendment that restricts the right to vote. Defeat the amendment that limits the freedom to marry. Here's how:

1. **Vote** on Tuesday, Nov. 6 (*see details in box at right*)
2. **Make phone calls** or **knock on doors** to persuade other voters in key legislative districts:
 - Saturday, Nov. 3: 9 a.m.-noon, noon-3 p.m., 3-6 p.m., or 6-9 p.m.
 - Sunday, Nov. 4: noon-3 p.m., 3-6 p.m., or 6-9 p.m.
 - Tuesday, Nov. 6: 8-11 a.m., 11 a.m.-2 p.m., 2-5 p.m., or 5-8 p.m.

To **join in**: Contact an AFSCME political organizer:

- **Twin Cities Metro**: Chris Cowen (651-287-0531) or Tigger Lunney (651-321-4050). Action Centers are in Coon Rapids and South St. Paul.
- **8th Congressional District**: Sandra Curtis (218-341-1659) or Chad McKenna (218-310-8412). Action Centers are in Brainerd, Grand Rapids, and North Branch.
- **Southern Minnesota**: Laura Askelin (651-238-5334) or Tamera Weller (651-208-9685). Action Centers are in Albert Lea, Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing.
- **Western Minnesota**: Julie Bleyhl (612-308-2037) or Bruce Iverson (320-235-2344). Action Centers are in Bemidji, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and Willmar.

Welcome to AFSCME!

Congratulations to Parks and Recreation workers in the City of Bloomington, who now are part of Council 5 after voting to join AFSCME.

The 23 workers endured more than six months of delays by city officials. In fact, the city is still in court, still trying to reverse the workers' election victory.

The workers filed for a union election in April, but the city fought about who is and isn't represented in the bargaining unit. That ongoing challenge stalled the election until September: The city lost, appealed, lost again, then had the ballots impounded.

But when the Bureau of Mediation Services finally counted votes on Oct. 17, the workers won!

The Basics of Voting

Election Day: Polls are open on Tuesday Nov. 6 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

Where to vote: Statewide redistricting means many people vote in a different district and different location this year. To verify where you vote, go to <http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us>, then enter your address.

Your ballot: To find the full list of candidates and issues on the ballot where you live, go to www.mnvotes.org.

To find which candidates and issues are endorsed by fellow AFSCME members, go to www.afscmemn.org; click "Political & Legislative," then click "AFSCME Election Endorsements."

Time off to vote: State law (*Minnesota Statutes 204C.04*) allows you to take the necessary time off from work to cast a ballot on Election Day. Your employer cannot reduce your pay, force you to use paid or unpaid leave, or otherwise penalize you for voting.

Vote by absentee ballot: You can vote absentee at your local election office before Nov. 6. You can vote weekdays during normal business hours; on Saturday Nov. 3 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; and on Monday Nov. 5 until 5 p.m. For full details, see: www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=211

Questions? Or, if someone tries to deny your right to vote, call 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683).

Get Involved Statewide

The Minnesota AFL-CIO is coordinating statewide activities to elect a new majority in the Legislature. Phone banks and door knocks take place in Belle Plaine, Brainerd, Duluth, Eveleth, Fargo, Faribault, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, Northfield, Rochester, St. Cloud, St. Paul, and Worthington.

Information: For exact times and locations, go to www.mnaflcio.org; click "It's up to us! Volunteer Today!"

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Corrections Unit to Meet on Contract

The Negotiations Assembly for State of Minnesota Corrections Unit 8 meets at 10 a.m. Nov. 16 at Council 5's South St. Paul office. Assembly delegates will make a recommendation to membership on the tentative agreement between AFSCME and the state. The 1,900 members in Unit 8 will be able to vote on the proposed contract in person from Dec. 3-6. Ballots will be counted on Dec. 7.

Mail ballots: Members who need to vote by mail must request a ballot from Council 5 no later than Nov. 16. Ballots and contract information will be mailed on Nov. 19; ballots must be returned no later than Dec. 6.

- To download a mail ballot request form, go to www.afscmemn.org; click "Negotiations Update," then click "Corrections Unit 8."

Open Enrollment Runs Nov. 1-14

Open enrollment in the State Employee Group Insurance Plan takes place Nov. 1-14. State workers can join a health, dental, long-term disability, or life insurance plan for 2013; add or change dependents; and switch their primary clinic or carrier during this time.

For a summary of open enrollment details, see the story at www.afscmemn.org; search for "open enrollment."

- All open enrollment materials are available at www.mmb.state.mn.us.
- Open enrollment meetings will be held around the state, but you can enroll anytime at www.state.mn.us/employee. You must have your employee ID and password to log on.
- Monthly premiums are expected to increase by 12.5 percent on Jan. 1. For eligible employees, the state pays 100 percent of premiums for individuals, and 85 percent for dependent coverage. That means employees with dependent or family coverage will pay an estimated \$16.28 a month more in 2013.
- Under a new state law, if you add a dependent, you will have to verify their eligibility for coverage.

Caucuses Connect AFSCME Members

AFSCME International's final two "constituency caucuses" will hold their initial get-togethers to connect members and retirees nationwide who share interests and identities. Each caucus starts with a conference call to discuss issues, exchange ideas and experiences, and figure out how to stay in touch. The next two calls:

Nov. 13: Pride caucus, 7 p.m.

Nov. 15: Conservative caucus, 4 p.m.

For reservations and call-in details, see the story at www.afscmemn.org; search for "constituency caucuses." Questions about the caucuses can be emailed to the International at caucus@afscme.org.
Caucuses were held earlier for members who identify as African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino, progressive, or environmentalist.

Upcoming Training at Council 5

Council 5 is providing the following training for local leaders and activists:

Workplace Bullying: Train the Trainer: Nov. 29 (10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.), South St. Paul

Basic Steward Training: Dec. 12-13 (8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. each day), Willmar

All participants must be registered by an officer in their Local. Local officers should contact Jackie O'Shea at jackie.oshea@afscmemn.org or 651-287-0524.

LES Offers Union Skill Classes

Union members can learn basic activist skills through non-credit classes from the University of Minnesota's Labor Education Service. Classes include:

Nov. 17: Effective Leadership Styles

February (online): Introduction to the Labor Movement

March 2 and 9: Contract Negotiations

Classes take place on the West Bank of the Twin Cities campus. For a brochure with class details, costs, and registration deadlines, call 612-624-5020 or email les@umn.edu.