

# Council 13 CONNECTION

Council 13 AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

## PUSHING BACK



### **PASSHE approves job-cutting consolidation, AFSCME responds**

*Pages 3-4*

#### ***More Inside:***

- Early morning rally wakes Cumberland County up to privatization attempt — Page 2
- Full schedule of 2021 union training webinars — Page 5
- AFSCME Free College program offers "new hope" for member's family — Page 6
- Legal Update: Another benefit of union membership — Page 8

# Executive Director's Message



Summer is upon us, sisters and brothers, and with it comes a sense of normalcy returning to all of us. We at Council 13 are excited to be fully engaged in your representation, whether at the work site or at your local meetings, and we could not be happier to be face-to-face with each of you.

Council 13 and the District Councils have been continuously representing you during the pandemic through all the services we provide. In addition to contract negotiations, arbitrations, and grievances, we have been involved in local meetings and labor/management meetings. We have provided more training opportunities for all our members and communicated to you through MemberLink, emails, virtual meetings, President's meetings, and the Member Resource Center. As employers have opened their worksites, we have been there in person. Delegate assemblies were held virtually and, in some instances, in person, utilizing outdoor venues to conduct the business of the District Council. We have been there every day and will continue to do so!

Statewide, Council 13 was influential in assuring all Commonwealth employees received Juneteenth off or earned a compensatory day. Council 13 worked tirelessly during the budget negotiations to protect our members' public services and to ensure your interests were considered with bipartisan support. We pushed back against PASSHE's consolidation proposal with testimony from members and staff, and we secured millions of dollars in funding for the state system, as well as a commitment to protect AFSCME members' jobs (read more on pages 3 and 4). We testified on your behalf for a public sector OSHA bill and continue to pursue it with bipartisan support. Nothing illustrates the need for this bill more than the recent accidental death of our PennDOT brother and another member struck by a truck while operating a jackhammer, suffering serious injuries.

Moving forward, we are excited to announce that the Council 13 Convention will be held in person on October 23 in Harrisburg at FNB Field! Additional information is forthcoming, and I hope to see each of your local unions represented! We are creating additional constituency groups, made up of members within Council 13, to better serve your professional interests and to discuss issues that pertain to your profession. We are placing a greater emphasis on labor/management meetings to resolve issues at the local level with your input. In doing so, we need your involvement and knowledge to ensure that relevant information is shared and discussed.

We allow for your voice to be heard, collectively! We know that you are the true everyday heroes, the front-line workers that provide the vital services that so many of our fellow Pennsylvanians utilize, especially during this past year.

I want to thank each of you for what you do, and I want to thank you for being a member of this great union. I continue to be honored to be your Executive Director. Thank you and God bless each of you! Stay safe and we are looking forward to seeing you soon!



**MEMBER RESOURCE CENTER**

**1-800-5-AFSCME**

**STAFF REPRESENTATIVES AVAILABLE  
MONDAY - FRIDAY 9 AM - 5 PM**

**Your one stop for any and all union issues and inquiries!**

# EARLY MORNING RALLY WAKES CUMBERLAND COUNTY UP TO NURSING HOME PRIVATIZATION ATTEMPT



Concerned citizens of Cumberland County rallied with Claremont Nursing Home workers represented by AFSCME Local 3504 in front of the courthouse on Friday, March 26, at 7:30 a.m., to urge the pause of the abrupt sale of the nursing home to a for-profit company by the county commissioners.

The event was organized by community group Citizens Saving Claremont, which is calling on county commissioners to, at the very least, open up the process for meaningful public input as there are mounting concerns about the detrimental effects privatization could have on Claremont residents and employees alike.

Many of those passing through downtown Carlisle saw the action and signified their support with loud horn honking.

"I could list multiple reasons why I oppose the sale of Claremont," Local 3504 member Autumn Alexander said.

"The most important reason for me, though, is family. I have had two family members that have resided at Claremont. One long-term and the other short-term. It's quality of care for the people I love."

Cumberland County residents are being asked to respectfully contact the commissioners (especially Vince DiFilippo at [vdifilippo@ccpa.net](mailto:vdifilippo@ccpa.net)) and urge the pause of this sale. An online petition has gathered more than 2,700 signatures, and your support is needed now to keep the momentum going to save Claremont.

AFSCME Council 13 is proud to stand with the front-line workers at Claremont who provide such a high quality, vital service to their residents and to their community. Their union will continue to fight alongside them against this and any other threats to the quality of that service or security of their jobs.



AFSCME Local 3504 member Autumn Alexander (right) rallies to save Claremont with her sisters and brothers in downtown Carlisle.

# PASSHE approves job-cutting university consolidation

AFSCME Council 13 is extremely disappointed in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Board of Governors' unanimous decision to approve the consolidation of six of the system's 14 universities into two.

The plan includes drastic cuts of staff and faculty throughout the entire state system and will combine the universities of California, Clarion, and Edinboro in the west, and Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield in the northeast.

Council 13 has maintained the position that this is a rushed, inadequate plan that threatens the livelihoods of the PASSHE workforce and the quality of service and education on the system's campuses.

Custodians, groundskeepers, support staff, clerical staff, and other essential workers who AFSCME represents, have kept these campuses running safely and efficiently despite a global pandemic. Now, their jobs are at risk.

"While we are extremely disappointed in this latest development, we are not the least bit deterred from doing what is necessary to defend workers on PASSHE campuses," AFSCME Council 13 Executive Director David Henderson said.

"The university employees who AFSCME represents have kept these universities functioning throughout a pandemic, and we will continue working with university leadership to save their jobs wherever possible."

*Read more on the next page about AFSCME's efforts to save members' jobs and gain crucial funding*

It was clear from the beginning that PASSHE's "system redesign" would jeopardize the jobs of faculty and staff at all 14 universities, and a report released by the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) shows the economic impact will be even worse than expected for the campuses' workers and their surrounding communities.

The study shows that university consolidation will hurt local economies in a way similar to the ongoing experiences in Pennsylvania with factory closures and job losses. The abstract of the report reads in-part, "The cuts, amounting to 14 percent of overall PASSHE employment, are of a magnitude equivalent to the largest private-sector plant closings and mass layoffs of the previous decade in Pennsylvania. This study documents that the cuts and their spillover effects will have a substantial negative impact on the Pennsylvania economy. The largest negative impacts in terms of job loss and revenue decline will be in the economic regions near each university that is facing job cuts."

The study also reveals that the system will see a 11 percent budget cut as of 2023, adjusting for inflation. Within that budget cut, 73 percent of the cuts are to personnel. According to the study, "at three of the universities slated for consolidation, Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield, more than 100% of the cuts are to personnel; that is, non-personnel parts of the budget are increasing while staff is being cut. At the other three universities undergoing consolidation, California, Clarion, and Edinboro, personnel cuts constitute fully 85% of the budget cuts."

This is further proof that not enough has been done to avoid furloughs while still making the system more financially stable – goals that all parties should want to achieve.

No matter what, AFSCME's goal remains the same, and that is to continue to explore every possible avenue to avoid outsourcing and job cuts on PASSHE campuses for the good of students and employees alike.



# AFSCME RESPONDS



Members of AFSCME Local 2360 rallied in downtown Lock Haven on Saturday, March 20, to voice their opposition to PASSHE's proposed job cuts as about 40 custodians and groundskeepers on their campus faced potential layoffs and outsourcing. Their union sisters and brothers and members of the community came out in full force to show their support. About a month later, Local 2360 President Shawn O'Dell learned that those custodial jobs would remain in-house after university management realized the savings of outsourcing were simply not worth it. AFSCME firmly believes this would be the case at other universities, as well, if time were given to further examine the situation.



AFSCME Local 2329 (Edinboro University) President Ross Brumagin (left) and AFSCME Local 2360 (Lock Haven University) President Shawn O'Dell (right) testified via Zoom to the PA Senate Democratic Policy Committee on the impact of PASSHE's redesign plan on Monday, May 17, 2021. Ross also testified to the House Democratic Policy Committee on May 20, along with District Council 85 Director Shane Clark (below).



"One of my biggest issues with PASSHE's integration plan is that it's not really much of a plan at all."



"I believe in Lock Haven University, and now I feel like I am watching it be destroyed before my very eyes."

## PASSHE receives \$200 million commitment, commits to working with unions to avoid furloughs

While PASSHE moves forward with consolidation, the system has received the first \$50 million of a \$200 million three-year commitment from the state after strong advocacy from Governor Tom Wolf.

This funding is to be used for improving student retention and graduation rates; ensuring campus communities are diverse and inclusive and produce equitable outcomes for students, faculty, and staff; targeting financial and other supports to make PASSHE more affordable for low-income students; growing enrollments through reinvigorated marketing; and modernizing essential infrastructure.

PASSHE is also working with AFSCME and APSCUF to use a portion of the investment to support its workforce. This will minimize reliance on retrenchment and furloughs through a variety of means including retirement incentives, placement and outplacement for impacted employees, and providing reskilling and upskilling opportunities through credentialing programs.

AFSCME-represented employees facing role elimination will have placement opportunities with other state agencies and an extended furlough notice period to allow for that. Additionally, PASSHE and AFSCME will work together to ensure no functions that impact current AFSCME-represented employees are outsourced.



# Organizing Victories!

## Franklin County Housing Authority

The nonprofessional and professional workers at the Franklin County Housing Authority have won their union election, voting in favor of representation by AFSCME District Council 89! This brings 25 new workers to AFSCME ranks.



## Upper Pottsgrove Township

The Public Works Department workers of Upper Pottsgrove Township have won their union election, voting in favor of representation by AFSCME District Council 88! This brings four new workers to AFSCME ranks.

**Welcome to the AFSCME family!**

## FULL SCHEDULE OF 2021 UNION TRAINING WEBINARS

AFSCME Council 13 has announced free webinar trainings for members throughout all of 2021. These virtual trainings will build your skills as a local officer and as a union organizer. Registration links can be found in the calendar on [AFSCME13.org](http://AFSCME13.org).



- Treasurer Training - July 7 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Treasurer Training - July 7 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Steward Training - July 13-15 @ 6:00-8:30 PM
- Officer Training - August 24 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Officer Training - August 24 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Treasurer Training - September 1 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Treasurer Training - September 1 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Talking Union - September 8 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Talking Union - September 8 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Steward Training - September 21-23 @ 2:00-4:30 PM
- Treasurer Training - October 6 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Treasurer Training - October 6 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Grievance Training - October 14 @ 6:00-7:30 PM
- Treasurer Training - November 3 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Treasurer Training - November 3 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- New Employee Outreach - November 4 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- New Employee Outreach - November 4 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Steward Training - November 8-10 @ 6:00-8:30 PM
- Treasurer Training - December 1 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Treasurer Training - December 1 @ 6:00-8:00 PM
- Officer Training - December 9 @ 2:00-4:00 PM
- Officer Training - December 9 @ 6:00-8:00 PM

## SIGN UP NOW: MemberLink

[memberlink.afscme13.org](http://memberlink.afscme13.org)

- Union member resources
- Targeted news articles
- Update your information

5



# AFSCME Free College Benefit offers "new hope" for member's family

In addition to free associate degrees, AFSCME is now offering its Free Bachelor's Degree Completion Program permanently!

This is actual free online education that is designed to fit into the busy schedules of hardworking AFSCME members AND their families.

Debbie Jenkins is a member of AFSCME Local 1985 and employee of the PA Department of Revenue. Her daughter Ashley was furloughed and told her mom she wished she could earn some college credits, but feared it was not a good time.

Debbie told Ashley about her union's Free College Benefit, and Ashley has now earned her Business Management Degree and a Certificate in Cyber Security.

"It's giving her a new hope on an otherwise gloomy situation," Debbie said.

Council 13 wishes Ashley the best in her new educational and career endeavors!

**NOW ENROLLING FOR SUMMER CLASSES: AUGUST 16, 2021**



AFSCME Local 1985 (PA Dept. of Revenue) member Debbie Jenkins with her daughter Ashley, who is earning her Business Management Degree through the AFSCME Free College Benefit.

For more information on AFSCME's Free College Benefit (Associate Degree): [freecollege.afscme.org](http://freecollege.afscme.org) or 888-590-9009

For more information on AFSCME's Free Bachelor's Degree Completion Program: [bachelorsdegree.afscme.org](http://bachelorsdegree.afscme.org) or 888-897-9671



# HERSHEY PARK

**\$41 each!**

**DISCOUNT TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW FOR AFSCME MEMBERS**

**ORDER NOW:**

**1-800-5-AFSCME**

# STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT

## Angela Ferritto named Resources & Events Planner for AFSCME Council 13



Angela Ferritto assumed the position of Resources & Events Planner in AFSCME Council 13's Education & Resources Department on July 1, 2021.

Angela is transferring from Council 13's Grievance Department, where she worked for the last four years as a Staff Representative handling Article 27 grievances among other duties. Prior to that, Angela worked as an Organizer for Council 13 for 7.5 years. Angela was introduced to AFSCME as an employee of the PA Department of Revenue, where she was a member and Local Union President of Local 2594 (Erie County Clericals).

Through her various roles over the years, Angela brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Education & Resources Department. Congratulations to Angela on earning this new position!

## COMMONWEALTH WARNS OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FRAUD ACTIVITY

*The Pennsylvania Office of Administration issued the following message to Commonwealth employees regarding an increase in fraudulent attempts to apply for unemployment benefits using previously stolen identities:*

The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) is seeing an increase in fraudulent attempts to apply for unemployment benefits using previously stolen identities. This is a widespread issue affecting unemployment programs in every state. L&I continues to work closely with its counterparts, as well as federal and state authorities, to hold fraudsters accountable and implement methods to identify and block these fraud attempts.

Unemployment fraud can affect children, retirees, workers and legitimate claimants. Criminals frequently steal identities to commit fraud themselves or to sell personal identifiable information to other criminals on the online black market, also known as the dark web. As a result, information stolen from one organization may be used by criminals to commit fraud against other organizations.

AFSCME members should be vigilant in protecting their personal information and reporting suspected or known fraud and identity theft. If you or someone you know believes they are a victim of unemployment fraud, L&I recommends that you take the following steps.



### What to do when someone files for unemployment benefits using your identity:

- File a form online:
  - Unemployment compensation fraud
  - Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) fraud
- File via phone:
  - Call the PA Fraud Hotline at 800-692-7469
- File a report with police:
  - Contact police in the municipality you resided in at the time the unemployment fraud occurred/benefits in question were paid. A copy of the filed police report must also be provided to the Office of Unemployment Compensation.
- Start a recovery plan with the Federal Trade Commission by visiting [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov).

Visit [www.uc.pa.gov](http://www.uc.pa.gov) for more unemployment fraud information and tips.



# LEGAL UPDATE

## ANOTHER BENEFIT OF UNION MEMBERSHIP: OBTAIN YOUR FREE WILL AND LIVING WILL THROUGH THE AFSCME COUNCIL 13 LEGAL SERVICES PLAN

by Ruth Ann DiDonato, Esquire

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us that life can change in a moment. Over the past year, have you awakened in the middle of the night wondering if your loved ones know your wishes regarding life-support measures? Have you wished that you had found the time to prepare a will before the pandemic began? As we begin to emerge from these trying times, now is a perfect time to ensure that your affairs are in order. And for members of the union, the AFSCME Council 13 Legal Services Plan is here to help.

Under the Legal Services Plan, both the member and their spouse are eligible to receive a personally-prepared Last Will and Testament and a Living Will free of charge, once annually. To access this benefit, the member calls the Legal Services Plan at (800) 631-1233 or (888) 294-2747 to request a Will Questionnaire. After completing and returning the questionnaire to Willig, Williams & Davidson, the member works directly with an attorney who will assist with preparation of these two very important documents.

A Last Will and Testament disposes of your solely-owned assets at death. These assets are called “probate assets.” An example of a probate asset is a checking account, which is titled only in your name. Non-probate assets refer to assets that are titled jointly with another individual; assets held by a trust; assets that have a designated beneficiary; or assets that have been made “payable on death” to another individual at the decedent’s death. Assets which you own jointly with another person or persons, will pass upon your death to the surviving co-owner or owners and not through your will. Examples of non-probate assets include a life insurance policy where you have designated a beneficiary. These accounts will pass to the beneficiary designated upon your death and not through your will.

In your will, you will make important decisions, such as how to allocate your assets, who to appoint as guardian for your minor child and who to appoint as trustee to handle any assets being left to the minor child. You will also appoint an executor, who will handle the estate administration following your passing. Therefore, it is important to have a Last Will and Testament prepared by an experienced attorney so that your wishes will be followed, and your probate assets left to those loved ones that you wish to include.

The Living Will is a statement of your instructions to your physician if you are at the end stage of life with no hope of recovery or in an irreversible coma. This document communicates your wishes regarding whether you wish to receive life-support measures if your body was in this grave and hopeless state. These are very difficult decisions to make and the document allows you to consider your options and make a decision that encompasses your beliefs concerning how you wish to live if you became so ill as to trigger the use of this document. By creating a Living Will, you are making tough decisions about your medical care, relieving your loved ones of the burden of making those decisions for you, and documenting these decisions so that the medical staff will know how to proceed with treatment or non-treatment.

This year has brought a renewed hope for a return to a more “normal” life as our nation continues to deal with this challenging pandemic. But it is still important to prepare for a sudden illness or an unexpected passing. Allow 2021 to be the year that you take care of these worries and finally have your Last Will and Testament and Living Will documents prepared. Through the AFSCME Council 13 Legal Services Plan, the process is easy, and you will rest easy in knowing that your wishes are documented, and your needs will be met. We look forward to working together with you to accomplish this important task.

***Council 13 members can access their legal services benefit by calling:***  
1-888-294-2747 or 1-800-631-1233

***Union members are also entitled to legal benefits through Union Plus:***  
[unionplus.org/benefits/home/legal-help](https://unionplus.org/benefits/home/legal-help)

# Council 13 AFSCME CommUNITY



AFSCME District Council 86 was a proud sponsor of the Lycoming Creek Anglers Association Kids Trout Derby, where more than 200 kids participated and took home a prize.

**United Way of Lawrence County** 

223 N. Mercer St., New Castle, PA 16101

**"Gutchies" for Kidz**

Thermal Tops/Bottoms, Underwear, Socks  
Hats, Scarves and Mittens (Sizes 4—2X)



SPONSORED BY 

\*Distributed to all Lawrence County School Districts\*

AFSCME Local 2902, representing workers in Lawrence County, sponsored this year's "Gutchies For Kids" drive in partnership with United Way. According to United Way, the "Gutchies for Kids" program began with the Quota International Club of Hermitage and was introduced to New Castle by then-President Connie McMichaels, Connerly's Cleaners and the United Way of Lawrence County. "Gutchies" is Western Pennsylvania slang for underwear. Connie started collecting items such as underwear, socks, pajamas, and long underwear for children in the area, and distributing them through Midwestern IU-4 throughout Lawrence County. "This program helps the most vulnerable population in our community and we are proud to support this effort," Local 2902 President Charl Cox said. All collections were distributed to school districts in Lawrence County.

Visit our website!



afscme13.org

Council 13 Connection  
Copyright © 2021 - AFSCME Council 13 - All rights reserved

David Henderson, Executive Director  
Jane Gill, President  
Earnestine Kearse, Secretary  
Shawn Makar, Treasurer

Jennifer George, Editor and PR/Communications Director  
William Kauffman, Editor and Writer/Media Technician

AFSCME Council 13 Member Resource Center:  
1-800-5-AFSCME

Email:  
webadmin@afscme13.org

Like us on Facebook!



facebook.com/  
AFSCMECouncil13