



AFSCME IN ACTION

Member Newsletter | March 2023



Pictured: AFSCME members standing on steps inside the Maryland State House at the last Lobby Night

What's Coming Up After Crossover: A Legislative Session Update

Monday, March 20 was "Crossover Day", the deadline for a bill to pass either the House or Senate to be considered by the other and have a chance of being signed into law. We have had 5 bills successfully cross over:

- **HB 368 (State Personnel - Executive Branch Service Contracts – Notification):** This bill will ensure that our union gets notice when an agency attempts to outsource state services. This bill was amended and passed the House with a bipartisan vote of 105-30.
- **HB 395/SB 223 (State Government – State Facilities Changes and Closures – Procedures):** This bill standardizes the process agencies use to change or close a facility and ensures a plan for the employees before they do. Both bills passed their original chambers by unanimous vote.
- **HB 184/SB 79 (State Personnel – Education and Transportation – Grievance Procedures):** This bill allows MDOT and Higher Education workers to grieve for damages when their paychecks are incorrect. SB 79 passed the Senate with a vote of 46-0. HB 184 passed with a similarly overwhelming margin in the House of 131-6.
- **SB 494 (Maryland State Department of Education - Employee Status and Designation):** This bill converts eligible MSDE employees who were hired as "at-will" special employees to merit positions with full union rights in SPMS. This bill passed the Senate by unanimous vote and is now assigned to the Appropriations Committee.
- **HB 116 (Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery - Collective Bargaining):** This bill enables collective bargaining rights for Walters Art Museum workers in Baltimore. This bill passed the House with a bipartisan vote of 103-35.

Read the full update at: bit.ly/crossover-update



Pictured (from top, left to right): AFSCME leaders and members Mildred Womble, Rose Bianca, Michelle McDermott

Celebrating Women's History Month

In honor of Women's History Month, scan the QR code to read this great piece that celebrates AFSCME Maryland Executive Vice President and Local 3655 President Mildred Womble as well as other members who work at the MVA. Mildred, Rose, and Michelle have all worked at the MVA for over 20 years.



Read the piece:
bit.ly/mva-whm

Higher Ed Week of Action: Turning Up the Heat for Negotiations



We grew our union by nearly 100 new members, Morgan State University hit 70% membership, and many people expressed interest in becoming a steward in their workplace! We had everything from lunch events to 1-on-1 conversations, and we spent the week at nearly all of the campuses we represent, from the University of Maryland College Park to Morgan State University to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Shout out to all of the members who helped make the week a success!



Left Photo (from left to right): Member leaders and activists Erik Hawkins, Patrick Okafor, Warren Roberts, and Nate Sims during the Higher Education Week of Action; Right Photo: Erik Hawkins speaking to new MVA workers during a New Employee Orientation

Member Spotlight: Erik Hawkins

At the end of February, Erik Hawkins, a member of AFSCME Local 3655, spent a week at the University of Maryland College Park organizing side by side with his union siblings who work on campus. Each day, they went out to different parts of the school to talk to College Park workers about how to get involved with their union and contract negotiations. "When I see someone make an active and conscious decision to secure their workplace rights and their future and join our union, I love that. I feel like I come across as authentic and approachable, so people see me and hear me and know that I'm someone they can talk to."

Erik has been a Customer Agent at the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) for over 8 years. He first saw the power of belonging to a union when his mother joined SEIU 1199 in New York and saw her working conditions and pay improve. Now as an AFSCME member, Erik finds that the aspect he enjoys the most is talking about our union during New Employee Orientations (NEO), which he typically goes to once or twice a month.

"I was happy to have a job when I first started, so when my manager asked me to work extra, I always volunteered until I realized I was being taken advantage of. If someone had told me what my workplace rights are and what my union contract does, I wouldn't have been taken advantage of. That's why I think participating in these NEOs is so important to me."

Looking back at the week he spent on the College Park campus, Erik says, "Organizing with other AFSCME members was dope. I could see that we had many things in common even though we work in different places. We all want more and we want better, not just for ourselves but for everyone."