



## We Care, We Fight, We Show Up and We Vote

Sarah R. Mesmer, President

Every two years AFT holds a national convention to bring members together from across the globe - that's right, across the globe, to network, hold elections, and to determine the direction of the organization for the next two years. Kallie Leyba, (AFT Colorado Secretary/Treasurer and President of Douglas County Federation) and I traveled to Pittsburgh, PA to participate in these activities. To say that it was hot and humid is an understatement!

Numerous issues were at the forefront of discussion including ramification of the Janus decision, securing a living wage for all workers, demanding justice for dreamers, securing retirement, and establishing safe working environments. Guest speakers included Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, and Elizabeth Warren, all who clearly understand the value of unions and support the labor movement. Without exception, their primary message was the critical importance of the elections in November, as well as, urging our legislators in Washington DC to fight against the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court.

There were nearly 3,000 participants in the convention and it was courageous and impressive for a student from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School to speak about her experience and the importance of school safety. In tandem, our very

own Kallie Leyba introduced a resolution, the first in the history of AFT Colorado, regarding mandatory mental health care and fitness-for-duty confirmation for staff members in schools who have experienced a shooting incident. Law enforcement, medical personnel, and firefighters have had this requirement in place for years as recognized first responders. But think about it, the first, first responders are the school staff members in these tragic events. Kallie's resolution was unanimously confirmed by the membership and the resolution accepted.



*Kallie Leyba, AFT Colorado Secretary/Treasurer and Douglas County Federation President introduces a resolution at the AFT Convention*

Finally, on the heels of the Janus decision, it was encouraging to learn that AFT membership is growing. Many of the fee payers in states impacted by Janus are choosing to stick with their union and are becoming full members. We are not going away! **As AFT members, we care, we fight, we show up, and we vote!**

# Why vote YES on Amendment 73?



Colorado has one of the fastest growing economies in the country, yet we spend roughly **\$2,800 less than the national average** on each student, and the majority of our **school districts have teacher shortages** because Colorado has the least competitive teacher wages in the country.

We can't forget that **strong public schools are the backbone of healthy communities**, preparing students to be good citizens and make positive contributions.

**Amendment 73 will give schools the funding they desperately need by creating a new revenue stream for local school districts that politicians and bureaucrats can't raid.**

It would provide equitable funding for all Colorado school districts by asking those benefiting the most from Colorado's growth — corporations and the wealthy — to contribute a little more.

Need details of the proposal, information about how Amendment 73 directly helps local school districts, and information about how to volunteer?

Visit <https://www.greatschoolsthivingcommunities.org/> for more information.



## **AFT COLORADO ENDORSED STATEWIDE RACES**

**Governor - Jared Polis**

**State Treasurer - Dave Young**

**Secretary of State – Jena Griswold**

**Attorney General - Phil Weiser**

**State School Board CD 2: - Angelika Schroeder**

**State School Board CD 4: - Tim Krug**

**CU Regent at Large: - Lesley Smith**

**CU Regent District 5: - Tony Wolusky**

If you would like more information on any of these candidates or you are not sure which district you live in, please respond to the email sending this newsletter to you ,Ryan Case at [rcase@aftcolorado.org](mailto:rcase@aftcolorado.org) or your local President for more information.



## **AFT Colorado Recommends**

### **YES on Y & Z**

**With a new Census around the corner and dramatic growth set to give Colorado an eighth congressional seat by 2022, now is the time to improve our existing system.**

Fair Maps Colorado presented redistricting reforms that included independent redistricting commissions and emphasis on fairness and better representation to the Legislature in its 2018 session.

In an unprecedented show of leadership on the issue, the General Assembly put redistricting reform ahead of partisanship and referred two measures to the ballot this fall by votes of 100-0:

#### **AMENDMENT Y**

Congressional redistricting

#### **AMENDMENT Z**

Legislative redistricting

## AFT Colorado Endorsed Candidates



In order to provide you with the information you need to make an educated decision on whom to vote for, we undergo a process to survey and interview candidates to find the best pro-public education and pro-labor candidates that will best serve our members. Below are our recommendations.

### HOUSE

HD 1	<a href="#">Susan Lontine</a>	HD 31	<a href="#">Yadira Caraveo</a>
HD 3	<a href="#">Jeff Bridges</a>	HD 32	<a href="#">Adrienne Benavidez</a>
HD 4	<a href="#">Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez</a>	HD 33	<a href="#">Matt Gray</a>
HD 5	<a href="#">Alex Valdez</a>	HD 34	<a href="#">Kyle Mullica</a>
HD 9	<a href="#">Emily Sirota</a>	HD 35	<a href="#">Shannon Bird</a>
HD 10	<a href="#">Edie Hooton</a>	HD 36	<a href="#">Mike Weissman</a>
HD 11	<a href="#">Jonathan Singer</a>	HD 37	<a href="#">Tom Sullivan</a>
HD 13	<a href="#">KC Becker</a>	HD 38	<a href="#">Christopher Kolker</a>
HD 15	<a href="#">Brenda Krause</a>	HD 40	<a href="#">Janet Buckner</a>
HD 16	<a href="#">Andrew Smith</a>	HD 42	<a href="#">Dominique Jackson</a>
HD 17	<a href="#">Thomas "Tony" Exum</a>	HD 43	<a href="#">Barrett Rothe</a>
HD 18	<a href="#">Marc Snyder</a>	HD 44	<a href="#">Simone Aiken</a>
HD 20	<a href="#">Kent Jarnig</a>	HD 46	<a href="#">Daneya Esgar</a>
HD 22	<a href="#">Todd Kastetter</a>	HD 47	<a href="#">Brianna Buentello</a>
HD 23	<a href="#">Chris Kennedy</a>	HD 48	<a href="#">Gbenga Ajiboye</a>
HD 24	<a href="#">Monica Duran</a>	HD 50	<a href="#">Rochelle Galindo</a>
HD 25	<a href="#">Lisa Cutter</a>	HD 56	<a href="#">Dave Rose</a>
HD 26	<a href="#">Dylan Roberts</a>	HD 58	<a href="#">Seth Cagin</a>
HD 28	<a href="#">Kerry Tipper</a>	HD 59	<a href="#">Barbara McLachlan</a>
HD 29	<a href="#">Tracy Kraft-Tharp</a>	HD 61	<a href="#">Julie McCluskie</a>

### SENATE

SD 3	<a href="#">Leroy Garcia</a>	SD 20	<a href="#">Jessie Danielson</a>
SD 5	<a href="#">Kerry Donovan</a>	SD 22	<a href="#">Brittany Petterson</a>
SD 6	<a href="#">Guinn Unger</a>	SD 24	<a href="#">Faith Winter</a>
SD 7	<a href="#">Chris Kennedy</a>	SD 30	<a href="#">Julia Varnell-Sarjeant</a>
SD 11	<a href="#">Pete Lee</a>	SD 32	<a href="#">Robert Rodriguez</a>
SD 15	<a href="#">Rebecca Cranston</a>	SD 34	<a href="#">Julie Gonzales</a>
SD 16	<a href="#">Tammy Story</a>		

## Get Involved Today!



Politics have you frustrated? We feel your pain – our federal government is in disarray, and our split-legislature in Colorado has caused gridlock and inaction towards fixing our broken education system with seemingly no end in sight. Fortunately, we are in the position to support a group of candidates running for office in 2018 that are true champions of public education, and with our collective action, we have a real opportunity to turn things around in a meaningful way.

Through our extensive endorsement process, we have identified the candidates we believe will turn things around in Colorado and eliminate the gridlock we have seen over the past several years; **And, they need our help.** We know they have our back, and we need to show them we have theirs.

Our strength as a union largely lies in our people-power and our ability to band together for a common cause; so, we must come together and contribute our time and effort to these candidates' campaigns. Together with the Colorado AFL-CIO, we will be knocking doors and making phone calls for these candidates for the next eight weeks, and we need you to join us!

**We will be knocking doors every Saturday at 10am and making phone calls every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, at the AFT office in Denver.** You can sign up and find out more specifics at this link: <https://actionnetwork.org/groups/colorado-afl-cio>. **Please sign up today.** Colorado's students and your fellow public-school employees need us to step up.

We are especially focused on this upcoming **Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>**, when our locals across the state will be banding together to knock doors for Rep. Jessie Danielson – who is in the most competitive and arguably the most important state senate race in Colorado. We will be meeting at **10am at 7510 W. Mississippi Ave., Lakewood, CO 80226.** Sign-up here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/joint-labor-walk-jessie-danielson>, or above, and email [rcase@aftcolorado.org](mailto:rcase@aftcolorado.org) with any questions.

**COPE**

For those of you that cannot contribute in that way, there is an alternative – COPE. COPE stands for “Committee on Political Education”. We are not legally allowed to use your union dues for political purposes, so COPE allows us to contribute to the campaigns of pro-public education school board, state house and senate, and candidates running for statewide office to ensure that your interests are being served at the State Capitol.

If you are unable to contribute your time, please consider donating to COPE or increasing your donation to COPE. Page 11 of this newsletter has an application that you can complete to enroll. Contact our Political Director, Ryan Case, at [rcase@aftcolorado.org](mailto:rcase@aftcolorado.org) or contact your local President for more information.



## Student Debt Clinic

AFT Colorado is excited to announce that we will be hosting another student debt clinic on October 1<sup>st</sup>! It will be held at Clear Sky Elementary School ([map](#)) in the Bungalow Room from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. For more detailed information on the debt clinics, please RSVP [here](#). When you register, select Douglas County (CO) Federation 5:30 PM 10/01/2018 from the “Student Debt Clinic” drop-down menu. Under the required affiliate field, type the full name of the local – the field will eventually autofill, but abbreviations won’t register.

Student loan debt has a huge impact on many of our lives. 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 2,000 people a day are going into default on their student loans.

Regardless of whether or not you personally have student debt, or you’re a family member of somebody with student debt, it is essential that you are equipped with the most complete and up-to-date information available to help you maneuver the student debt landscape. There are several programs that provide significant relief to those who have struggled, or are struggling, to make student loan payments, and we will be going over these programs with you in-depth at our student debt clinic 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, and we simply want to share that 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, so 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 Director, Ryan Case at [rcase@aftcolorado.org](mailto:rcase@aftcolorado.org).

## Union Plus Scholarship Program



Sponsored by the Union Plus Education Foundation. The program is open to members, spouses and dependent children of unions participating in any of the Union Plus programs. See the [Union Plus Scholarship Program website](#) for more information.

Deadline for 2019 applications is 12:00pm (noon, Eastern Time), January 31, 2019.

## Vote YES on Proposition 111



*Payday lenders trap Coloradans in outrageously high-cost debt. Triple-digit rates and multiple fees strip millions of dollars annually from the pockets of people across the state.*

***Proposition #111 prevents a 200% APR on payday loans by capping interest and fees.***

**Interest and fees on payday loans strip nearly \$50 million annually from Coloradans.**

- Payday loans are short-term loans for up to \$500. The average payday loan in 2016 was for \$392 and cost customers an average of \$119 in interest and fees.
- In 2016, payday lenders originated 414,284 loans in Colorado. These high-cost payday loans drained nearly \$50 million in fees and interest payments from financially-strapped Coloradans.
- This is a significant drain on Colorado's economy, diverting dollars that otherwise would be spent in the local economy on everyday necessities.
- Alternative lending products are available to consumers across Colorado. A review of the credit market for households with lower credit scores and the experience of states that have addressed payday lending show that many alternatives are available. They are all far better than the long strings of repeated high-cost loans that trap payday borrowers in unmanageable and ultimately devastating debt.

**Capping rates on payday loans means payday lenders must play by the same rules as other lenders.**

- Payday lenders can currently charge an interest rate of 45 percent *plus fees* because these loans are exempt from state usury laws—the laws that prevent excessively high interest rates. By capping the APR (annual percentage rate) at 36% inclusive of fees, this ballot measure would make payday loans subject to the same top interest rate allowable for all other loans in Colorado.
- Over a decade ago, Congress capped the interest rate on payday loans offered to active-duty military and their families at 36%. Currently, 15 states and the District of Columbia have also passed laws capping payday lending rates and fees at 36%. Former payday customers in these states are relieved to be out of the payday debt trap and report many other less costly ways of meeting financial shortfalls.

**Despite legislative reforms, payday loans are still very costly, carrying an average APR of 129%.**

- In 2010, the Colorado legislature took steps to reform payday loans, lowering the fees and creating a minimum loan term of six months. The law also allowed prepayment of the loan balance without penalty.
- Despite these important reforms, Coloradans are still paying too much for these loans. In 2016, the average payday loan had an average APR of 129% costing Coloradans \$50 million in interest and fees annually and trapping people in a cycle.

For more information contact [www.StopPredatoryPaydayLoans.org](http://www.StopPredatoryPaydayLoans.org)



## AFT's Concerns with Nomination of Kavanaugh to Supreme Court

A Supreme Court nominee should be fair, independent, and committed to safeguarding the rights and freedoms that protect every one of us. Judge Brett Kavanaugh not only has a long history of siding with corporations when workers try to stand up for themselves, but also stood with CEOs when they wanted to discriminate against their employees, fire their workers unfairly, or infringe on the health and safety of consumers. And now, he wants to turn a blind eye to President Trump's lawless behavior. He's written that presidents shouldn't be indicted or subject to investigation.

### Education:

- **Vouchers and school choice:** Kavanaugh served as the co-chairman of the Federalist Society's School Choice Practice Group and worked on school choice litigation in Florida for a reduced fee.
- **Prayer in schools:** Kavanaugh wrote an amicus brief in favor of a Texas high school's policy allowing the use of a public address system for prayers at school football games.
- **Affirmative action in higher education:** With Robert Bork, Kavanaugh co-authored an amicus brief on behalf of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a group that opposes race-based affirmative action in college admissions.
- **Access to services for students with disabilities:** In 2007, Kavanaugh wrote the opinion that ruled against a student who sought compensatory special education services from the District of Columbia Public Schools for time he spent incarcerated in Maryland. The school system had agreed to provide the services to the student, then 17, while in prison, but Maryland prison officials refused to allow them and provided their own services instead.

### Workers' rights:

- **Collective bargaining:** Kavanaugh authored an opinion that would allow the secretary of defense to "abolish collective bargaining altogether."
- **Treatment of vulnerable employees:** Kavanaugh dissented from a majority decision that ordered a company to bargain with a union, arguing that undocumented immigrants were ineligible to vote.
- **Employee safety:** Kavanaugh dissented from a majority opinion upholding a safety citation against SeaWorld following the death of a trainer.
- **Right to protest:** Kavanaugh reversed and remanded a National Labor Relations Board decision that a hotel engaged in unfair labor practices when it requested police officers issue criminal citations to union demonstrators who were legally protesting.

## Healthcare:

- **Affordable Care Act:** Kavanaugh has criticized the rationale Chief Justice John Roberts invoked in upholding the Affordable Care Act. He also has offered Trump an open invitation to disregard the ACA and continue to sabotage insurance markets. Kavanaugh has written that the president may decline to enforce a statute that regulates private individuals when the president deems the statute unconstitutional, even if a court has held, or would hold, the statute constitutional.
- **Reproductive rights:** Kavanaugh blocked an undocumented minor in government custody from exercising her constitutionally protected right to an abortion.

## Favoring corporations over individuals:

- **Consumer protections:** Kavanaugh believes the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which was created to protect consumers from unscrupulous financial institutions, is unconstitutional.
- **Net neutrality:** Kavanaugh argued that the Federal Communications Commission's net neutrality rule benefiting millions was unconstitutional.
- **Access to basic health and safety:** Kavanaugh has repeatedly ruled for corporations and against protections for clean air and clean water.



# Local Union Updates



The Douglas County Federation is proud to be one of only twenty-two of the American Federation of Teachers locals to be selected to participate in the Teacher Leader program for the 2018/19 school year. While the name is Teacher Leader, the DCF has invited all educator members to consider joining us for this year long program where participants identify a policy they don't think is working, or an issue where a policy is needed, and

complete action research around the issue. At the end of the program, participants will present their research to people in positions of power to influence policy change. We are looking forward to developing new union leaders who have an opportunity to take on leadership roles in their schools or departments.



## A home financing program created exclusively for AFT members.

Amalgamated Bank's Home Financing Program<sup>1</sup> offers competitive rates, exclusive discounts, and more!

**Learn more at [aft.org/benefits](http://aft.org/benefits) or call 800.701.8409.**



1. To be eligible for the benefits under the AFT Home Financing Program, applicants must identify themselves as AFT Members during the loan application process. AFT membership is subject to verification.

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# AFT COLORADO

## STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

925 S. Niagara St., Suite 600, Denver, CO 80204 [www.aftcolorado.org](http://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: 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.