

AFT Colorado's Bi-annual Convention

The bi-annual convention of AFT Colorado was held on April 22, 2017 at the Colorado WINS office in Denver. Delegates, alternates, and guests attended this all-day business meeting which included speakers and election of officers.

Our guest speaker, Great Education Colorado Executive Director Lisa Weil, presented information on school funding and Colorado's state budget. She introduced an interactive budget tool, [Mission Possible](#), that allows users to create models utilizing Colorado's budget priorities in order to see for themselves the state of education funding in Colorado.



Lisa Weil, Great Education Colorado and Kallie Leyba, AFT Colorado

Lisa also received AFT Colorado's *Friends of Public Education* award for her work creating community coalitions whose goals are to improve education funding in Colorado. Lisa is a co-founder of *Great Education Colorado*, established in 2005, and has worked for years advocating for improving school

funding, including her instrumental involvement in the passage of Amendment 23. More recently she worked to create a coalition of over twenty community partners who have come together to find and implement school funding solutions.

Additionally, Lisa has collaborated with superintendents across the state in establishing consensus regarding Colorado's school funding formula. Her efforts toward educating our state's population around school finance will undoubtedly lead to a solution to education funding.



**Amy Carihfield and Marlene Candelaria
Winners of the Meyer-Mall Volunteer Award.**

AFT Colorado presented awards to two outstanding volunteers. The *Meyer-Mall Award* was given to Amy Carihfield and Marlene Candelaria.

Amy is a building representative at Grant Beacon School. Through her organizing efforts, she has achieved 100% membership density. Amy also serves as a member of the Executive Board for the Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees. Her work with students with special needs, particularly students with autism, is exemplary. Amy also has been an outstanding assistant in CPR professional development courses.

Marlene has been a member of the Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees since the Nutrition Service Association, an organization of which she was a founding member, joined with the Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals in October of 2010. Marlene also served on the writing team funded through an AFT Innovation Grant that created the Nutrition Service performance pay compensation system. Even though Marlene is retired, she continues to serve the union through involvement with various campaigns.

Officers for the 2017-19 term

President: Sarah Mesmer, *Douglas County Federation of Retirees*

Secretary/Treasurer: Kallie Leyba, *Douglas County Federation*

Executive Vice President, Laura Salazar, *Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees*

Vice President: Kelli Eastmond, *Douglas County Federation*

Vice President: Bernie Jiron, *Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees*

Vice President: Victoria Pacheco, *Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees*

Vice President: Joanne Slanovich, *Douglas County Federation of Retirees*

Vice President: Ellen Slatkin, *Metropolitan State Faculty Federation*

Thank you to all who attended the convention and special thanks to the individuals who planned and executed another successful event!



Discovering Discounts



Check out the values online at our all new website at unionplus.org/aftbenefits

*15% ON THE MONTHLY SERVICE CHARGE OF QUALIFIED WIRELESS PLANS: Available only to current members of qualified AFL-CIO member unions, other authorized individuals associated with eligible unions and other sponsoring organizations with a qualifying agreement. Must provide acceptable proof of union membership such as a membership card from your local union, a pay stub showing dues deduction or the Union Plus Member Discount Card and subscribe to service under an individual account for which the member is personally liable. Offer contingent upon in-store verification of union member status. Discount subject to agreement between Union Privilege and AT&T and may be interrupted, changed or discontinued without notice. Discount applies only to recurring monthly service charge of qualified voice and data plans, not overages. Not available with unlimited voice or unlimited data plans. For Family Talk, applies only to primary line. For all Mobile Share plans, applies only to monthly plan charge of plans with TGB or more, not to additional monthly device access charges. Additional restrictions apply. May take up to 2 bill cycles after eligibility confirmed and will not apply to prior charges. Applied after application of any available credit. May not be combined with other service discounts. Visit unionplus.org/aft or contact AT&T at 866-499-8008 for details.

**Certain restrictions, limitations, and qualifications apply to these grants. Additional information and eligibility criteria can be obtained at UnionPlus.org/Assistance. Credit approval required. Terms and conditions apply. The Union Plus Credit Cards are issued by Capital One, N.A., pursuant to a license from Mastercard International Incorporated. Capital One N.A. is not responsible for the contents of this message and/or any of the other third party products/services mentioned. The Mastercard Brand Mark is a registered trademark of Mastercard International Incorporated.



2017 Lobby Days



From all accounts, this year's lobby days were great successes. We had two lobby days over the course of two weeks and were excited to see all the members who joined us at both. Members from the south metro area joined us on March 22nd and members from Denver joined us on March 30th.

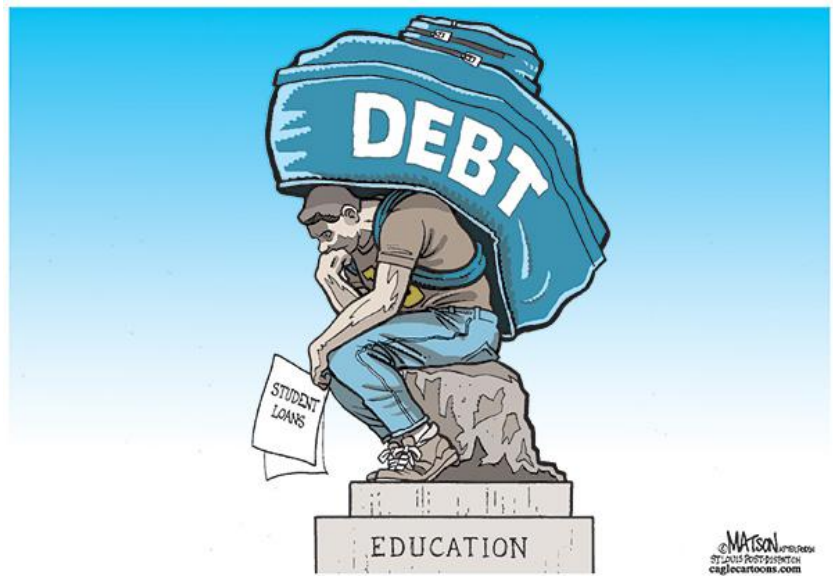
This year, we focused on “pulling legislators off the floor” of the House and Senate to discuss the important

legislation being debated at the time. We had dozens of conversations with legislators, and afterwards, heard they were very impressed and truly appreciated our input.

It is imperative for us to engage with our legislators to ensure they understand our perspective on important issues and to let them know we are paying attention and will hold them accountable. One of the bills we discussed—Senate Bill 61—was very controversial and would have been bad policy if implemented in its original form; but in large part, because of our efforts at lobby day and our members emailing key legislators afterwards, we were able to pressure our elected officials and reach a compromise on the bill. From the AFT Colorado staff, we would like to thank those who participated in this year's lobby day and we hope more people join us next year!



Student Debt Clinic



As many of you know, we unfortunately were forced to postpone our April 29th student debt clinic because of a winter storm, but we have now **rescheduled the clinic for two dates in June: June 21st from 3:00 to 5:00 PM and June 24th from 10:00 AM to Noon.** There was a lot of demand for the first clinic, so we want to make sure everybody who can benefit from this information can attend. It will be held at the AFT Colorado office at 304 Inverness Way South, Centennial, CO 80112 ([map](#)) on the terrace level. For more detailed information on the debt clinics please RSVP here: <http://bit.ly/2qxZMER>

We understand student loan debt has a huge impact on your lives. Not only because we have heard from you about your frustrations with your student debt, but also from our own experiences with student loan debt. We're not alone. The U.S. is on the verge of a devastating debt crisis not seen since the mortgage crisis of the late 2000s. Almost 45 million Americans have student loan debt totaling \$1.4 trillion, and a staggering 2000 people a day are going into default on their student loans.

Because we personally understand the frustrations that come along with trying to navigate the repayment process, regardless of whether or not you personally have student debt or you're a family member of somebody with student debt, we want to make sure you are equipped with the most complete information possible to maneuver the student debt landscape. There are several programs providing significant relief to those who have struggled, or are struggling, to make student loan payments. We will be going over these programs with you, in-depth, to ensure you can take full advantage of them.

AFT employs some of the nation's most knowledgeable experts on the student debt crisis and has incredible resources on this issue. We want to share that expertise with you. There are programs that can save you hundreds of dollars a month and even forgive you of your debt after a certain amount of time. We hope you take advantage of this student debt clinic! We look forward to seeing you there. Please RSVP at the website above and/or email our political coordinator, Ryan Case at rcase@aftcolorado.org with any questions you may have.

Colorado Union Veterans Council

The mission and purpose of the Union Veterans Council is to bring together Union Leaders and Union members who are Veterans and Non-Veterans, to speak out on Veterans' issues and influence public policy to improve the quality of life for U.S. Veterans and their families.

The primary areas of focus for the work of the Colorado Union Veterans Council (CUVC) are:

- Privatization of services
- Veterans claim backlog
- Appropriations and Training
- Outsourcing work
- Veterans Community Resources
- Staffing
- Veterans Taxation
- Healthcare
- Jobs
- and Veterans Housing and homelessness

The Colorado Union Veterans Council will hold government officials, candidates and elected officials accountable to the needs of military Veterans and their families. The CUVC will make our positions on veteran issues known to candidates for public office and support the appointment of labor-friendly veterans to government agencies at all levels. The CUVC will also encourage Colorado Union Veterans to take leadership roles in other Veteran Organizations and will strive to form coalitions and alliances with other veteran groups around Union Veteran issues.

The CUVC is building and looking for new members to join their executive council. They are asking all affiliated international unions to nominate one person to represent them as a delegate to the CUVC.

To join CUVC please contact Bernard Humbles at humblesbernard@msn.com and include the following information:

Name

International and Local Union

Phone

And email address.

Any questions or for more information please reach out to Bernard Humbles at humblesbernard@msn.com

Legislative Update



The 2017 legislative session has officially ended! Unsurprisingly, education was a hot topic this year. AFT Colorado ended up tracking a total of 90 bills. Despite the huge amount of education related legislation introduced, not much was accomplished. Because the legislature was split (Democrats had the majority in the House and Republicans had the majority in the Senate), most of the bills we supported in the House failed in the Senate, and most of the bills we opposed in the Senate died in the House. Our major focuses were on the student debt crisis and protecting funding for public schools.

Notwithstanding the gridlock we encountered in the capitol this year, we feel optimistic about making progress on our legislative priorities next year – especially on the topic of student debt. We actively supported two bills that would have provided relief for those of us that have student loan debt – House Bill 1352 and Senate Bill 147.

HB-1352 would have held student loan servicers more accountable for any negligence or wrong doing they brought upon a student loan borrower, and SB-147 would have required public employers to notify their employees by email of their eligibility for a program that forgives them of all their student loan debt after ten years. Similar bills have passed in other states in a bipartisan way and we made significant progress in explaining to legislators of both parties why these issues are so important and why they transcend partisan politics. Keep an eye out next year because we may need you to send a letter or call your legislator on these topics. Mark this down as an example of why it is so important to

elect the right legislators during election season. If one senate race went the other way last year, these bills would be law today.

Another bill we worked endlessly on, but in this case to amend or kill, was Senate Bill 61. SB-61 was a very controversial bill that originally aimed to mandate locally elected school boards share all revenue raised from mill levy overrides with charter schools. Many school districts already do this and this bill would have usurped local control from school districts and provided money to charter schools that do not have to follow the same rules as every other school.

We were fortunately able to work with House leadership to amend SB-61 to require charter schools to be held to some of the same standards of accountability and transparency to which traditional public schools are held. It is also not mandatory that school districts equally share mill levy revenues with charters, but rather they must create a plan to distribute money based on the needs of students without regard to what type of school they attend.

To finish with good news – despite early forecasts that Colorado public school funding could see as much as a \$1 billion budget shortfall, our lawmakers were able to actually increase per pupil funding by \$242 and keep the negative factor at the same level as last year for the first time in several years. There is obviously a need to overhaul how we fund our schools in Colorado but the fact that schools didn't lose funding should be considered a victory at this point.

Local Union Updates



DFPNSE

Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals
and Nutrition Service Employees

We extend our congratulations to the Beach Court Elementary School nutrition workers. The nutrition employees received recognition, signed by the Mayor, from the Health Department for their implementation of a management system promoting a safe operation.



DCF Hosts Teacher-Time Panel Discussion



The Douglas County Federation (DCF) hosted a panel discussion with teachers, an administrator, and school board members. The group discussed the importance of collaboration and trust to maximize the effects of the time teachers spend outside of the classroom for students. DCF presented information from international

research that shows countries with successful education systems have teachers who spend less time in front of students, while spending about half their work time collaborating with colleagues.

Joanne Slanovich Retires

The Douglas County Federation Retiree local was chartered in 2009, thanks to the hard work of Joanne Slanovich. Since then Joanne has served as President, building membership, and supporting retirees, in-service staff, and teachers. As President, Joanne has been involved with legislative work with AFT Colorado seeking to protect PERA through her involvement in the SecurePERA group. Prior to starting the retiree group, Joanne was Vice President of the Douglas County Federation, and she remains a Vice President of AFT Colorado. At this month's General Membership meeting Joanne announced that she is stepping down as President of the retirees. Her years (decades) of service to the DCF, AFT Colorado, and DCF Retirees is extraordinary. One of her members spoke very eloquently about her at the General Membership meeting, telling all in attendance about Joanne's selfless acts that have helped individuals and our organization. We are grateful that Joanne will continue to mentor the executive board of the retirees as they transition to new leadership, as well as continuing her role as VP for AFT Colorado.



Welcome Robin Handy

With Joanne Slanovich stepping down as President of the Douglas County Federation Retirees, Robin Handy has agreed to take over. Robin retired last year from her position as a Spanish teacher at Castle View High School. Robin was very involved with the Douglas County Federation and will be an excellent leader for the retirees.

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.