SEVENTEENTH BIENNIAL
AFSCME ILLINOIS RETIREES
CHAPTER 31
CONVENTION

OCTOBER 16-17, 2019

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION #1

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

WHEREAS:

We the AFSCME Illinois Retirees resolve and appreciate the following:

International AFSCME Retiree Director, Ann Widger;
International AFSCME International Retiree Field Manager, Ben Hodapp;
International AFSCME Regional Organizer, Kayce Reed
International AFSCME Communication Coordinator Terri Brady, and the International staff;
AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director, Roberta Lynch;
AFSCME Council 31 Deputy Director, Mike Newman;
AFSCME Council 31 Legislative and Political Staff, Adrienne Alexander, John Cameron, Jason Kay, Dominic Watson, and Joanna Webb-Gauvin; and our Retiree Coordinator, Maria Britton-Sipe;
AFSCME Retiree Chair Officers and Executive Board:
Retiree sub-chapter presidents and officers; and the
Work of our deceased brothers and sisters.

WHEREAS:

We resolve and express our appreciation to all of those who have put forth special efforts in support of AFSCME retirees by lobbying, letter writing, and telephoning.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Seventeenth Biennial Convention of AFSCME Illinois Retirees Chapter 31 give their support to the above for all of the special efforts and will gratefully work to establish efficient and effective ways of obtaining the high goals that have been outlined by these people and organizations.

RESOLUTION #2

GENERAL PROGRAM

WHEREAS:

The AFSCME Illinois Retirees Chapter 31 is proudly affiliated with AFSCME International and the AFSCME International Retiree Council, a nation-wide organization fighting for the dignity and security for all retired public employees; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME is an affiliated union of the Alliance for Retired Americans and the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans, on which Executive Board member Don Todd serves as the President.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Retirees will constantly give our support to the national program headed by the International Retiree Council which is targeted at protecting and giving strength to the voice of the retirees in Washington, D.C.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That we will continue to work with the Alliance for Retired Americans and the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans to ensure the security of senior citizens by fighting for common issues such as national health care reform, Social Security reform, and protecting the health and welfare of working America; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That all of our 35 sub-chapters will continue to be an affiliated "club" of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans by the end of calendar year 2020.

RESOLUTION #3

POLITICAL ACTION

WHEREAS:
Working people and retirees have entered an era in which they must fight against opponents with enormous wealth and power or accept a vastly diminished quality of life for themselves, their children and their grandchildren; and

WHEREAS:
Politics is one of the essential fronts on which that fight must be won; and

WHEREAS:
The massive concentration of wealth among the top 1% has enabled them to pour unprecedented resources into attacks on pensions, public services, and the right to collective bargaining; and

WHEREAS:
Those same interests seek to undermine the public programs, such as Medicare and Social Security, that are essential to the well-being of all working families;

WHEREAS:
Even in this hostile environment, union members have won important victories through political action, including ousting a hostile Governor, and replacing him with a Governor who values working people; getting a new state contract ratified after a 4 year battle; holding the line against massive increases of health insurance costs for state and university retirees; ensuring payment of back-pay, step increases, and longevity pay owed to retirees; stopping the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, protecting retirement security, blocking attacks on collective bargaining; and

WHEREAS:
Illinois is a key battleground in the fight for control of the US House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS:
Members of the Illinois General Assembly who have stood with our union against the anti-worker agenda pursued by wealthy CEOs and the politicians they control have been targeted for defeat; and

WHEREAS:
Illinois volunteers can play an important role in these elections, as well as races in Wisconsin and other neighboring states; and

WHEREAS:

Chapter 31 continues to have one of the leading PEOPLE participation rates in AFSCME with over 12% of members enrolled;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will work to recruit at least 2% of their members as active volunteers in campaigns for union-endorsed candidates;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Chapter 31 and all affiliated sub-chapters will continue their combined efforts to sign up new members for the PEOPLE program in order to raise vitally needed funds for legislative and political activity; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That each sub-chapter work within AFSCME Chapter 31 to establish an ongoing campaign to inform the membership about the key issues that face the labor movement and retirees and to mobilize them to communicate with their legislators on these issues.

RESOLUTION #4

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Chapter 31 has had continued success in recruiting new members through various recruitment mailings; and

WHEREAS:

Some areas in the State have no sub-chapter charters; and

WHEREAS:

Our continued strength as an effective public sector retiree organization is a direct result of our ability to tap into the membership of Council 31 and build a large membership base; and

WHEREAS:

The membership base allows our retiree members to be informed and influential voters, to win significant gains for retirees, and forestall attacks on senior citizens' standard of living; and

WHEREAS:

The continued involvement of union retirees assists AFSCME Council 31 by participating in many activities including, but not limited to, labor strikes, rallies, lobbying, and grassroots activities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That all sub-chapters continue to place a significant emphasis on recruiting people in their communities to join Chapter 31 through the development of sub-chapter membership committees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That a plan of action be implemented by the Chapter 31 Membership Committee to identify and develop leadership in areas with no chartered sub-chapter so that one may be established; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will work with the sub-chapter membership committees to develop ways to reach out to the various AFSCME Council 31 locals in their region to introduce themselves to the local leadership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will make a full effort to build effective partnerships with AFSCME locals, their leadership, and their staff, to the end of ensuring continuity between active membership and retiree membership; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That the delegates to the Seventeenth Biennial Convention establish a goal of having 25,000 members by the Eighteenth Biennial Convention in 2020.

RESOLUTION #5

ELECTING PUBLIC PENSION TRUSTEES

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Chapter 31 represents over 23,000 public sector retirees that share a common commitment to public service and who have invested in a financially sound public retirement system for their financial security; and

WHEREAS:

Our members participate in 5 public pension systems with assets totaling more than $91 billion; and

WHEREAS:

The elected boards and trustees of those retirement systems serve as fiduciaries whose responsibilities it is to ensure the transparency in how funds are invested to ensure sufficient funds will be available to pay retirement benefits many years into the future, and make certain systems are in place to pay retirement benefits in a timely and accurate manner; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME has been a leader in the efforts to reform corporate governance, working to improve the responsiveness of boards of directors and executives to shareholders, not only for our own members, but of public employees and retirees generally.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will continue to recruit and develop strong leaders to run for the position of trustee in all 5 retirement systems who are interested in advocating to maintain a healthy, well-managed, and transparent pension systems; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT:

Chapter 31 commends the work of our current elected trustees, Sharon Thompson (IMRF), Trudy Williams (IMRF), John Tilden (SERS), Jeremy Hawk (SERS), Stephen Mittons (SERS), Shaun Dawson (SERS), David Morris (SERS), and Kevin Ochalla (Cook County).

RESOLUTION # 6

DEFENDING UNION RIGHTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

WHEREAS:

The labor movement has been the strongest force in our nation's history for securing and defending economic justice, democratic governance and individual freedom; and

WHEREAS:

For that very same reason, the rights of working people to join and build strong unions has been under sustained attack for the last half-century by the forces of corporate power and wealthy privilege; and

WHEREAS:

As a consequence, union density has dramatically declined in the private sector where less than 7% of all workers are unionized, while 34% of all public employees are protected by a union, and even though only 1 in 6 workers is employed by the public sector, public sector union members constitute nearly half of all union membership; and

WHEREAS:

Because public sector unions have become the backbone of the labor movement, they have also become the target for a sophisticated, well-funded and relentless vendetta by corporate elites over the last two decades; and

WHEREAS:

That assault has many components including the attempts to privatize public services, defund public education and especially public higher education, eliminate public pension plans, and fiscally strangle state and local governments by reducing public revenues; and

WHEREAS:

The assault on public sector unionism has also been carried on in the nation's courts, with a multi-year strategy to undermine settled constitutional rights and negate state labor laws, culminating in the *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* ruling in June 2018 by the U.S. Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS:

Hardly content with damage inflicted by the *Janus* ruling, those same corporate-funded sources are now engaged in further litigation aimed depleting union ranks and draining their treasuries, pushing additional harmful legislation where politically possible, and conducting dark money operations to persuade individual union rank-and-filers and retirees to drop their membership.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 recommits its itself to fighting all attacks on the union rights of public service workers, and will engage its resources at every level – legal, legislative, political, through public discourse as well as by member to member communication – in that ongoing struggle; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will support policies and legislative initiatives to strengthen union rights and build union power in the public sector, including pending legislation now in the Illinois General Assembly and H.R.3463/S.1970, the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2019, in the Congress; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will defend against outside parties attempting to confuse our members and persuade them to drop membership through our robust AFSCME Strong program; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will also continue its historical effort to defend the public sector, maintain and improve public services, oppose privatization in all its forms, defend public pension benefits and support the needed revenues and revenue reforms like the Fair Tax that will adequately fund those services.

RESOLUTION #7

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

WHEREAS:

AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31 defines organizational objectives which include keeping members informed and educated on issues that affect them; and

WHEREAS:

We have constantly identified key issues and brought experts to sub-chapter meetings for background and information of these issues; and

WHEREAS:

We are continuously requesting the involvement of our members in various activities which would result in resolving issues and eventually improve or prevent harm in our members' lives; and

WHEREAS:

It is extremely important for the sub-chapter leadership to put emphasis on these issues, so that the members are aware of them and can develop appropriate action in addressing them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That we will continue to support efforts to educate and communicate with our members and provide ongoing leadership training for sub-chapter officers; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That the Chapter 31 Executive Board will establish a Communications Committee to work with the staff of Chapter 31 to place emphasis on communicating important issues to the membership through such important means as the Council 31 newspaper, *On the Move*, the monthly leadership letters, and various International publications, as well as digital communications and social media.

RESOLUTION #8

PENSION BENEFIT COMPOUNDING

WHEREAS:

Illinois state and public university retirees who are in tier one, Cook County retirees and City of Chicago retirees have their annual 3% cost-of-living pension adjustment compounded, which means that their pension is adjusted based on their pension payments from the previous year; and

WHEREAS:

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF), and state and university employees/retirees in tier two do not have a compounded 3% annual adjustment, which means the adjustment is based upon their original monthly pension benefit from the first month of their retirement; and

WHEREAS:

Retirees who do not have their pension benefit compounded suffer a loss of purchasing power as their pension benefits are eroded by inflation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31, in cooperation with Council 31, will advocate for a compounded 3% annual adjustment for IMRF and those hired by the state and public universities after January 1, 2011; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31, in cooperation with Council 31, will work to protect the compounded cost of living adjustment for the public sector retirees that currently have it.

RESOLUTION #9

DEFENDING RETIREMENT SECURITY

WHEREAS:

Retirement security is one of the most important issues facing working people in our country with worker pension benefits threatened in both the public and private sectors, and the basic concept of defined benefit pension plans under direct assault; and

WHEREAS:

Public pensions in Illinois represent a key element of employee compensation for hundreds of thousands of workers in the public service based on our state's commitment to the fundamental principle that those who have worked hard and played by the rules should be able to retire and live out their remaining years with dignity and security; and

WHEREAS:

Individual retirement savings, on average, are dangerously low, making the guaranteed benefits of pensions fundamental to a secure retirement after a lifetime of work; and

WHEREAS:

For far too long the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, and Cook County have failed to adequately fund their pension systems, leaving the state with an unfunded pension liability estimated at $133.5 billion and the City of Chicago with an unfunded liability estimated at more than $12.7 billion; and

WHEREAS:

Study after study has shown that pension benefits received by most Illinois' public retirees are modest and well in line with national trends and that pension plans are a far more cost-efficient means of providing retirement income as compared to defined contribution (401-K) accounts and "hybrid" plans that dilute defined benefit pension plans with defined contribution elements; and

WHEREAS:

The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF), with benefits comparable to the State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) of Illinois, does not have a liability crisis, proving that the State of Illinois has a pension *funding* problem, not a problem of excessively generous pension benefits; and

WHEREAS:

Article XIII of the Illinois Constitution contains a "non-diminishment" clause that prohibits the pension benefits of current employees from being reduced by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS:

In an effort intended to cut pension costs for all Illinois state and local governments, the Illinois General Assembly enacted a substandard "Tier II" pension benefit for all Illinois public pension systems that applies to employees hired after 2010 and which requires most of these

employees to work until age 67 to receive an unreduced pension while saddling future retirees with a totally inadequate cost-of-living adjustment in retirement; and

WHEREAS:

The Illinois business community, led by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago and backed by other business organizations and most of the news media, continue a sustained and relentless propaganda and political campaign aimed at substantially reducing public employee benefits and silencing labor's voice in negotiating retirement security for its members; and

WHEREAS:

AFSCME and our allied public sector unions, including both teachers' unions, police, fire, nurse and the service employees, have organized and financed the We Are One Illinois coalition to oppose attacks on our members retirement security through grass-roots mobilization and paid media in order to educate the public on the need to maintain public defined benefit pension plans and retiree health benefits.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Chapter 31 continue to strongly oppose any measure that would unfairly diminish the pension benefits of Illinois public employees or establish defined contribution plans for such employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will continue to inform members about the on-going threat to their pension benefits and mobilize members to engage in the kind of concerted, intensive political activism that is essential to defeat this threat; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED:

That AFSCME Chapter 31 will vigorously oppose any effort to repeal the constitutional protections afforded to public employee pensions in Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 recognizes that Illinois public pension systems do, in fact, face a significant funding shortfall and will continue to work with our allies in We Are One Illinois to advance sound, long term solutions to this problem, recognizing that such reforms must be supported by an adequate revenue system for Illinois state and local governments; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That since budget and benefit cuts are clearly not the answer to the pension funding crisis, AFSCME supports new revenue measures—including, amending our state constitution to allow fair state taxes for individuals and corporations with higher rates for higher income levels and lower rates for lower income levels, and closing corporate tax loopholes to raise additional revenues that would allow the state to balance its budget while meeting its obligation for the unfunded pension liabilities of Illinois state and local governments.

RESOLUTION #10

OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT PENSION AND WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION

WHEREAS:

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) are two measures in the Social Security Act that unfairly penalize public pensioners who worked in public jobs not covered by Social Security; and

WHEREAS:

These offsets reduce or even eliminate Social Security benefits for 25% of public employees nationwide, including millions of retired federal, state and local government employees who worked as teachers, police, firefighters and general employees; and

WHEREAS:

The GPO requires affected public retirees to offset 2/3 of their public pensions against any Social Security spouse or survivor benefit to which they would otherwise be entitled; and

WHEREAS:

The GPO has a particularly harsh impact on moderate- and low-income pensioners, with women affected disproportionately and more likely to end life in poverty; and

WHEREAS:

Victims of the GPO would be entitled to collect their full Social Security benefit – based on a spouse's work record – if they had never worked a day in any type of employment, but are singled out for the offset because they worked in public sector jobs; and

WHEREAS:

The WEP applies a similar offset to Social Security benefits *earned* by public employees themselves in Social Security-covered jobs -- held before, during or after their public-sector careers; and

WHEREAS:

This makes a substantial reduction and in some cases it exceeds $509 per month from a beneficiaries *earned* Social Security benefits, simply because they worked at some point in the public sector.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

Illinois AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 will work to enact federal legislation to repeal or significantly modify the GPO and WEP in order to protect the Social Security benefits of affected public retirees; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 endorses the following bill currently pending in the 116th Congress:

- S.521 Social Security Fairness Act - Senator Sherrod Brown

RESOLUTION #11

PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare are government-sponsored insurance programs that provide dignity and security to senior citizens and people with disabilities, keeping millions out of poverty; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare benefits are *earned* on the job – tied directly to the payroll contributions made by nearly every American worker; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare have made full payment of benefits for over 82 years and almost 53 years respectively, and the long term solvency of these programs should be addressed with all parties at the table and with the goal of protecting the integrity of the benefits, not in the context of federal budgets or deficits; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare hospital insurance are self-supporting with payroll contributions, do not contribute a penny to the federal deficit and, according to their Trustees, will be able to pay full benefits for many years to come; and

WHEREAS:

Two-thirds of all seniors depend on Social Security benefits for more than half their income and a third depend on it for more than 90% of their income, while Medicare protects beneficiaries and their families from the potentially bankrupting cost of a serious illness; and

WHEREAS:

Social Security and Medicare are highly cost-efficient programs with extremely low administrative costs because, unlike private insurance, they need no expensive marketing, make no profit, and are able to pool the resources of nearly all Americans; and

WHEREAS:

These vital programs are more threatened today than at any time in their history, with significant cutbacks included in budget proposals submitted by both Congressional Republicans and the White House; and

WHEREAS:

Proposals for benefit cuts include raising the age of eligibility for Medicare benefits; changing the formula for the Social Security COLA to a chained CPI in order to reduce annual increases; further Medicare means-testing that would raise premiums;

turning Medicare over to private insurance companies; and introducing a process to fast-track major changes to Social Security; and

WHEREAS:

Polls show that a majority of Americans want to reduce the deficit by raising taxes on the wealthy and making corporations pay their fair share, rather than cutting lifeline programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; and

WHEREAS:

Medicare just reached its 53rd anniversary, and throughout the existence of both Social Security and Medicare, both programs have made all benefit payments in full. Furthermore, the long-term solvency of these programs should be addressed with all parties at the table and with the goal of protecting the integrity of the benefits, not in the context of federal budgets or deficits.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 rejects all efforts to balance the federal budget on the backs of seniors and people with disabilities by cutting benefits in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid for either current or future beneficiaries; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will work in coalition with all other concerned organizations to build the strongest possible bulwark against all those who seek to shred the retirement safety net that Social Security and Medicare provide for our nation's senior citizens of today and tomorrow.

RESOLUTION 12

CONTAINING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

WHEREAS:

AFSCME is proud of our history in fighting to establish, maintain, and protect Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act; and

WHEREAS:

The cost of prescription drugs continues to climb, forcing working families and retirees to choose between food, rent and life sustaining prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS:

The cost of drugs is NOT correlated to the actual cost of research, development or production by pharmaceutical companies and does not reflect the public subsidies, tax breaks, or **taxpayer funds for** research and development provided to these companies by public agencies; and

WHEREAS:

Prescription drug costs are a major contributing factor to the rising cost of employer-sponsored and/or collectively bargained health plans; and

WHEREAS:

While the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 prohibits the federal government from negotiating drug prices, the government by federal law can use its bulk purchasing power to benefit veterans**,** Medicaid recipients, active duty military and in federal emergencies; and

WHEREAS:

Ever increasing drug costs strain Medicare and Medicaid budgets.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will in fight for common sense policy changes that brand name and generic drug companies us to block or delay competition and actively support the campaign for Lower Drug Prices Now for bold action to stop drug corporations form price gouging patients, insist that government set fair rules to ensure access and affordability for everyone, and rewrite the rules that allow drug corporations monopoly power to price gouge; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 support H.R. 3 that would direct the federal government to negotiate directly with prescription drug corporations for lower prices, including insulin, regardless of whether people get their health coverage through a job, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicare, or other insurance, give drug corporations a financial incentive to negotiate, establish an a maximum fair price based on what other countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom) pay for the same

drugs, stop unfair price hikes above inflation for Medicare Part B and Part D, and cap out-of-pocket costs for Part D to $2,000; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That Chapter 31 will work with other labor organizations, community partners, religious community, retiree organizations and health advocates in the campaign to Lower Drug Prices Now to create the political moment for the needed bold reforms.

RESOLUTION 13

SUPPORT FAIR TAX IN ILLINOIS

WHEREAS:
Illinois has a flat income tax, causing low and middle-class families to disproportionately bear the burden of funding the state; and

WHEREAS:
The combined effect of all state and local taxes causes hardworking people with lower incomes and struggling small business owners to pay a higher portion of their income in taxes than wealthy households and large corporations; and

WHEREAS:
Illinois' poorly- designed revenue system has prevented the state from consistently providing support for programs that strengthen communities – education, human services, healthcare and public safety; and

WHEREAS:
The Fair Tax is a more progressive way for the State to generate revenue; and

WHEREAS:
According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, Illinois has one of the most regressive tax structures in the country, as families with incomes under $19,000 pay 13.2% of their income in taxes, while those with income over $498,000 pay only 4.6%; and

WHEREAS:
The Fair Tax will create additional macroeconomic benefits for the State, as Illinoisans with smaller tax burdens find themselves with additional purchasing power; and

WHEREAS:
The Fair Tax will directly address the state's structural fiscal deficit. which has led to the chronic underfunding of the state's pension obligations, undermining their long-term viability and increasing the political support for removing the pension protection clause in the state constitution; and

WHEREAS:
Of the 41 states in the country with an income tax, 33 have graduated rate structures, including – Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS:
Only the FairTax will allow the state to increase support for schools and local governments, thus relieving the pressure increase property taxes; and

WHEREAS:

Opposition to the Fair Tax fails to recognize the ability to reduce the tax burden for the vast majority of taxpayers – this opposition stems from a desire to protect the status quo for the wealthy; and

WHEREAS:

Things must change for the better through fiscally responsible and sustainable initiatives that foster economic growth and cease to be an over-encumbrance on Illinois taxpayers.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That AFSCME Illinois Retiree Chapter 31 stand in support of the Fair Tax to reduce taxes on low and middle-income families while raising taxes on the wealthiest Illinoisans.

RESOLUTION 14

SUPPORT THE PUBLIC SERVICE FREEDOM TO NEGOTIATE ACT (H.R. 3463/S. 1970) THAT WOULD SET MINIMUM NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS THAT STATES MUST PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS

WHEREAS:
AFSCME Chapter 31 stands in solidarity with all workers fighting for the right to form a Union; and

WHEREAS:
The attacks on public employees' collective bargaining rights make it even more important that Labor stand strong in support of all public sector workers' right to collectively bargain with their employers; and

WHEREAS:
Unions provide working people with a voice on the job and the power to act collectively and—by standing together—union members earn higher wages and are more likely to have employer-provided health care, pensions and benefits such as paid sick and family leave; and

WHEREAS:
Unions also narrow wage gaps for women and people of color; secure higher safety standards; provide the means to address discrimination faced by women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals and the disabled; and win more resources to meet the needs of the people they serve; and

WHEREAS:
Unlike the private sector, there is no federal law that protects the freedom of public service workers to join together in a union and collectively bargain for fair wages, hours and working conditions; and

WHEREAS:
The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act has been introduced in the U.S. House as H.R. 3463 and the U.S. Senate as S. 1970 to set minimal national standards for collective bargaining rights that states must provide public service workers standards; and

WHEREAS:
The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act will ensure that dedicated public employees working every day to improve their communities have the right to: join together in a union selected by a majority of employees; collectively bargain over wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment; access dispute resolution mechanisms; utilize voluntary payroll deduction for union dues; engage in concerted activities related to collective bargaining and mutual aid; have their union be free from