

AFSCME LOCAL 1668

Volume 4, Issue 4

April 2011

President's Report

Hello again AFSCME Local 1668! I hope this month's newsletter finds you all well.

This month finds us still under attack by the republican led legislature here in Michigan. Just recently, our state government exercised it newly formed dictatorship agenda in the city of Benton Harbor. That city has had an emergency financial manager (EFM) in place for a long time, with control over the financial aspects of the city government. With the new changes in the law, that EFM gained total control and decided that he new better than the elected officials, and stripped them of all of their authority. They now only have the power to call a meeting to order, approve the agenda, and adjourn the meeting. That's it. It doesn't matter that the people of the city elected these leaders. It doesn't matter that they answer to the voters. The people of the city of Benton Harbor now have absolutely no say in how their city will be managed. The EFM answers to nobody, except the governor. I don't remember the nerd saying he was going to do that to the citizens, do you? Just you wait and see.... Benton Harbor will be just the first in a long list of municipalities, and school districts, that will become part of Snyder's realm.

And very soon, your republican led legislature will vote to make it illegal for any union business to take place while on the clock. No more release time for your officers. No more grievance meetings during the work day. No more negotiating our contract during business hours. This is plain and simple an attack on unions. This has no impact on the budget. Unions are the sole remaining line of defense for the middle class of America. Destroy the unions, and it becomes much easier to destroy the middle class! That is their agenda.

Its time to put an end to this! We need to stand together, pay attention and get rid of these fools in our government. Please contact your legislators and tell them that you are watching, and you will not stand idly by while they take away our rights and our way of life. There are many easy ways you can be heard. You can keep informed by going to www.miaflcio.org and click on the legislative update. This will take you to a list of the no less than 37 pieces of legislation that are an attack on the middle class. From there you can click on a link that will send a letter for you, you just fill in your name and address and it will direct your letter to the right person. Or you can call the local office and someone will be happy to help you as well.

What about you members that are republican, and some of you are. There is nothing wrong with that. It's your right as an American. But please at least think about it. Did your candidate campaign that they were going to do the bidding of the Tea Party and their billionaire financers? I don't remember any. Did you vote for them to represent you, or the uber-rich they seem to be working for? Are they doing what they said they would? If not, tell them! You are their constituents, your voice should be heard.

So what do you say 1668? Will you stand and fight, or roll over and take what you get? Let's fight together for what is right!

In solidarity, Dennis

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www.facebook.com/afscme1668

We're On the Web
afscme1668.org

Thought for the Month
*Listening may be the most loving
thing you do today*

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3625 DOUGLAS AVENUE
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Vice President's Report

FIRST WORLD OR THIRD WORLD? YOU DECIDE

I hope everyone is enjoying the weather so far. It's still good to know we can enjoy something in this state. Weather can be relaxing to the soul. When the weather is warm like this we can go outside and enjoy the surroundings of the neighborhood, work in the garden, wash your car, go for a nice walk. However weather can also be unpredictable around this time of the year, thunderstorms, tornado watches, snow storms etc... so we have to be on the look-out for the signs. Like the weather, the state of Michigan is very unpredictable right now. Every day changes are being made in Lansing, changes that will affect people lives. How does someone get prepared for the out- come of state affairs? There are thousands of people on edge wondering what will happen to my job? Will I have anything when I retire? What's going to happen to my money that's been put aside for my benefit when I leave my job? Will I be able to survive on what's left when taxes, medical insurance, and any other thing they can think of to take the money I have worked so hard for out of my check? In a flyer at the Union hall a really good question was asked "FIRST WORLD OR THIRD WORLD? YOU DE-

CIDE. That is a flyer formed because of a bill from Lansing. It wants us to kill bill (HB4306). If passed, what this bill wants is to:

Fire long-term employees from the community.

Get rid of collective bargaining rights and seniority rights.

Higher taxpayer costs and inferior school services-studies show that it generally costs twice as much to pay private contractors to do the work of civil servants.

The State Legislators are trying to take a large bit out of our educational system by replacing public worker with personnel from their buddies personal companies which happens to be major donors, major political donors.

Michigan Labor Press Conference

I was able to go to the Michigan Labor Press Conference this month in Grayling Michigan. I had great time learning how to update our newsletter. There was so much to learn I couldn't get to it all. The most important thing I did learn is we can get our newsletter out through facebook now, linking it straight from

our web-site. And since a lot of people are on facebook now and afscme has a facebook page (thanks to Kathi Babbitt our chief steward) we can enter it there also. We also learned about a new system called "Random Select System" it is a system that will randomly select from the news off the internet and add it to our website.

For example: If we want the Legislative Report up-dates, it will up-date the legislative report every time it changes and send it to our website/link to our facebook. That way we will have the updates as soon as they are posted.

We learned about Technology Rescue and Recovery, Web Site development, Social Networking, and my favorite the One-on-One Critique. Speakers were Tim Sweeney, Brent Gillette, Steve Schlicht and a host of many more.

Well that's all I have for this month I hope you can tell that I improved a little after the conference.

In solidarity,

Val Armstrong, VP

TAKE ACTION!

STOP THE ATTACKS!

Gov. Snyder and the politicians in Lansing are unfairly exploiting Michigan's economic crisis to attack students, seniors, and working families. Their radical plans will take away our rights, endanger our families, destroy the vital public services we rely on and tear our communities apart.

IN FACT, Governor Snyder's budget would:

- Cut \$564 million from our **SCHOOLS**
- Slash \$220 million from our **COLLEGES and UNIVERSITIES**
- Impose taxes on **SENIOR'S PENSIONS**
- Take Away worker's rights to collectively bargain for better and safer worker conditions
- Limit unemployment benefits during a time when a half million Michigan residents are without jobs.

CALL 1-888-793-3601 and tell Gov. Snyder and the politicians in Lansing to STOP THE ATTACKS on Students, and working families. Tell them to dump the \$1.8 billion tax giveaways to CEOs and work to find FAIR solutions that will move Michigan forward!

For more information or to volunteer email: michiganbattleground@afscme.org

Chiefs Steward report:

The spring semester has come to an end and the summer work is beginning. Summer work brings Summer Dining work. We have only been given 30 positions for summer dining and one position for a few months of work. There is always hope for more, but we are not holding our breath. There should be NO Temps working past Friday, April 29, 2011. Students should only be working 20 hours per week.

We had two informative Steward Training sessions in April. Both were well attended and we received some excellent training for our Council 25 staff. Thank you to the Stewards and Alternates who were released to attend. Not all Stewards and Alternates were able to attend. That was not because they didn't want to go, but because we could not get everyone released. IF you are interested in attending other steward training classes or receiving additional training, please contact me and I will get you signed up for future classes in the area, when they become available.

The University's Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Care Insurance Benefits that were negotiated in 2009, changed without any notification to the Union or its members. We are filing a grievance at this time. There are serious changes that have been made that we were not aware of. If you are having difficulties with your insurance, co-pays, coverage, or are receiving letters in the mail from Blue Cross, this is probably why. If you believe that this is the case in your situation, please know that we are working on it. We became aware of this, purely by accident. There will hopefully be more information at the Union Meeting on Thursday, May 5, at 4pm.

We have not received any official word on how the budget cuts are going to affect us at this point. Anything that you may have heard is just speculation and rumor. With that in mind, let's all try to be mindful of what we are doing and saying to others. If there were ever a time to stand in Unity and Solidarity, it is now. We encourage each and every one of you to become more proactive by writing letters to the editor, writing letters to the legislatures, calling your representatives and senators about the issues surrounding working people, and our fellow neighbors. The Governor signed the Emergency Financial Manager package into law on March 16. The legislature continues to pass laws every day, that affect your wallet, wages, benefits, security, voting rights, and over all well being. This is NOT just a UNION battle; this is a dictatorship of everyday, working class people. This law is absolutely horrible for the State of Michigan. We need more voices. We are in for the fight of our lives across this state and across the country. We need your help. There has been an all out war declared against unions and the working class people. The Governor has proposed serious cuts that will affect our livelihood and make it extremely easy to appoint these emergency managers to local government and boards.

We need everyone to call 1-888-793-3601 right now and enter your zip code when prompted. You will automatically be connected with your representative. Tell them to vote NO on the Governor's Budget! Your voting rights are under attack. See the "TAKE ACTION" Section on the Page 2 of this newsletter for more information.

Please go to one or more of these websites and stay connected and take action when asked too. Many have sign ups available so they can keep in contact with you via email. If you text, Text the word AFSCME to 237263. Check out some of these websites for more information. www.moveon.org www.afscme.org www.miafscme.org www.aflcio.org www.miaaflcio.org (this site has a legislative update linked to it which is updated almost daily and it has a "take action" link as well)

www.facebook.com/afscme1668 join our facebook page for quick and easy information. www.afscme1668.org is our website, here you can request for a free email account and then be sure to share your email address by emailing: chiefsteward@afscme1668.org. Other sites to visit are <http://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Central-Michigan-Community-Action-Team/195190330521090> Join the We are the People: www.wrongformichigan.org Join Working Michigan on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Working-Michigan/206372732710668>

Communication is the best way to stay informed of the real issues that are affecting you in the work place.

Several grievance answers are expected and more grievances have been filed. There is a grievance dealing with Closure Pay, and policies in BCSS and that are expected to be heard this week. Not that these are all of these grievances are discipline related as most are unit wide grievances dealing with contract language and policies, we need to be extremely mindful of what we are doing out there in regards to drawing attention to yourself in the case of discipline. We need to be the very best we can be and should always do the very best anyone can. I know I am getting preachy, but this is serious! Come to work, and do your job the very best you can! Public employees (that's us) are under attack and we have a huge fight on our hands! Now is not the time to be ignorant of the rules or act irresponsibly. I don't know any other way to say it so that people understand. This is where I will just shut up and end my article.

In Solidarity,

Kathi Babbitt, your Chief Steward!

Local 1668

Date: 06-18-11



Time: 7am Register 8am

We Make WMU Happen

4 person teams, must include at least one Local 1668 member per team

\$40.00/person includes 18 holes golf, cart, and lunch

Payment due by June 1, sorry-no refunds due to course commitment

7th Annual Golf Outing

Register by May 13 for chance to win entry fee back!!!!

Games on Course

States Golf Course
20 East W Ave Vicksburg

Cash Drawings

Door Prizes



50/50 Drawing



Come on out and enjoy a fun day of golf and games with your union brothers and sisters. Golf skill optional as games and

List Team members and return to Dennis (Maint Reg 3) or Bryan (Maint Reg 4)

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

