

**A Better Tomorrow Starts Today**

## **Round two brings new progress Negotiations Update: 2**

**O**ur negotiating team members continued to make progress in our second round of talks with the state on September 1st. We tentatively approved four new Articles for an Agreement covering the Employment and Social Services employees unit. We now have a total of ten tentative Article agreements.

There's still much work to do, and our priority proposals for better employee safety and other top issues still need responses from the state. But the movement in negotiations is a positive sign.

### **In Round 2, we agreed that the state will:**

- ◆ Guarantee only the Personnel Cabinet may change classification specifications.
- ◆ Uphold layoff and recall rights.
- ◆ Maintain and enforce Affirmative Action and anti-discrimination protections.
- ◆ Ensure employees bulletin boards in the workplace to provide information about our rights and activities as a union.



*AFSCME members review which legislators to call to ask for their support to improve safety, a top priority at the table.*

"It's how we're going to make the big changes" says Lisa Mays, a Family Support Specialist in Clay County, and a member of the team. "It's little by little but that's how we'll get there." With respect to recall and reinstatement rights, she says, "right now, we're often at their mercy."

AFSCME members brought a letter to the Kentucky Senate saying employees are a critical voice in discussions about safety and called for a review of the "Boni bill." The letter was delivered to Sen. Denise Harper Angel, a strong supporter of protections for social service staff. They also made to calls to legislators to drive the message home.

It's time to keep pushing for greater safety and for the state to move on our proposals. "Every day they look at this issue and don't act, is another day employees are not safe," says Sheila Patrick, a team member who works for Protection and Permanency in Menifee County.

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**Next Negotiating Session: October 2, 2009 \* Frankfort: Capitol Annex**

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### **AFSCME Kentucky Negotiating Team Members** \_\_\_\_\_

Linda Craig, Daviess Co. Family Support \* Julia Johnson, 410 W. Chestnut, Louisville \* Leslie Thorn, McCracken Co. Prot & Perm \* Kathy Green, Fayette Co. Family Support \* Sheila Patrick, Menifee Co. Prot & Perm \* Kimberly Weathers, L & N \* Joyce Graves, Kenton Co. Prot & Perm \* Vivian Thornton, Hardin Co. Family Support \* Rhonda Coleman, Hardin Co. Family Support \* Lisa Mays, Clay Co. Family Support \* Larry Simmons, L & N

## At Gov's Council: AFSCME members reveal true cost of high health care premiums

State workers, some with family members, stood before the Governor's Employee Advisory Council on August 31st to describe the real impact of high health insurance premiums on state employees. They called for new solutions to our health care costs. The Council, known as GEAC, is charged with negotiating, maintaining and enforcing the Master Agreement that covers all state employees.

The reality for many state workers is that full family coverage, at a cost of around \$580 per month, is out of reach. For some, that would eat up most of a 2-week paycheck.

Sharon Valandingham, whose husband, Chris is a CO at the Little Sandy Correctional Complex, told the panel and Personnel Secretary Nikki Jackson that the only way her family can have any health insurance is to leave her without coverage. Yet she has faced, and continues to confront, major health challenges. "I don't know how we'll do this," she said.



*State employees describe toll of expensive health care to Personnel Cabinet Secretary Nikki Jackson.*

Health insurance is a major issue for most state workers. Fixing it can't wait for a national health care solution.

Derek Lloyd, a CO at KSP, says he's had to negotiate a minimum payment plan with his doctor and hospital to pay for out-of-pocket costs after his wife had knee surgery recently. The monthly premium and payments are squeezing his family's finances despite Derek's second job.

"When we rank 49th in the nation in pay and 50th in health care," added Chris Valandingham, "there's something very wrong. We can fix this together."



*Chris and Sharon Valandingham explain how health insurance costs hurt families at the GEAC meeting.*

## Reaching out to inform legislators on the issues continues

A series of local meetings with legislators about health insurance, safety, the "Boni bill" and other negotiations priorities have been held around the state, with more in the works.

Each opportunity we have to educate and inform our legislators about our needs as employees and our goals for an Agreement makes our case at the table stronger.

So far, employees in both units – corrections, probation and law enforcement, and employment and social services – have met with more than 45 legislators.

Ready to reach out to your legislators so they'll know about the real issues state employees face? Want to let them know why we're asking for improved safety, health insurance and other changes that will help the Commonwealth? **Call us at 866-871-0646. Get active, get involved!**



*AFSCME members meet with Reps. Hoffman, Flood and Crenshaw in Lexington to discuss safety and other issues now at the table.*

**Get active!**  
**Call 866-871-0646 or visit [www.AFSCMEKentucky.org](http://www.AFSCMEKentucky.org)**