

AFSCME 3 NEWSLETTER

HIGHER EDUCATION OVERSIGHT HEARING ON RE-OPENING: FALL 2020

AFSCME Council 3 won an important oversight hearing on 9/16 of Maryland's public universities. The joint hearing, chaired by Del. Ben Barnes of Prince Georges County and Sen. Craig Zucker of Montgomery County and joined by Appropriations Chair McIntosh (Baltimore) and Budget and Tax chair Guzzone (Howard) examined what has been happening in terms of Health and Safety as well as fiscally on each campus and at the University System. It is vitally important that AFSCME members work as safely as possible, and are treated with dignity and respect during this difficult period.

After hearing from USM and University officials, AFSCME leaders Maria Ayala (UMCP), Quiana Tilghman (UMES), Blair Knouse (FSU) and Todd Holden (UMCP) and Stuart Katzenberg from the AFSCME Council 3 Staff gave testimony to the assembled senators and delegates. In the run up to this hearing, AFSCME members and leaders spent hours meeting with legislators so they understood the danger our members face daily on campus and the need for greater oversight.

At the hearing, members highlighted the inconsistencies within the USM such as lack of in person symptom screening at virtually all campus, lack of clear regular testing schedules, and inadequate quarantine policies. AFSCME emphasized the need for universal rules on health and safety and how the USM has refused to bargain them. Weak answers from management backed up AFSCMEs claims of problems throughout campuses and a lack of a strong central response.

All in all, the briefing demonstrated yet again the critical need for consolidating - and enforcing - fair and equitable collective bargaining between all of the USM campuses and AFSCME representatives. The fight for fairness will continue. AFSCME will continue to fight to make sure everyone is working safely, compensated fairly and treated with respect. Visit our website to watch our testimony and read press: www.afscmemd.org

Maryland Will Not Implement Federal Payroll Tax Deferral Program for State Employees

The Department of Budget and Management, Office of Personnel Services and Benefits has confirmed that the state of Maryland will NOT be implementing the federal Payroll Tax Deferment program. If your agency has shared information about this program, please contact the union as soon as possible. This program cannot be implemented without Central Payroll and DBM who have clearly stated this program will not be implemented. As noted, this was a DEFERRAL for 9/1-12/31, meaning employees would have been required to repay their taxes between Jan 1-April 15 with potentially significant consequences. Please refer any questions to our member resource center at mrc@afscmemd.org or 410-547-1515.

AFSCME 3 NEWSLETTER

EMERGENCY PAY GRIEVANCE UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 22ND 2020

Below is a list of the most recent status for each agencies Emergency Pay Grievance. It's important to note that while the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has resumed enforcing timelines, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) continues to toll and hold timelines for grievances. Over 4,000 members joined this grievance making it the largest case ever filed against the State of Maryland. At each step, DBM has tried to invalidate the case on the basis of forms being filled out and dates. To date, they have not addressed the core issue of the grievance: that our MOU has clear language outlining the required conditions to receive emergency pay. Review our MOU on our website!

DPSCS - Filed to Step 3 this week (9/21)

MDH - Step 2 hearing 10/7 then on to settlement conferences

DJS - Filed to Step 3 this week (9/21)

Dept of Labor - Settlement Conference scheduled for 9/23

Dept of Ag - Going to OAH

SDAT - Going to OAH

ALL MDOT - Waiting for settlement conference for two months now, timelines still tolled in MDOT

Comptroller - Going to OAH

DGS - Going to OAH

Military - Going to OAH

MSP - Going to OAH

DHS - Going to OAH DNR - At Step 2, agreed to waive timelines for additional 2 weeks

Veteran's Affair - Going to OAH

Our union continues to lead the fight for healthy and safe working conditions and the compensation public employees deserve to recruit and retain staff. We will continue to update all grievants as we move through the process. Don't hesitate to reach out to our Member Resource Center at mrc@afscmemd.org or 410-547-1515 with any questions.

AFSCME 3 NEWSLETTER

DBM CUTS COVID-19 RESPONSE PAY

AFSCME was informed after close of business Thursday, September 10th, that the elevated COVID-19 pay and additional quarantine pay for our frontline employees working at jobsites throughout the pandemic has been unilaterally canceled by the Hogan Administration. These members are exposed daily to COVID-19 and are in the highest risk category for contracting the virus. Already at least 800 AFSCME members have contracted COVID-19 from their workplace and two of our members have lost their lives from a workplace exposure.

AFSCME immediately took action demanding that the pay be restored. In concert with the media asking questions to the Hogan Administration about this pay cut. By 11:46am on Friday, September 11th, we received an email from Cindy Kollner reversing their original message and stating that quarantine pay (\$5.13/hr) will continue. As of now, the \$3.13/hr response pay has still been discontinued. DBM doesn't have a plan.

The poor management that has become a hallmark of Secretary Brinkley and the Hogan Administration continues. Even with quarantine pay continuing, cutting response pay will directly impact thousands of frontline workers across the state who work in all state facilities. This is especially insulting as it has been made clear by DBM that federal CARES money would cover all elevated pay and the state still has at least \$100 million dollars in these funds. With the positivity rate climbing across the state, we know the virus isn't over and we know the novel COVID-19 virus won't just skip workers not in a quarantine unit.

Urge Secretary Brinkley to reverse this decision and re-instate the COVID-19 response pay immediately by sending him an email at: david.brinkley@maryland.gov. You can also call him and urge him to reverse this decision and reinstate response pay at: (410) 260-7041.

September Regional AFSCME Meetings

This week, AFSCME staff and leaders will host a series of Regional AFSCME Meetings to update members about our ongoing wage campaign and fight for healthy and safe working conditions during the pandemic. RSVP by emailing the staff person coordinating your region- all members welcome from all agencies. All regional AFSCME meetings will be hosted remotely to keep members and staff safe and socially distant. When you RSVP by emailing the staff person coordinating the event, they will share details to join the meeting virtually either via zoom or conference call.

Regional Meeting Schedule

Saturday, September 26th Southern Maryland Regional Meeting at 11am RSVP to Hank at hhollis@afscmemd.org

Saturday, September 26th Baltimore City Regional Meeting at 11am RSVP to Ryan at rmurphy@afscmemd.org

Tuesday, September 29th Howard County and Anne Arundel Counties Regional Meeting at 6pm RSVP to Michelle at mmcintosh@afscmemd.org

Wednesday, September 30th Eastern Shore Regional Meeting at 6pm RSVP to Jack at jkhughes@afscmemd.org

Wednesday, September 30th Western Maryland Regional Meeting at 12pm RSVP to Jake at jklaus@afscmemd.org

Wednesday, September 30th Harford, Baltimore & Carroll Counties at 6pm RSVP to Lisa at lmckinney@afscmemd.org