



AFSCME IN ACTION

Member Newsletter | December 2022



Pictured (from left to right): MDU members at a voting party; members show off their MDU shirts; Vote Yes graphic made by MDU

Workers at the Office of the Public Defender Win Their Union Election!

On Tuesday, December 13 workers at the Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD) won their union election. 97% of the ballots were in favor of certifying AFSCME Maryland Council 3 as their exclusive bargaining representative.

Now, over 600 OPD workers, from attorneys to social workers to administrative staff to investigators and more, will join AFSCME members across the state who enjoy the benefits and protections we receive through our collective bargaining contracts.

The Maryland Defenders Union (AFSCME Local 423/MDU) has been organizing since August of 2020. These past two years they worked tirelessly to organize together, pass legislation, conduct workplace actions, and more. Way to go, MDU!



Pictured: Members of the 2022 state bargaining team

Bargaining Updates

For state workers, we're nearing the end of our wage negotiations with the administration this year. For those who work in higher education, we've nailed down ground rules with the University System of Maryland, and we've introduced a variety of different proposals.

Access updates at: afscmemdbargaining.org

Are you interested in expanding collective bargaining rights to supervisory & managerial workers in state agencies/higher education?

In this upcoming legislative session, we'll be working to pass legislation to do just that. If you're interested in helping us make this happen or you know someone who is, let us know!



bit.ly/supervisor-manager-interest



Pictured: Members at the December legislative training

Preparing for the Legislative Session

On Saturday, December 10, over 40 AFSCME members from across the state came to Baltimore for a legislative training. We discussed our takeaways from November's general election, shared upcoming priorities for this year's legislative session, and practiced telling our stories and giving public testimony on legislation.

From improving labor relations to securing paycheck protections, telework, and more, we have a number of priorities we will be fighting for in Annapolis come January. **Learn more at: bit.ly/2023-leg-session.**

2023 Legislative Session Kick-off
Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7:00 PM



RSVP: bit.ly/legsession-kickoff

Lobby Nights in Annapolis
Monday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 PM



RSVP: bit.ly/lobby-nights



Pictured: Maryland Defenders Union (Local 423) member Isabel Lipman

Member Spotlight: Isabel Lipman

Three years ago, Isabel Lipman never would have thought that one day, she would be witnessing her union win their union certification election. But fast forward to Tuesday, December 13, that's exactly what happened.

Isabel, a member of the Maryland Defenders Union (AFSCME Local 423/MDU), has been an assistant public defender for 16 years. Every week, she takes on case after case, working to get the best possible outcomes for her clients. In August 2020, she and her coworkers announced their intentions to form a union with AFSCME for workers in Maryland's Office of the Public Defender (OPD).

"We were at our wit's end," says Isabel. "Here is this agency that's supposed to be about fairness, dignity, and justice – doing the best job for our clients. But our administration was actively getting in the way of that at every turn. So what else do you do but unionize?"

Isabel and her fellow members have cited inadequate staffing levels, record high turnover rates, salaries too low to pay the bills, and impossible workloads as some of the core reasons why they wanted to unionize. "I've learned that anything worth having is worth fighting for. Our mission and OPD's mission are the same: fairness, dignity, and justice. Being part of the union is only going to make us better at what we do."

Tuesday's victory was indeed overwhelming, 233-8 in one unit and 45-1 in another. "I'm thrilled, proud, and grateful for what we've accomplished, but now the work really begins."