

AFSCME 48

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Labor History Added to Wisconsin School Curriculums

How did the eight-hour day get to be the standard work day? Have workers always been entitled to overtime when working more than eight hours in a day; or forty hours in a week? Who led the organizing that led to enactment of the Family Medical Leave Act, or the health and safety standards enforced by OSHA?

Represented city workers like us take these benefits and protections (and more) for granted. Did you know that *none* of these protections of income and quality of life

would be in place without unions and collective bargaining? That's something to think about when you apply for FMLA to spend precious time with children, a spouse or aging parents; or work weekends at a health fair, festival or flu clinic.

On December 10, Governor Doyle signed the Labor History in the Schools Act. Now, Wisconsin schools must include labor history in their curriculums, thus enriching students' understanding of the role working people and their

organizations have played in society. Wisconsin labor unions, including AFSCME, worked with the Wisconsin Labor History Society (www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org) to pass this legislation.

AFSCME in History

Since your children will be learning some labor history as the new curriculums are put into place, why don't you beat them to the punch and absorb some interesting background on your union, AFSCME? AFSCME was founded in our state, and in 1959, Wisconsin passed the first public employee bargaining law in the nation.

Political activists in AFSCME have been vigilant ever since to make sure that our bargaining rights aren't compromised by hostile legislators. A couple of

years ago, some legislators wanted to make *health insurance* a "permissive" rather than "mandatory" subject of bargaining.

In labor law lingo, "permissive" means your public employer (in our case, the City of Milwaukee) can *impose* changes unilaterally, if they don't feel like bargaining "mandatory" means they *must* bargain - that's how we were able to avert increases in our premium share for the years 2007 and 2008 and limit the amounts we now pay.

AFSCME activists (your editor included) attended committee hearings and lobby days at the capitol in Madison, to make sure legislators knew that we meant to hold on to our collective bargaining rights.

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Holiday Party



The 2009 Local 1091 Holiday Party, held December 12 at the Italian Conference Center, drew a record number of members and guests. The special attraction was professional photography service provided by Lead Program retiree Peter Skiba. Peter and his wife Renee have a business, Peter Skiba Fine Art Photography, and Local 1091 hired him to offer portraits for all who attended the party.

Nearly everyone present took advantage of this, and lined up to smile and style for the camera. The results can be viewed from Peter's website www.skibaphotography.com under a link *Afscme 2009 Holiday Party*. Each member who had a portrait

taken will receive one free print, and may order extras at \$15.00 per print.

The rest of the evening was filled with good food, lively dancing and drawings for valuable prizes. Every member also received a \$25 check, just for showing up! Many thanks are due to this year's party committee **Denise Anderson, Janet Haslem-Flowers, Naomi Jenkins, and Kandy Perez.**

Chief Steward Position Vacant

Local 1091 Chief Steward **John Kolberg** has left our bargaining unit to take a job in code enforcement, leaving this important position vacant. At the **March 3** membership meeting, we will take **nominations** for this office, with an election to be held on **May 5**.

If you've taken steward training in the past, now's the time to come forward! This is a challenging job, but a rewarding

one, as the steward is the guardian of our contract and works to assure that all member get due process in the work place. Please be sure to attend these important meetings. If you don't nominate, vote for an support your representatives, don't look for them when you need help!

Lobby Day Scheduled

Mark your calendar for **March 3, 2010**. Put in for vacation or comp now, so you can ride the bus to Madison and join AFSCME activists from all over the state as we make our presence known at the capitol. We have smart, hard working

lobbyists there, working for us every day, but, as they never tire of reminding us, they get their clout from us.

When we arrive in numbers, wearing our green T-shirts, it reminds legislators that we are following their actions closely,

and basing our voting and endorsements on how well they support our public services and bargaining rights.



Dr. King and AFSCME



Another union benefit we just enjoyed was a paid holiday to commemorate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. How many of you know the circumstances surrounding Dr. King's presence in Memphis, Tennessee when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968?

The sanitation workers employed by the City of Memphis Public Works Department had suffered enough from working conditions that no

modern, unionized worker we know would tolerate. All the rank and file workers were African-American, and besides facing low wages and appalling working conditions, they were subject to racist abuse and favoritism by their supervisors.

To improve their lives, and those of their families, they organized a union – forming AFSCME Local 1733. The City of Memphis refused to recognize the union. After two of their members died in a gruesome accident, because of a faulty truck, Local 1733 went on strike, and the whole community rallied around their push for dignity and justice.

Dr. King went to Memphis to support them, and delivered his famous last

speech (‘I’ve Been to the Mountain Top’) at a mass community meeting in support of these AFSCME strikers. Learn more about AFSCME history at www.afscme.org, our union’s website.



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Meet Our New T.B.A Organizer!

Peter Drummond is the newest member of AFSCME's Take Back America team. †The experienced political organizer will work in Southeast Wisconsin out of his base at Council 48 headquarters in Milwaukee.

Drummond is a native of Connecticut and earned his bachelor's degree in creative writing and English literature at Miami University in Ohio. †He continued his westward drift after graduation, joining the Iowa field staff for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

Since then he has been involved in congressional and statewide campaigns in Florida and Virginia. †He was living in Arlington, Virginia, before moving to Milwaukee to join AFSCME.

Drummond says he is excited to be working for AFSCME. †"I'm loving the job so far. †It is great to be working on behalf of front-line workers who play such important roles in their communities," he said.

Drummond says he learned the importance of unions early from his grandfather, who was a plumber. †"From a very young age, I was hearing stories about unions and what they meant for working people," he said.

He believes his work with political campaigns was good preparation for his job as a Take Back America organizer. †

"I've done grassroots organizing in a mess of states. †Every candidate I've ever worked for has been AFSCME-endorsed, so I know the important role the union can play in getting the

right people elected and holding elected officials accountable," Drummond said.

Members in Southeast Wisconsin can reach Peter at 414-344-6868 or 414-333-1606. His email address is pdrummond@wiafscme.org †††††Drummond replaces popul: organizer Ryan Neibauer, who was inspired by working with people on the front lines of public service. †Neibauer is returning to school to become an emergency medical responder.

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Ag We make America happen. Ai

*- American Federation of State,
County, and Municipal
Employees,
AFL-CIO*

State Legislative Update: AFSCME Testifies at Assembly Hearing

(Article from www.afscme48.org)

On Jan. 13, the State Assembly Committee on Labor held a public hearing on Assembly Bill 609, authored by Rep. Fred Kessler (D-Milwaukee). AB 609 would limit the ability of courts to overturn rulings by arbitrators in a mediation arbitration process, and your Union testified in support of the bill. We're asking the committee to schedule a vote in the coming weeks.

††††Currently, courts have broad powers to overturn an arbitrator's decision, even when both sides in the dispute have agreed to binding arbitration. These powers weaken the arbitration process, and take the final decision out of the hands of an arbitrator experienced with the issues

in dispute and place them in the hands of a judge who may or may not be familiar with labor/management negotiations.

††††In other Assembly news: AB 644 also received a hearing in the Assembly Labor Committee on Jan.13. Authored by Rep. Christine Sinicki (D-Milwaukee) and Sen. Jim Sullivan (D-Milwaukee), the bill creates the presumption, for purposes of determining benefits, that firefighters, emergency medical services providers, law enforcement officers and corrections officers who die or are disabled due to an infectious communicable disease, contracted the disease through their line of work.

††††Under current law, these

protections extend to fire fighters for heart and respiratory issues they likely would have obtained as a part of their public service. This bill expands the people covered by this protection to cover diseases that can be spread by direct contact to many public employees who work with people who are at a higher risk of having such a disease.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.afscme48.org

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