

JANUARY 26TH, 2021

AFSCME 3 NEWSLETTER

Higher Education Lobby Night

Last night, almost 50 members from campuses across Maryland came together to pass one of our most important legislative priorities this session: USM bargaining consolidation. Take Action to urge Legislators to Vote YES: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/support-sb09hb486-higher-education-consolidated-bargaining>

AFSCME Council 3 represents 6,500 higher education employees and over 20,000 regular state employees. For state employees, despite wide differences in job duties, we have one contract. But under the current system in higher education, we negotiate 15 different contracts with each individual campus within the University System of Maryland, even though jobs are very similar from campus to campus. This is an inefficient system preventing comprehensive work policies and perpetuating divisions on campus leading to vastly different experiences for frontline workers.

Furthermore, with individual campuses, we can only negotiate non-wage issues, which in turn can be rejected by the USM Board of Regents. Even then, many individual campuses have declined to negotiate non-wage issues, including health and safety issues during a pandemic. COVID-19 doesn't care which campus it hits! That's why this legislation is urgently needed to make sure each campus has a detailed and unified response to the pandemic to keep frontline staff safe.

SAVE THE DATE:

Monday, February 22nd, 5:30PM

Fight for a Fair Budget Virtual Lobby Night

RSVP For Health and Safety Lobby Night Next Monday

Because of the pandemic, AFSCME Council 3 members have experienced an unprecedented number of health and safety issues in the workplace. As we have seen all across the country, strengthening our protocols and contamination practices is key to preventing transmission of COVID-19. That is why this year our members are working to pass two important pieces of legislation to strengthen health and safety regulations in Maryland.

- Maryland Essential Workers Protection Act
- Injury and Illness Protection Act

Join us for Health and Safety Lobby Night on Monday, February 1st, at 5:30pm:
<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0udOugqjgrGtZq42IVZDpV5flauRwzfh-v>

Invite your co-workers & share widely!

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Telework Reform Policy: Take Action

When the pandemic began in March of last year, AFSCME members rose to the challenge despite inadequate technology and infrastructure for remote work. Throughout the pandemic, our members have shown that we can still be productive while teleworking. The flexibility that telework offers is an important employee benefit that helps with retaining and recruiting staff which the state has had documented difficulty with.

The State of Maryland has already invested in the equipment. We don't want to go back to where it was before the pandemic where none of our members had access to teleworking. The reality is that there is a telework divide. Black and Brown workers have less access, so do lower-income workers. This is why it is urgent that we pass Telework Policy Reform this year!

Support HB 73 with amendments for meaningful telework policy reform. Send your letter today:
<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/support-telework-policy-reform-yes-on-hb73>

An Update from AFSCME Council 3 President Patrick Moran

The celebration of a Giant and the passing of a Titan.

Dr. Martin Luther King looms large in the history of AFSCME. If you ever walk into lobby of our union's national headquarters the first thing you will see is a bust of his likeness greeting you. Dr. King lost his life standing up for the members of AFSCME Local 1733 to have a union in Memphis, TN. He was murdered because he believed everyone should have equal opportunity in society, regardless of their race or class. He believed that we should all have safe and healthy working conditions, earn a living wage, have access to affordable healthcare, retirement security, and most of all rights on the job. What he did in the very short time he was on earth was nothing short of miraculous. Working with thousands of men, women, and children in a coalition he brought the civil rights movement to America's front door. Our country changed for the better because of his work and his efforts, as gradual as the changes may seem and have been, we are moving forward as a nation. With recent atrocities it is obvious we have much ground still to cover but that will not deter us from moving ever forward towards Dr. King's Dream. I hope everyone had a moment to reflect and relax on that special day.

Unfortunately, we lost a Titan in Maryland politics on Friday, January 15th. Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, the longest serving State Senate President in the history of our country. Senate President Miller oversaw some of the most important legislation that has affected working people and AFSCME members over the years. The living wage bill, that will put the minimum wage at \$15 an hour, paid sick leave which will ensure that people don't have a union will get some sort of sick leave, collective bargaining rights for state and higher education employees, and retirement security for public employees by ensuring we kept our pensions. Many of us had the pleasure of meeting Senator Miller in Annapolis over the years and he always was willing to meet with the members of our union when we needed his support. He leaves behind a long legacy that will be studied and admired. Bless you Mike Miller!