

July 22, 2021

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2021 Regular and Special Session Highlights

AFSCME Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl said, "We were able to secure many victories through union solidarity! Our collective diligence and activism resulted in members making countless calls and sending emails to our elected officials. Members also took our message and their stories to social media and participated in press conferences to fight for our legislative priorities during the 2021 legislative session. Thank you for your continued activism!

"A huge shout-out and **thank you** also goes out to Legislative Director Ethan Vogel, Legislative Representative Pat Banner, Public Affairs and Political Action Director Max Hall, C5 Staff Sector Liaisons, our management team, field reps, and office staff for all of your incredible work during this difficult legislative session.

"In March 2021, we led one of the largest **Day on the Hill** events at the Capitol. Hundreds of members and retirees met with more elected officials than ever before in our council's history! We put a face to the honorable work you do every day, and you held lawmakers accountable to our shared values as union members and the working class. We remain grateful for the continued activism and passion of all AFSCME C5 members. Together, we will continue to reach and surpass our identified goals as a union."

Our work resulted in the following wins-

Transportation. All operating adjustments for MnDOT as requested by the Governor's initial budget were funded in the transportation bill. **Driver and Vehicle Services** within the Department of Public Safety received the full operating adjustment as requested by the Governor. Republican efforts to privatize public safety by allowing third parties to test for Class D and CDL licenses were defeated. Our

union successfully led the effort to block this harmful privatization provision.

Public Safety - Corrections, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem. The Public Safety negotiations continued to the very end with last minute agreement on additional police reforms finally allowing a deal to fall in place. The bill included full funding for operating adjustments for the Department of Corrections, Public Safety, Courts, Guardian ad Litem Board, and other boards and commissions.

Education. In coalition with Governor Tim Walz and other labor unions, we helped defeat efforts to privatize public education funding through a voucher system. The final agreement provides more funding for the education formula than any time in the last 15 years. Senate Republicans refused to include our legislative priority to extend unemployment benefits to hourly school employees, and we will continue to push this legislation going forward.

Higher Ed. Minnesota State will receive a budget increase of \$56 million over the two-year budget period with \$45 million dedicated for operations and maintenance. An additional \$5.4 million per biennium will fund supplemental aid to non-metro colleges. **University of Minnesota** will receive a funding increase of \$38.5 million. These increases are in addition to funding from the last federal stimulus package.



Health and Human Services. House HHS Chair, Tina Liebling (DFL, Rochester) called this agreement "**the best HHS bill we've seen in a generation.**" It includes historic investments for working people and additional funding to make our workplaces more safe. Among other gains we fought for and secured, Direct Care and Treatment will receive a funding increase for operating adjustment of \$33.5 million in FY 22-23 and \$51.8 million in FY 24-25.

Veterans Home Funding. We helped secure a \$7.6 million operating adjustment for existing veteran's homes, and \$8.6 million for staffing at three new veteran's homes in Bemidji, Montevideo, and Preston with hiring to begin in the fall of 2022 with potential winter 2023 opening.

Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). This session, Senate Republicans refused to compromise in any meaningful way on PFML, and it was ultimately left out of the Jobs and Commerce omnibus bill. We will continue to advocate for this necessary provision for all working people.

When we work together, we will accomplish anything!

For additional legislative session highlights, go to our Council 5 website.



New Council 5 Sector Liaison Structure

Executive Director Julie Bleyhl: "A new addition to aid our legislative communication is our staff sector liaison structure which includes state, county, city, and private/special sectors, leaving no member or sector behind. This new structure allows for effective and quick communication between the affected budget area and our members who would be directly impacted by these decisions.

"This critical communication puts our legislative team, sector liaisons, staff, and members in direct contact more than ever before to engage and educate our lawmakers on the work that you do through committee testimony, press conferences, and more. We delivered upon our legislative agenda and ensured front-line worker input is truly heard in the halls of power through this new process, including the new creation of a city/county staff liaison.

"This is a great example of the Green Machine hard at work and creating new systems within our union that will be more effective and deliver upon our priorities!"

AFSCME State Multi-Unit Negotiations Team Reach TA with the State

The AFSCME Council 5 multi-unit negotiations team representing more than 18,000 state employees have reached a tentative agreement with the state after more than 175 hours of negotiations over several months. TA highlights include:

- * 2.5% wage adjustment in the first year (retroactive to July 1, 2021), and
- * 2.5% in the second year of the contract,
- * New Juneteenth holiday added,
- * Additional 100 hours of Injured-on-Duty leave,
- * Additional \$75 dollar-for-dollar match (up to \$250) for employees' deferred compensation plan,
- * Significant health care wins, including no plan design changes, fully covering 3D mammograms to the plan and more.

The negotiations team also successfully fought back against the employer's attempt to strip away our seniority, implement 30-day furloughs, the employer being allowed to take away

step increases as a form of discipline, and more. The team fought hard and prevented these harmful proposals from moving forward. Thank you for wearing your AFSCME green at work, signing our petition, sharing your stories, and supporting your negotiations team!

Congratulations, siblings!

AFSCME Local 1337 Reach TA

AFSCME members in private assisted-living homes in Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, reached a tentative agreement for a new union contract bringing all members to a \$15 minimum wage, a new wage grid honoring seniority and experience, and two extra paid holidays every year.

Our brothers and sisters stayed strong on the front lines of the COVID-crisis caring for their community and appreciate all the support of their co-workers and union family.

Congratulations, siblings!

Duluth Human Development Center Workers Reach TA

AFSCME Local 3558 members reached a 3-year TA with their employer that resulted in the following:

- Market adjustments for everyone from 1% to 36.5%.
- Struck and modified language allowing the employer to pay out bonuses at will.
- Added dual-role clinicians to the bargaining unit.

Congratulations, siblings!

City of Duluth Local 66

Members of AFSCME Local 66-City of Duluth won a case-setting arbitration. The employer sought to win a retroactive termination and was rejected by the arbitrator! The CBA has no provision for a "retroactive termination" as was attempted here.

Great job, siblings!

Community Back-to-School Unity Day, August 28, Noon - 5 p.m.

Please join these caring organizations as they celebrate life and healing in the Minneapolis area. **Goal:** 400 backpacks filled with school supplies. The event includes free school supplies, free food, bounce house, games, and giveaways.

Me after organizing with my coworkers to join AFSCME



Create your own AFSCME social media graphic at <https://memegenerator.afscme.org/>

This event will be held at **Elks Lodge, 1614 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis.** Co-Sponsors include: AFSCME Local 4001 (Minnesota State), KMOJ Radio, IBEW Local Union, Minneapolis Police Department 4th Precinct, People of Color Union Members (POCUM), Minneapolis Labor Federation, and others.

Add this event to your calendar!

Chapter 5 Retirees Organizing Grants to Local Sub-Chapters

Chapter 5 President Jeff Birttner and the Chapter 5 Retirees Executive Board approved their sub-chapter leaders to request organizing grants from Chapter 5 Retirees to grow retiree membership and connect with one another.

Great work, siblings!

Protecting Pensions Campaign

Politicians often politicize our pensions by trying to divert and micromanage our pension funds, or take away our defined-benefit pension and move to a 401(k) plan. AFSCME Council 5's position is clear: **Do not touch our pensions, and we will not tolerate micromanagement of our pension funds.**

If you are interested in participating in this campaign, please email Public Affairs and Political Action Director Max Hall at: Max.Hall@afscmemn.org, who will work with you to record a short video and put a face to our pensions.

Resources for Members

Stay up-to-date on all the latest news by following @afscmemn5 on FaceBook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Subscribe to our YouTube channel **AFSCME Council 5** and get guidance and resources at afscmemn.org. Look for action alerts via email and texts, so you know when to take action to protect working families.

Be well and stay safe.