

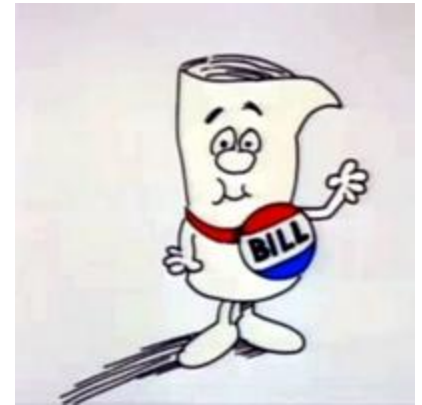
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Colorado legislative session has been underway for roughly one month. There are approximately 50 bills currently being monitored or actively opposed/supported by AFT Colorado. These bills either affect education policy in Colorado, PERA benefits, or both. Because we were able to keep the State House friendly to our interests in last year's election, we are confident that with the help of our expert legislative team in the capitol, all of the 'bad' bills will be blocked; and we are working tirelessly with legislators to ensure the 'good' bills pass. Unfortunately, many of them will likely die in the senate along party lines.

Due to the number of bills it would be impossible to summarize all of them but we can offer the following:

The 'bad' bills that have been introduced aren't generally new ideas, and our opponents have introduced similar or identical bills in the past. **They include allowing the concealed carry of firearms in schools, equally providing revenue generated by previous mill levy overrides to charter schools, providing tax credits or vouchers for private schools, allowing school districts to employ uncertified teachers in rural districts, and capping PERA benefits.** These issues can be very complicated, but generally speaking we are opposing them

because they divert funding away from our already underfunded public education system, degrade the quality of education being provided to our students, and undermine the local control of our schools, as well as, denying PERA members benefits they have been promised for years.



The 'good' bills we are actively **supporting prohibit the use of corporal punishment in schools, limit expulsions and suspensions that disproportionately affect minority students, unburden teachers of the requirement that 50% of their evaluations depend on student assessments, make it easier for public employees to have their student loans forgiven, and fund all-day pre-school.**

If you would like more information concerning any one of the bills mentioned, please feel free to contact AFT Colorado. We will be happy to discuss them with you.

If you are interested in testifying during committee hearings concerning certain issues you are passionate about, please contact Ryan Case at rcase@aftcolorado.org.

STUDENT DEBT CLINIC

Chances are you, or somebody you know, has student debt. The U.S. is in the middle of a devastating debt crisis. As of 2013, 40 million Americans had student debt, totaling \$1.4 trillion. Of those 40 million Americans, roughly 4 million of them were at least 90 days behind on their payments.



Luckily, for those who have student debt, there are several programs that provide significant relief to those who have struggled to make student loan payments. **AFT employs some of the nation's most knowledgeable experts on student debt and has incredible resources providing the information needed to take advantage of these programs.** These programs can reduce your monthly payments by hundreds of dollars and even completely forgive your loans after a certain amount of time.

We at AFT Colorado would like to ensure that anyone who can benefit from this information, receive it as soon as possible. Our Political Coordinator, Ryan Case, recently attended a multi-day training on student debt and will be hosting a student debt clinic on Saturday, **April 29TH**. We highly encourage those of you who have student debt, or know somebody who does, to attend. We are here first and foremost as a resource for you, so we hope you take advantage.

Again, **the clinic will be held on April 29th**. The time and location are yet to be determined depending on demand, but if you are interested in attending, please email Ryan Case at rcase@aftcolorado.org.



AFT Colorado Biennial Convention

This is a **call** to the **AFT Colorado Biennial Convention** convening at 10:30 am on Saturday, April 22nd, 2017 at our affiliate Colorado WINS' office located at 2525 W. Alameda Ave, Denver, Colorado 80219. Registration and pre-convention committee meetings will begin at 10:00 am with officer nominations, resolutions and constitutional revisions being the order of business.

Members may contact their local union if they are interested in running for any officer position or would like to attend as a delegate. The terms of office are for two years and are voluntary. The deadline for nomination of officers is March 23rd.

AFT Colorado will recognize outstanding members by awarding the Meyer/Mall Award and Friends of Public Education Award. If you know of anyone deserving of the recognition, please contact your local union office. The deadline for submission is March 23rd.

The AFT Colorado Convention delegates will consider proposed amendments to the constitution or bylaws, and proposed resolutions. Delegates will also nominate and elect officers of the State Federation. We encourage you to take part in this process.

Please contact your local union leader if you wish to attend.

LOBBY DAY/LOBBY CORPS

Education is always a hot topic in Colorado politics and this legislative session is no different. AFT Colorado is constantly in the capitol monitoring bills and talking to legislators, but there is no substitution for legislators hearing from people like you. Legislators care about what you think and that's why you should join us for our annual lobby day!

We will be getting together at the capitol to help you more effectively talk to your elected officials and sit in on an education committee hearing so that you can listen in on the conversations behind the policies affecting public school employees and union members.

In order to ensure as many of you as possible can join us, we will have two lobby days this year. The first is on **Wednesday March 22nd** and the second will be the following week on **Thursday March 30th**.

Send your RSVP to Political Coordinator, Ryan Case at rcase@aftcolorado.org

Protesters rally in Denver against the confirmation of Education Secretary nominee Betsy Devos on Feb. 4th



Thank you to our locals in Douglas, Elizabeth, and Metro for your participation and support.

AFT Colorado Welcomes our New President



We welcome Sarah Mesmer to her position of Interim President of AFT-Colorado. Our former President, Courtney Smith, stepped down to pursue another position, and as the AFT-Colorado Executive Vice President Sarah assumed the Presidential role.

Sarah has extensive experience in education both as a teacher and administrator:

- Teacher at Arapahoe High School, Littleton Public Schools (LPS)
- Member of Littleton Education Association (LEA)
- LEA teacher representative at collective bargaining
- Coordinator of Staff Development – LPS
- Level 3 grievance hearing officer - LPS
- Staff mediator and facilitator
- Assistant Director of Human Resources – Douglas County School District (DCSD) assigned to classified staff
- Director of Human Resources –DCSD
- Member of joint writing team to create the collective bargaining agreement between DCSD and Douglas County Federation (DCF) classified staff
- Administrative representative at both certified and classified DCF/DCSD collective bargaining
- Facilitator at DCSD/Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) collective bargaining
- Adjunct instructor Adams State University
- Interest based collective bargaining facilitator in Eagle County School District
- Senior Professional in Human Resources for DCF
- Vice President of DCF

We are fortunate to have someone with such extensive experience leading AFT-Colorado. Sarah will remain in her position through June. We will be selecting the new AFT-Colorado President at our April convention.

Local Union Updates

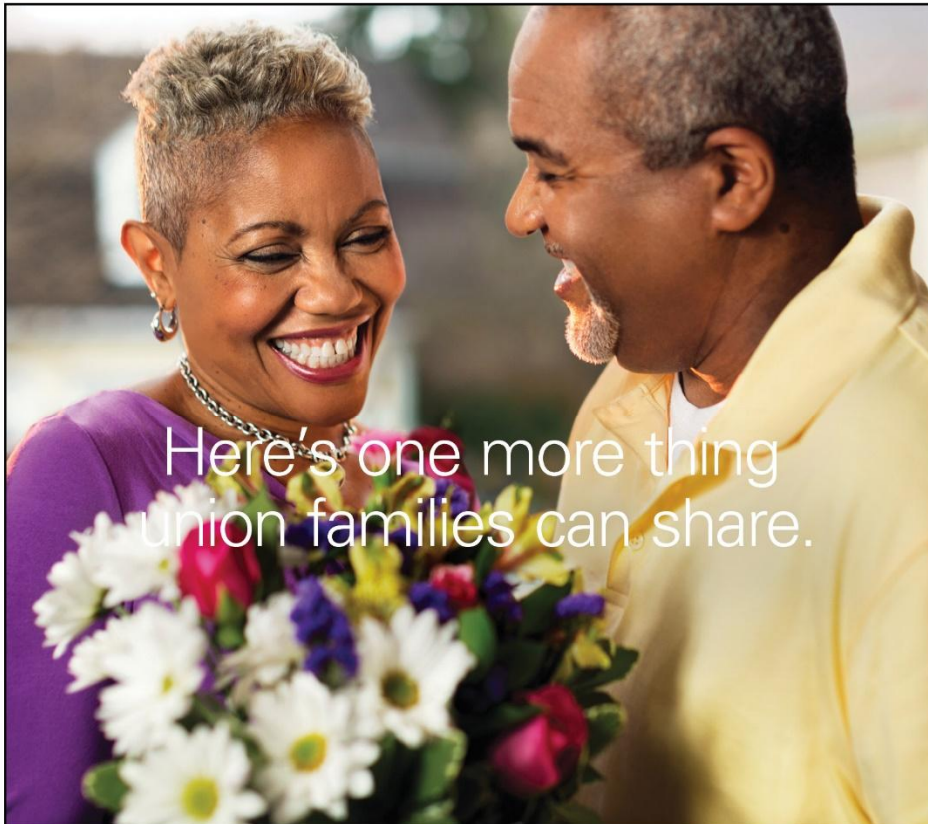
MSFF

Metro State Faculty Federation

The rights and responsibilities comprised by academic freedom are central to the very existence of the university but also essentially contested. What kinds of speech are protected? What is not? Why is academic freedom considered the cornerstone of the scholarly and educational mission and the foundation of a free society? How do we protect academic freedom when political pressures threaten to undermine it?

The MSFF, MSU Denver's faculty union, and the university's Office of Academic Affairs will co-sponsor an Academic Freedom Forum on **Monday, March 6, 2017, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm**, to explore the facts, issues and controversies around this key concept. The forum will feature two of the country's most respected legal experts, Mr. Matthew Finkin and Mr. Joseph Goldhammer. All AFT Colorado members would be most welcome!

For more information, please contact the MSFF at msff6321@aol.com



Here's one more thing
union families can share.

Save on education expenses with Union Plus. The rising cost of higher education can be a real barrier to union families who want the best for their kids. Union Plus offers annual scholarship awards, discounts on college test prep courses and college counseling, plus grants to help erase college loan debt. Don't let money complicate your family's college goals. Turn to Union Plus for help.



A Union of Professionals

AFT +
Member Benefits

Find out more at
UnionPlus.org/AFT

AFT COLORADO
STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

www.aftcolorado.org 720-443-8032

What is COPE? COPE is how AFT Colorado raises and collects voluntary political contributions from members. COPE is a non partisan political education committee. These voluntary funds are used statewide to help back candidates and committees that support education and labor. There is one reason AFT Colorado needs to grow our COPE program, **YOU**. With the current economic environment our priorities are vulnerable and are constantly being targeted for reduction. Education budgets, programs, and services are often first on the chopping block when states face dwindling tax revenues. Along with decent working conditions, retirement, and health care. All vitally affect our lives. A strong COPE program will protect our various interests.

At the local level COPE is essential. AFT Colorado will use your voluntary funds to assist in school board races, levies, and referendums in your district. Reductions in state education aid and inflation have made local budgets even more of a challenge. We use COPE dollars to work with labor and education friendly supporters on both sides of the aisle.

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

BILLING ADDRESS _____

BILLING CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

MOBILE PHONE _____  wish to receive periodic text messages and accept the associated charges.

HOME EMAIL _____ LOCAL _____

WORK LOCATION _____

PAYMENT

*Due to the associated fees, we prefer that you sign up for **bank draft** payment.*

MONTHLY COPE AMOUNT \$5 \$10 \$15 \$OTHER _____

BANK DRAFT ***PREFERRED METHOD*******

Fill out below or simply attach a voided check.

BANK NAME _____

ROUTING NUMBER _____ ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: If you choose this method, we will follow up with you to change to bank draft at a later date. CARD

TYPE: VISA MC

NAME ON CARD _____

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP DATE _____

I hereby authorize a monthly contribution to the AFT CO COPE (AFT CO COPE) in the amount indicated above. This authorization is signed freely and voluntarily and not out of any fear of reprisal, and I will not be favored nor disadvantaged because I exercise this right. I understand this money will be used to make political contributions by AFT CO COPE. AFT CO COPE may engage in joint fundraising efforts with AFT COPE and/or the AFL-CIO. This voluntary authorization may be revoked at any time by notifying AFT CO COPE in writing of the desire to do so. Contribution or gifts to AFT CO COPE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions cannot be reimbursed or otherwise paid by any other person or entity.