



# ACTION UPDATE

**One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers**

Tuesday, August 28, 2012

[www.afscmemn.org](http://www.afscmemn.org)

## Unions Celebrate Labor Day

This weekend, you can join AFSCME members and other unions at Labor Day celebrations around the state:

- **Sept. 2:** Virginia
- **Sept. 3:** Brainerd, Cloquet, Duluth, St. Cloud, and St. Paul

For specific times, locations and other details, go to [www.afscmemn.org](http://www.afscmemn.org); click "Celebrate Labor Day."

## Fundraiser Brings in \$8,000

A fundraiser Aug. 21 for locked-out Crystal Sugar workers raised \$8,000, with pledges still rolling in. More than \$3,500 came from AFSCME members and locals.

Council 5's Next Wave and University of Minnesota Clerical Workers Local 3800 co-sponsored the event.

## Insurance Grievance Scheduled

Council 5's class-action grievance challenging the state's decision to drop health insurance for thousands of state workers' dependents is scheduled for Sept. 6.

The grievance covers more than 30 AFSCME members. They are among 3,100 employees whose dependents lost coverage July 31. The cancellations came after an outside audit, which the Legislature mandated, said employees did not adequately document that their dependents qualify for insurance.

## Convention is Around the Corner

Council 5 has issued the official call for its annual convention, Oct. 4-6 in Bloomington. This year's convention includes elections for all officers and executive board members. Dates to remember:

- **Sept. 2:** Deadline for discounted room reservations at the DoubleTree convention hotel: 800-325-3535
- **Sept. 12:** Deadline for discounted room reservations at the Crowne Plaza Bloomington: 888-233-9527
- **Sept. 14:** Deadline for submitting resolutions
- **Sept. 24:** Deadline for registering for convention workshops, and for requesting child care, interpreters, or other accommodations
- **Sept. 27:** Credentials for delegates and alternates must be mailed and postmarked by this date

## State Contract Up for Vote Aug. 30

After two postponements, a legislative subcommittee now plans to vote Aug. 30 on the state contract agreement that was ratified by AFSCME members in Units 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7.

Union members are expected to again pack the hearing when legislators convene at 8:30 a.m. in Room 15 of the Capitol.

Committee co-chair Mike Parry has stated publicly that the committee's Republican majority will reject the contract because they think the health insurance and pay packages are too generous. If the committee rejects, the full Legislature will decide the contract's fate in January.

## Tell HealthPartners to Stop

More than 2,000 AFSCME members have signed postcards urging HealthPartners to take a stand against union-busting, and dozens of locals have passed resolutions saying the same thing.

The actions ask CEO Mary Brainerd and the HealthPartners board to quit allowing health-care premiums that union members pay to then be used against other workers trying to organize a union.

The action is in response to behavior by management at Stillwater Medical Group. The clinic, an affiliate of HealthPartners, ran a vicious, personal, anti-union campaign after two-thirds of workers signed union authorization cards earlier this year.

**What you can do:** Fight Stillwater Medical Group's behavior by signing cards and moving resolutions at your next local union meeting.

## 'Vote No' Rally Postponed

A union rally to oppose the anti-marriage and voter restriction amendments – which was planned for Sept. 9 – is being cancelled and rescheduled.

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## Locals Reach Agreements

**Minnesota Judicial Branch.** Clerical, administrative, and technical employees in Local 3688 are voting by mail on a wage reopener with Districts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10. The proposal provides a 4 percent lump-sum payment, payable within 30 days of ratification.

**Roseville Area Schools.** Two units in Local 1129 have ratified a two-year contract, through June 30, 2014. Members get step increases in both years; that includes workers at the top step, which will increase 1 percent the first year and 3 percent the second year. The district also increases its contribution for health-insurance premiums in the second year, raises life insurance by \$10,000 the second year, and improves language regarding discipline.

**St. Paul Public Schools.** Members of Local 844 will vote Sept. 13 on a two-year tentative contract agreement. The proposal includes a 1.5 percent pay raise retroactive to July 1, another 1.5 percent raise in 2013, and step increases in both years. The district increases its health-insurance contribution each year, increases the rate at which severance is calculated, and increases the maximum severance payout.

In addition, there are numerous language improvements, including on layoffs, bumping, and limits on how many hours temporary employees can work.

## College Scholarships Available

AFSCME is accepting applications for its 2013 Family Scholarship Program, which provides \$2,000 college scholarships for up to four years for full-time students. Applicants must be graduating high-school seniors who have a parent, legal guardian or financial responsible grandparent who is a full AFSCME member.

**Details:** See [www.afscme.org/family](http://www.afscme.org/family). The application deadline is Dec. 31, 2012.

## Raising Awareness of Thyroid Cancer

Local 2181 member Susan Valentines and the cancer survivor support group she organized are sponsoring two thyroid cancer awareness events in September at Department of Human Services locations.

The free events will provide "neck check" cards and other information. Both events run from 7-9 a.m.:

- **Sept. 11** at the DHS offices in downtown St. Paul, 540 Cedar St.
- **Sept. 12** at the DHS offices in Lafayette Park, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul.

The thyroid cancer support group meets on the third Saturday of each month at Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. in St. Paul, from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

## LES Offers Union Skill Classes

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

- **Sept. 11:** Successful Social Media Strategies for Labor Unions
- **Oct. 6:** Telling the True Story of Workers
- **Nov. 17:** Effective Leadership Styles
- **February 2013** (online): Introduction to the Labor Movement
- **March 2 and 9, 2013:** Contract Negotiations
- **April 20, 2013:** Basic Arbitration

For a brochure providing class details, costs, and registration deadlines, call 612-624-5020 or email [les@umn.edu](mailto:les@umn.edu).

## Join Us on Facebook

Council 5 is now on Facebook. Take a look at [www.facebook.com/AfscmeCouncil5](http://www.facebook.com/AfscmeCouncil5) – then "like" us to keep up on what we and members are doing.