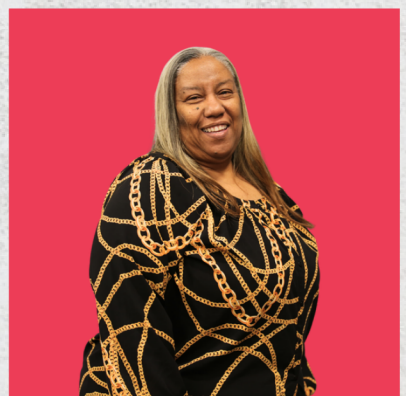


# Council 13 CONNECTION

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

*Union members stand united,  
ready to grow their movement*



## *More Inside:*

- Council 13 members speak up at town hall meetings – Page 3
- Union members take Public Sector OSHA fight to Senator's door – Page 6
- Chichester School District workers battle outsourcing attempts – Page 7
- More Healthcare Coverage: PEBTF announces major benefit enhancements – Page 8
- AND MUCH MORE!



# Message from the Administrator



Sisters and Brothers,

In the first three months of the administratorship, we received critical input at town hall meetings that were held across the commonwealth. We've made progress in key battles and are engaging on several issues through labor-management meetings. Members are fighting for their jobs and to protect standards at local governments and school districts. We are protecting workers' interests at the Capitol. More than 2,800 workers have joined us to build a stronger AFSCME – and we don't plan to slow down!

At town hall meetings throughout April, more than 400 members came together to discuss how we build the strongest possible union. Attendees were proud of what we have achieved over the years but asked for clearer and more frequent communication, transparency, and more mobilization. We are winning good contracts and fighting to protect members every day, but we need to do a better job of communicating those victories. Activists and staff need to be more visible at worksites and make sure that we engage members and non-members. We must be honest with ourselves and non-members about why we don't win every battle and make sure that non-members understand why it's important for them to join us and show their solidarity.

We are taking your input into the field. More than 60 leaders representing PennDOT workers came together and bargained for improvements that target recruitment AND retention. We accomplished this through a statewide meeting of local union presidents, labor/management discussions, and ultimately a ratification vote that came back overwhelmingly in favor of this agreement. Through that campaign, PennDOT's membership increased by 201 new members! Campaigns like this will keep our union strong for generations to come and help us win more battles.

Local leaders and activists are stepping up across the state. A number of examples are highlighted in this newsletter such as the battle against privatization at the Chichester School District, our fight to win workplace safety protections through public sector OSHA coverage at the state and federal legislatures, and our battle to ensure adequate funding for public education and retiree cost of living adjustments.

We launched our Solidarity Summer program in Philly and Pittsburgh and have trainings planned at every district council. This volunteer member organizing training will connect activists and give them the tools and power to stand up and win across Pennsylvania. This is about building stronger local unions and organizing the unorganized. I urge you to reach out to your District Council and sign up today!

Finally, 3,500+ elected local union delegates will come together at the AFSCME International convention in August in Los Angeles. This is the highest elected body of our union, and delegates will set our course for the next two years. This is an opportunity to make sure members' voices are heard, to get valuable training, and to meet with workers from all over the country who share our hopes and struggles.

As we gear up for a Summer of Solidarity and a crucial election season, I look forward to continued activism that will maintain and grow the power of this great union. Whether it's at the workplace, in the union hall, or at your kitchen table, I hope to connect with you soon.

Thanks for all you do to keep our communities and our union strong.

In Solidarity,  
Mike Sukal, Administrator, AFSCME Council 13



# COUNCIL 13 AFSCME

## *Solidarity Summer*



Solidarity Summer is in full swing from Pittsburgh to Philly and everywhere in between, where Volunteer Member Organizers are having powerful conversations with their union sisters and brothers at their worksites and homes during weekend blitzes. We're turning up the heat all summer long!



*Click here or scan the code  
to get in on the action!*





# Council 13 members speak up at town hall meetings

During the month of April, AFSCME members gathered at town hall meetings throughout Pennsylvania to connect with Council 13’s new leadership and strategize on how to strengthen the union moving forward.

Meetings were held in Harrisburg, Plymouth Meeting, Dunmore, Duncansville, New Columbia, Clarion, and Pittsburgh.

Council 13’s Administrator and AFSCME International’s Director of Organizing and Field Services, Mike Sukal, laid out the challenges the union faces, as well as possible solutions, while taking vital input and feedback from members in attendance.

“The town hall was well attended and lots of good points were made,” said Michelle Lee, Vice President of AFSCME Local 3130, who attended the Harrisburg meeting. “It’s on us. We’re leaders because we step up. We need to inspire and encourage the newer members to step up and be active as well.”

“It was nice to have an open dialog with everyone having an opportunity to speak,” said Shawn Makar, President of AFSCME Local 2361, who attended the town hall meeting in District Council 86. “It’s our union, and everyone needs to be active in righting the ship. We have an opportunity to make things even better than they were before. It’s going to take all of us to make changes moving forward that will keep our union strong now and in the future.”

It is clear that Council 13 members throughout the state have common sets of challenges within their union, as well as a common pride in the gains they have made through their union. It is equally clear that to overcome those challenges, we will all need to work together to build an even stronger Council 13 for the future.

Thank you to those who attended these meetings, and we hope you will be sure to join your sisters and brothers when we get together again soon.







# PennDOT Workers Unite!



Local Union Presidents who represent PennDOT workers gathered for a statewide labor/management meeting on April 9, 2024. A truncation agreement was reached to end the urban/rural pay divide by moving rural employees to the urban scale and providing a lump sum payment to employees not impacted by the rate increase. AFSCME members throughout the commonwealth then had the opportunity to vote on the agreement and ratified the deal with 84% of the 3,500+ voters saying YES. This is the power that union members hold when we join together!







## We are fighting for safer workplaces, retirement security, and public education!



### Public Sector OSHA

Public sector workers deserve the same protections as private sector workers. With a three-year window to come into compliance with a state OSHA plan, the long-term cost savings outweigh the initial cost. Ultimately, you cannot put a price on a human life. Public sector workers are dying every year from preventable accidents due to a lack of minimum standards. We can change that, and we must act now to pass **House Bill 299**!



### State Retiree COLA

From 1968 to 2002, the General Assembly passed COLA legislation every 4-5 years, but it has not done so since 2002. The House approved **House Bill 1416** in November 2023 to provide a COLA to pre-Act 9 retirees, but the bill now sits inactive in the Senate. We must apply pressure to ensure a COLA for the retirees who dutifully served our commonwealth for many years is a top priority in this year's state budget!



### Private School Vouchers

In 2023, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania ruled the state's system of funding public schools to be unconstitutional. AFSCME members are calling for adequate public education funding and standing against private school voucher schemes like **Senate Bill 1150**, which are backed by anti-public education billionaires, and they are harmful to students, teachers, staff, and taxpayers, alike.

## *DID YOU KNOW?*

Pennsylvania **STILL DOES NOT** have an OSHA-approved state plan for public sector workers while those in the private sector are protected by OSHA, despite both doing equally dangerous jobs; **AND** Pennsylvania's retirees have gone **MORE THAN 20 YEARS** without a Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA), which puts tens of thousands of seniors who gave decades to public service at risk of poverty; **AND** Pennsylvania's public school system is **UNCONSTITUTIONALLY UNDERFUNDED**, but billionaires are pushing private school voucher schemes that would divert desperately needed funds.

## [Click here to find your legislator!](#)



# THE ROAD TO WORKER SAFETY

## Union members take Public Sector OSHA fight to Senator’s door

House Bill 299 would finally extend OSHA-level protections to public sector workers in Pennsylvania, but the bill remains stuck in the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee, which is chaired by Senator Jarrett Coleman.

On June 21, union members braved the 90-degree temperatures to turn up the heat on Senator Coleman and urge him to allow a full vote on the Senate floor. Members and leaders of AFSCME, SEIU, CWA, UFCW, PSEA, AFT, IBEW, as well as the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO were in attendance.

The bill passed in the House last year with bipartisan support, which is the closest that public employees in Pennsylvania have gotten to finally gaining equal coverage. We are urging Senator Coleman and the entire State Senate to do the right thing and get this bill to Governor Josh Shapiro's desk.

AFSCME Local 1598 (Bucks County) member Linda Vuono spoke at the rally and shared stories of how Public Sector OSHA would help members in her local and beyond.


"The members of my local union who work in our schools would get the same protections as the privatized services in the school district that are protected by OSHA. Right now, my sisters and brothers in the same school have no safety protection oversight," Linda shared. "Senator Coleman, we need a vote!"



## Council 13 members applaud Public Service Worker Protection Act



“The lack of public sector OSHA affects students, teachers, and staff, alike.” - Brian Brocato, President, AFSCME Local 297, Pittsburgh Public Schools



Members of AFSCME Council 13 thank Congressman Chris Deluzio (PA-17) for his leadership in the introduction of the Public Service Worker Protection Act and urge immediate passage of the bill by the United States Congress.

The Public Service Worker Protection Act was introduced by Deluzio on June 14, 2024, and would extend OSHA-level protections to all public service workers nationwide, which is an initiative that AFSCME members in Pennsylvania have spent decades fighting for.


While efforts are ongoing at the state level to get House Bill 299 out of committee and on the PA Senate floor for a final vote, the Public Service Worker Protection Act would see to it that workers in all 23 states that actively exclude public sector workers from OSHA coverage, including Pennsylvania, would finally be covered.

HB 299



Council 13  
AFSCME  
We Make Pennsylvania Happen

“We need OSHA regulation in PennDOT with all the hazardous jobs we do to serve the public and keep people moving. Employers always claim to value safety, but we need a higher level of oversight to hold them to it.” - Ken Royal, VP, AFSCME Local 2163, York County DOT



WORKER  
SAFETY  
AHEAD



# Chichester School District workers battle outsourcing attempts

Members of AFSCME Local 2196 are standing united against the Chichester School Board's attempts to outsource up to 60 jobs in the district's Maintenance Department.

Workers from all departments packed the June 11 school board meeting where a Request-For-Proposal (RFP) to outsource the maintenance jobs to a private for-profit company was expected to be voted on. Fortunately, thanks to the workers' solidarity, there was no vote, but the threat still looms.

"The union means that you have more people fighting for you," said Helen Malloy, a Van Driver for the district and President of Local 2196.

"Our Maintenance Department is under siege right now, so all of us are coming together to help our fellow members in Maintenance. Four years ago, the board threatened our Transportation Department. It seems like every year that our contract comes up, they threaten one of our lines of work. If we all come together and fight for each other, it's more powerful."

Union members continue to attend every school board meeting, including the June 20 budget meeting where board members discussed a \$235,000+ superintendent position, which would be in addition to two already-existing assistant superintendent positions. Ultimately, district workers and community members alike questioned the need for this position, and a budget agreement was not reached.

"Outsourcing would hurt the community and the tax base, because if you lay off everybody, they get rehired by an outsourced service that comes in. You're not going to have your pension, you're not going to have your salary, you're going to lose your benefits. You may get some benefits, but they're going to be horrible. They may give you more money, but you're losing your benefits and your pension and your vacation time and everything that you have built during your years being here," Bus Driver and Local 2196 Vice President Roxanne Hoag said.

The workers have gained strong community support. Local 2196 created yard signs and T-shirts to raise awareness about the outsourcing attempts, and they continue to grow their union power by signing up non-members and getting more current members involved.

Joel Bryant is a custodian for the district and is among the workers whose jobs are threatened by the board's outsourcing attempts. When asked about the outsourcing efforts, Joel responded, "Well, I think it's a dumb decision because the company is for profit, and the school district is just owned by the by the public, right? By the taxpayer, right?"

"Without the union, we'd probably be voted out just last week – just right out the door," Joel said.

Chichester School District has a long union history. District workers went on strike in 2001. This is a local union that's not afraid to flex its collective muscle, and they are here for the fight against these latest attacks.

"To have a union means working together to make sure we're a team and coming together to save jobs and fight for one another. If we didn't have a union, we'd be fighting by ourselves, and we would lose very quickly," said Jamie Boughter, an Instructional Assistant and Secretary of Local 2196.

"With the union, we have everybody, and we have the community behind us. We're not alone."





# PEBTF announces major benefit enhancements

The Pennsylvania Employee Benefits Trust Fund (PEBTF) has announced significant enhancements to the current Plan of Benefits for covered Commonwealth employees and their eligible dependents.

AFSCME-represented employee contributions are negotiated in the union contract, so these improvements come with no increase to employees’ biweekly healthcare contributions.

AFSCME Council 13 is proud to have led this effort with our partners on the Board to win these improvements for state employees. The truth is, having a strong union and a voice on the job are the keys to winning these and future improvements.

If you or your coworkers are not yet union members, you or they can join by contacting the Member Resource Center at 1-800-5-AFSCME, by texting ‘UNION’ to 237263, or by visiting <https://memberlink.afscme13.org/signup>.

Information about these benefit enhancements and more can be found at [pebtf.org](http://pebtf.org).

## On August 1, 2024

- Inpatient hospice will be covered under the medical benefit.
- PEBTF’s dental plan’s network of dentists, provided by United Concordia, will expand to access an additional 1,186 dentists in Pennsylvania through their Elite Prime and Elite Plus networks.
- The new hire waiting period decreases from 90 days to 30 days for family PEBTF health coverage (medical, prescription drug, dental, vision and hearing aid benefits).

## On January 1, 2025

- The eyeglass frame allowance will increase from \$150 to \$175. Transition lenses will be covered at a reimbursement of \$65 for single vision and \$70 for bifocal/trifocal lenses (coverage for transition lenses had previously been excluded).
- The following changes will be made to the dental plan: The annual dental plan maximum will increase from \$1,500 to \$2,000; preventive and diagnostic dental services will no longer apply to the annual plan maximum; the orthodontic lifetime maximum will increase from \$1,750 to \$2,250; and dental implant coverage, which had previously been excluded, will be covered at 60% plan allowance.



“The great benefits we have gained as union workers allow us to serve the people of Pennsylvania to our fullest. Having that security goes a long way in improving life on and off the job. These benefit enhancements only increase that sense of security and remind us why we stand together as workers.”  
Susan Bosco, DHS Employee and AFSCME Local 2456 Member

“Healthcare is expensive, but AFSCME members kept our costs at a minimum through negotiations while gaining enhanced benefits through our role on the Board. We need to keep a strong union membership to keep strong benefits. Without that, we have nothing.”  
Jerry Lombardo, DOT Employee and AFSCME Local 2159 Member







# Union members call for mental health awareness, safer conditions at state hospitals



Members of AFSCME Local 1003 were joined by their SEIU sisters and brothers for an informational picket outside of their workplace Wernersville State Hospital (WSH) on May 30.

Nurses and other staff at WSH concluded Mental Health Awareness Month by calling on their employer, their elected officials, and their community, to learn more about this issue and to understand the challenges that employees in mental health facilities are facing.

Some WSH employees have experienced violence at the hands of patients. They are now calling on the local District Attorney and other officials to do more to protect nurses and patients alike.

"In the long run we are looking for laws to be changed so that we're able to do something to protect ourselves against the threat of harm," said Christine Dietz, a Psychiatric Aide at WSH and President of AFSCME Local 1003.

"It's not just our hospital. I want this for everyone to be safe."

Christine spoke out during the informational picket, along with SEIU-HCPA President Neal Miller and AFSCME District Council 88 Director Tom Tosti.

Council 13 is proud to represent hundreds of employees at WSH, including Psychiatric Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, clerical employees, food service workers, custodial and maintenance staff, equipment and utility operators, and more. [Join us in solidarity with WSH workers and healthcare professionals everywhere!](#)



AFSCME members are standing with their union sisters and brothers AGAINST private school voucher schemes! Lesli Elby, a Paraprofessional in the Steelton-Highspire School District and President of AFSCME Local 1086, recently raised her voice at a rally on the Capitol steps. Hear her remarks here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGrhONWDTdQ&t=37m20s>





Council 13

**AFSCME**

We Make Pennsylvania Happen



**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!



# FRONT LINE & **FEARLESS**

AFSCME 46<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The Convention Call for the 2024 AFSCME International Convention was mailed on May 13, 2024. The Convention is scheduled for August 12-16, 2024, and will be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Our delegation will be staying at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites Los Angeles, 404 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071.

You must register online for BOTH the Convention AND your hotel here:

<https://convention.afscme.org/registration>

The letter with this information that was mailed to Local Union Presidents and Secretaries can be found [here](#).

The Council 13 Delegate Reimbursement Form can be found [here](#).

If you have not received the Convention Call or if you have any issues or questions, please email [education@afscme13.org](mailto:education@afscme13.org) or give us a call at 1-800-5-AFSCME.

Please note the following important dates:

- April 14 - Delegate and alternate elections must be held on or after this date unless the local meets less than quarterly.
- July 1 - To ensure you receive the discounted room rate, hotel reservations must be made by this date.
- July 23 - Delegate and alternate credentials must be received/postmarked by this date.

## Hire, Improve, Recruit, Empower (HIRE) Committee



Council 13 was proud to be part of Governor Josh Shapiro's recent Executive Order signing, which established the Hire, Improve, Recruit, Empower (HIRE) Committee, a directive aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of jobs within the Commonwealth.

These efforts fall directly in line with union members' goals in the last set of contract negotiations, as well as AFSCME's Staff the Front Lines campaign to boost recruitment and retention in public service jobs.

We look forward to continued partnership on this initiative.  
[Watch and read more here!](#)



# Council 13 AFSCME CommUNITY



At the 2024 Women's Conference, Council 13 members raised \$2,700 for Caitlin's Smiles, which donates arts and crafts supplies to children in hospitals. Special thanks to the Council 13 Women's Committee, which is pictured above along with Caitlin's Smiles Director Cheryl Hornung, C13 Education Director Kristie Wolf-Maloney, and C13 Administrator Mike Sukal.



Local 2421 members at Millersville University held their biannual AFSCME Day on May 1.



The members of AFSCME Local 471 in Somerset County are proud to sponsor the Casselman Valley Machine Pitch Team!



AFSCME Local 1985 President Andrew Rosenberger won Enforcement Officer of the Year as a 20-year employee of the Public Utility Commission. Congratulations!

Council 13 Connection  
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website!



[afscme13.org](https://afscme13.org)

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