

All Elections Have Consequences



After experiencing the longest government shutdown in history, some of us are wondering how we got to this point. Why aren't our elected officials working for us? What are they doing to ensure our government workers are paid, our airlines are safe for travel and most importantly, making sure the safety net for our most financially needy individuals is funded and working.

We are at this point in history because voters chose to elect individuals who are more entrenched in partisan politics than bipartisanship. Meaning, the individuals who we elected are committed to their political party not the constituents they represent. In the democratic process, we vote for individuals to represent us, on the critical issues and needs of our society. We expect mature men and women to meet, discuss, and debate the issues vital to our survival and well-being. However, when we elect and send individuals down to Washington or up to Harrisburg who are unwilling to work across the aisle or compromise, we are left with the longest government shutdown in history and five months without a state budget.

Consequently, both actions have had a direct impact on us. While most working people do not depend on SNAP benefits, we service people that do. Some of our members were stranded away from home due to the flight delays and government workers calling out from work. They faced discipline which required Union intervention to make them whole. Some of our employers were in the process of scheduling meetings with staff to announce layoffs because the State legislators had not passed the budget which thankfully has been averted.

That is why participating in the democratic process of this country is so important. Decisions are going to be made with direct impacts upon you and your family. That is why we encourage all our members to register to vote, and vote for individuals who will fight for your issues.

As a union, we established a political action fund (PAC) to support candidates who have shown themselves to be reliable allies to represent us in both Washington and Harrisburg.

We regularly collaborate with our employers and elected officials together to obtain funds for our programs or support legislation for working families. This collaborative approach is a "win-win" for everyone.

In closing, I would like to thank the members who support our PAC fund through contributions and supporting our fundraising efforts. If anyone is interested in participating in or contributing, please contact me directly.



Frederick Wright,
President





Academy House Service Workers

Academy House Condominium Association has started 2 new projects: 1) The renovations of the staff locker room, which will be expanded, 2) Management is creating a "Parcel" room for the condo owners who have packages delivered. Vlad Pinguez, shop steward for the Academy House workers, reported that some of the staff have concerns about the new parcel room. Fearing that it may impede on the space for them to house their uniforms, but hopefully the renovated staff locker room will alleviate the problem.

The Academy House Workers share in a "holiday fund", a voluntary collection of the tenants of Academy House. That fund is due to be disseminated to all eligible staff on Dec 18, 2025.



CIS, our newest chapter to Local 1739, has reported ongoing concerns with staff scheduling, according to our chief shop steward, Peter Schranz. Some of the employees have resigned due to the new scheduling process and their inability to make the adjustments. CIS has hired approximately 10 new employees within the past two months.



JEVS Human Services

JEVS Community Living Home Supports (CLHS) division is still experiencing Direct Support Professional (DSP) vacancies.

JEVS has ramped up their recruitment efforts by holding job fairs; one was held on November 14, 2025. For the months of October and November, JEVS has hired over 60 DSPs, although retaining DSPs has been challenging. JEVS CLHS program has made changes to their administrative staff.

The previous Vice President of Operations, Paul Devito resigned and was replaced by Rahmena Wilson, who comes with over 17 years experience in the field.

Falone Gant, who was the Director of Community Supports Services, is now Director of Outreach and Recruitment, Megan Russell will replace Falone's old position.

JEVS has switched medical carriers, going from Aetna to Meritan, however the plan benefits remain the same. There will be no new cost for employees; if someone is experiencing problems with the new carrier, they should contact the Union immediately. Our contract with JEVS Human Services expires on June 30, 2026. The Local will begin meeting with the membership (both in-person and virtually) in the early months of 2026 to solicit input from them concerning proposals for the upcoming contract negotiations.



JCC Kaiserman

JCC Kaiserman has recently completed an expansive one-million-dollar renovation project on their gymnasium, which is partially funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. The other half (\$500,000) was matched by JCC Kaiserman. JCC has added an HVAC system (which was greatly needed due to there being no previous HVAC system), new basketball court, backboards, scoreboards, and a new roof.



American Friends Service Committee

American Friends Service Committee

It has been brought to the union's attention that management has been requiring workers to perform duties of those in a higher job classification, but has failed to provide additional pay. The Union has filed a class action grievance due to management's violation of the collective bargaining agreement.



Special People in Northeast (SPIN)

On September 10th, the Union participated in SPIN's fall benefits bash event where our members learned how to navigate and access all their SPIN benefits as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. The Union was on hand to distribute our current contract to any employee who had not already received a copy.

The Union made a donation and sponsored the DJ and photo booth for SPIN's Life of Possibilities Membership campaign. This annual campaign provides financial support for over 3500 children and adults with disabilities, enabling them to be active, productive members of their community.

The list of SPIN stewards and contact information is as follows: Lisa Anderson, Chief Steward 215-880-1479, Shante Williams 267-326-3773, Tamara Tully 484-431-2688, Cherill Hagans 215-431-8671, Shante Jenkins 267-596-4532, Yvette Wilson 215-651-2883. Children Services: Tonia Starks 267-581-3663; SPIN Lehigh: Randy Williams 610-349-9123.



Jewish Family and Children's Services

The Union reached a tentative agreement with JFCS on October 21st. The tentative agreement was ratified by the majority of members on October 29th. With the new three-year contract, the members will receive a ten and one-half (10.5%) percent wage increase over the term of the contract.

Our members also received an increase in dinner money and expansion of bereavement leave which was a major obstacle in the negotiations. There was no change in the medical benefits package or contributions. The union negotiation team members were Zakiyyah Snead, Kimberly Nissim, Stephenie Moats, Dawn Waters, and Ayesha Uqdah.



Tenant Union Representative Network

TURN has been operating well under the leadership of new Executive Director, Nicole Lawrence, who has been very cooperative with the union.

TURN has experienced some funding cuts, but Ms. Lawrence is confident that she can have the funding either restored or replaced to insure the loss of funding will not result in any layoffs.

With the current economic climate, the need for tenant assistance and advocacy is at an all-time high. TURN had a reunion of Tenant Action Group (TAG) staff, these were the individuals who initially formed the union.



Season's Greetings

With warm wishes from all of us @





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2026 Minimum Dues Increase

Brothers and Sisters:

In November, a letter was sent to all the AFSCME International Vice Presidents, Council Presidents/Directors, Local Union Presidents and Secretary-Treasurers from Elissa McBride, International Secretary Treasurer.

The letter outlined the mandated minimum dues increase for 2026. Article IX, Section 6 of the International Constitution provides that the minimum dues and Per Capita (PCT) rates shall be adjusted every year.

Pursuant to Article IX, Section 7, this adjustment is based on the average percentage increase of pay of AFSCME members (as that term is defined by the Constitution) and individuals making service or similar payments in lieu of dues, over the twelve-month period ending July 31.

Information on increases in pay was collected from 76.97% of AFSCME's membership. The average wage increase received by AFSCME members over the 12-month period ending July 31, 2025 was 3.2630%.

Article IX, Section 7 also requires that this calculation be audited and certified by an independent certified public accountant who is not otherwise connected with AFSCME. Upon request, a copy of the certification will be provided to any affiliate.

Full-Time Employee Minimum Dues

Applying this latest percentage (3.2630%) to the current minimum dues results in a required (unrounded) dues increase of **\$ 1.4732446** per month. This unrounded increase is then allocated and rounded to the nearest five cents, resulting in an increase of **\$1.50** beginning January 1, 2026.

Part-Time Employee Minimum Dues Rates

For members with regular work schedules of twenty or fewer but more than twelve hours per week, the increase is computed by multiplying each component of the unrounded full-time minimum dues rate increase by 75% and rounding to the nearest nickel, resulting in a minimum dues increase of **\$1.15** beginning January 1, 2026.

In solidarity,

**James Baylor, Treasurer
AFSCME Local 1739**

Happy
Chanukah