



# Colorado Connection

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2024



## Happy May!

The flowers are blooming! Spring is in the Air. Are you ready for Summer?  
April and May have been busy months!

I attended a press conference regarding a resolution **SCR-24-01 Child Sex Abuse Accountability Amendment**. The Amendment would have gone to voters (it failed) and allowed for victims of childhood sex abuse to bring a civil claim regardless of when it occurred. The bill sponsors were Senators Jessie Danielson and Rhonda Fields, Majority Leader Monica Duran, and Representative Mike Weissman. Dee Smith, DFPNSE president and Christina Garcia NSE organizer also attended the press conference.



Rally to support American Public Works Association

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, I attended a rally to support local APWA (American Public Works Association). The rally was held at the post office on South Broadway. The rally protested the threats to close some local post offices. Over seven different locals turned out in support of this rally.



May 23, 2024 Rally at the Capitol. Bernadette Jiron, President AFT Colorado

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, a rally protesting the actions of Governor Jared Polis was held at the Capitol. It was very well attended: we had over 200 members from over eight different union locals. Governor Polis had vetoed three bills that supported labor and our students in classrooms. These bills included wage theft, HVAC in schools and a bill to prevent

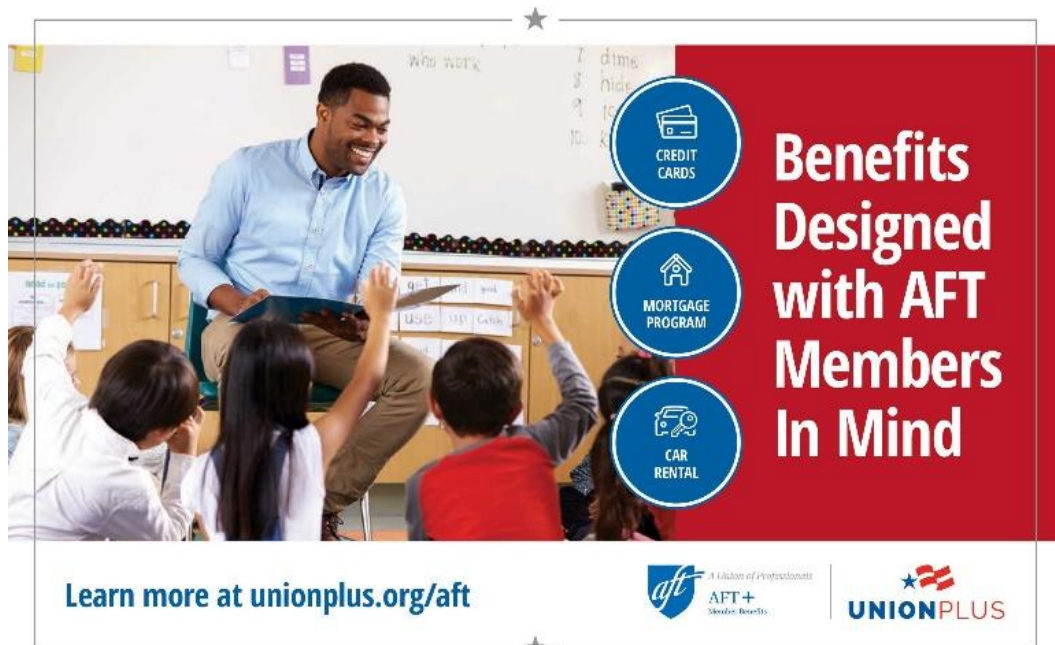
employers from retaliating against workers for not attending employer meetings with political or religious content. 9News and several other media sources covered the rally.

I will attend the AFT National Convention in Texas in July 2024, I am proud to be representing AFT Colorado members.

Have a safe and relaxing summer break!

See you in August!

In Unity –  
Bernadette (Bernie) Jiron  
AFT Colorado President  
303-744-9962



A promotional graphic for AFT Union Plus benefits. On the left, a photograph shows a male teacher in a light blue shirt sitting on a desk, smiling and interacting with a group of young students in a classroom. The background includes a whiteboard with some writing and classroom decorations. On the right, a red vertical banner contains the text "Benefits Designed with AFT Members In Mind" in white. To the left of this text are three circular icons: a credit card labeled "CREDIT CARDS", a house labeled "MORTGAGE PROGRAM", and a car labeled "CAR RENTAL". At the bottom of the graphic, there is a white bar containing the text "Learn more at [unionplus.org/aft](https://unionplus.org/aft)" on the left, the AFT logo and "AFT+ Member Benefits" in the center, and the "UNIONPLUS" logo on the right.

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CREDIT CARDS


MORTGAGE PROGRAM

CAR RENTAL

**Benefits  
Designed  
with AFT  
Members  
In Mind**

Learn more at [unionplus.org/aft](https://unionplus.org/aft)

 **AFT+**  
Member Benefits

 **UNIONPLUS**

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## From your Executive Director

By: Kallie Leyba

The 74th session of the Colorado General Assembly wrapped up last week after the 120 days required in state statute, passing 186 bills. So far, the Governor has vetoed 6 bills – several of which were bills we engaged in and actively lobbied to pass.

Of the 778 bills introduced, the AFT Colorado engaged on 135 bills—either supporting, opposing, working to amend or monitoring. Our union is unique in the number of bills that affect our members—the bills we followed were:

- 58 bills related to pre-kindergarten through 12th public schools
- 11 bills related to Higher Education
- 16 bills related to labor or public employees
- 6 bills related to PERA
- 8 bills related to gun safety or gun violence prevention
- 13 bills that are related to children and youth issues (but not tied to education)
- 4 bills related to health care, mental health or suicide prevention
- 5 bills related to housing
- 6 bills related to racial justice or social justice
- 3 bills related to voting rights or election security
- 5 bills related to the economy – affordable living for our members



*Kallie speaks to the DCF retirees at their membership meeting with their guest speaker, Secretary of State Jena Griswold*

If you would like to receive a copy of the AFT Colorado 2024 Final Legislative Summary Report, please email me at [KLeyba@AFTColorado.org](mailto:KLeyba@AFTColorado.org) and I will send you a copy.

Now that session is over, my job transitions immediately into candidate endorsement and election support. The AFT Colorado follows the AFL-CIO or DALF (or other labor councils) endorsement process but doesn't necessarily follow the endorsement recommendations of the AFL or labor councils. Our COPE committee will be meeting in early June to make endorsement decisions. If you are interested in joining the COPE committee, please email me at [KLeyba@AFTColorado.org](mailto:KLeyba@AFTColorado.org).

We have made several early endorsements of candidates, some who have contentious primaries and who have been K12, Higher Education and Labor champions. **We need your help knocking doors, writing postcards, phone or text banking for these candidates! Please email me to let me know you can help! This is an URGENT REQUEST!**



Please email me with any questions or thoughts you may have. I'm looking forward to meeting lots of you as we canvass for candidates that support the issues that are most important to our membership.

In solidarity,  
Kallie Leyba  
Executive Director  
AFT Colorado

# Stand with Workers Rally

On May 23, 2024 around 500 AFL-CIO members, other union and association members, supportive community groups and state legislators showed up to the Capitol to share our disappointment with Governor's Polis' decision to veto three bills that were labor priorities:



Tom Yondorf, DCFR member, Bernie Jiron, AFT Colorado President and Kallie Leyba, Executive Director.

- **HB 24-1307 HVAC Improvement for Public Schools**  
This bill created an OPTIONAL program for schools to get help writing grants to access Federal funding to address HVAC systems in school, ensuring proper climate control and air quality for our students, teachers, and staff. Those who opposed the bill took issue with the requirements for using certified contractors and agreeing to using union labor OR paying prevailing wages. However, the districts would still be allowed to apply for the grants outside of this program and therefore could indicate on their grant application that they did not agree to this standard. Federal funding requires the prevailing wage or union contracts so they are unlikely to receive the grant without this standard. (Remember the [HVAC system that fell into the pool](#) at the Gaylord Rockies? Quality of work matters!) We believe that Polis' veto of this bill is anti-labor.

- **HB 24-1008 Wage Claims Construction Industry Contractors** would have held contractors responsible for wage theft committed by the subcontractors they hire. In Colorado, construction workers account for 7% of the workforce, but experience 17% of the wage theft. This deplorable practice is common and one worker told the story of two consecutive jobs where he wasn't paid – even after filing a claim and winning the claim. He lived for six months in his car. During the second job, after being told he would have to wait to be paid, when he filed his wage theft claim, he was kicked out of the housing that the subcontractor had provided – making him homeless once again. He still has not been paid for either job.

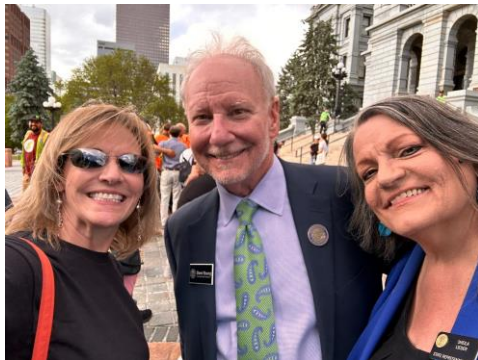


Labor overflowed from the west steps of the Capitol –there were over 500 people in attendance, many wearing t-shirts that read "Polis Failed Workers."

- HB 24-1260 Concerning a Prohibition against Disciplining an Employee for Refusing to Participate in Employer Speech would have addressed the union busting meetings that employers require employees to participate in. One worker told her story of working in child care and being forced to leave her classroom for hours (leaving the kids with disrupted days) to hear a union busting company try to scare employees out of joining a union. In committee hearings we also heard employees talk about being forced to participate in meetings that involved religious indoctrination. The Governor wanted the bill to be amended to only include union speech, and to remove political and religious. This would have made the law in conflict with the NLRA (National Labor Relations Act) as it would have been preempted.



Fiona Boomer, Executive Director DCF, Carl Smith, SMART transportation division, Rob Gould, President DCTA (Denver Classroom Teachers Association), Kiersten Forseth, Lobbyist for the AFL-CIO and Kallie Leyba, Executive Director, AFT Colorado.



Kallie with Treasurer Dave Young and Representative (and union member) Sheila Liedt.



Representative Tammy Story, Kallie and Treasurer Dave Young.

Read or watch more about the rally at links below:

News coverage of the rally:

[Colorado Public Radio](#)

[CBS News](#)

[Denver 7](#)

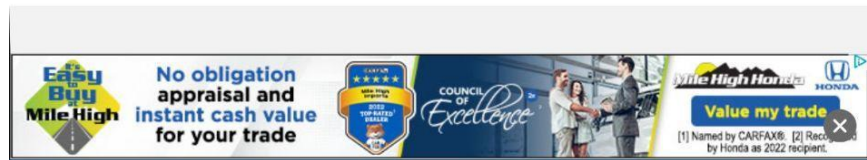
[9 News](#)

[Colorado Politics](#)

Interesting quote from this article:

8:27

29



The governor also provided a statement to Colorado Politics.

“Governor Polis is committed to fighting hardworking Coloradans. The reality is, Governor Polis has expanded collective bargaining rights for tens of thousands of workers, including bargaining rights for state employees and local government workers. Gov. Polis was clear in his vetoes that while each of the bills had good aspects to the idea the bills in their final form were not in the best interest of the state, and our requests to the legislators to improve the bills were rejected. He remains open to working on each of these policies ahead of the next session to craft laws that support the objectives of the sponsors and organizations.”

# Local Union Updates



## "Douglas County Retirees: A Community of Engaged Educators"

By [Bill Hamaker](#)

President of the Douglas County Retirees

### Douglas County Federation of Retirees General Membership Meeting Recap

The Douglas County Federation of Retirees (DCFR) held its general membership meeting on May 14, 2024, at Maggiano's, marking another successful gathering aimed at fostering community and addressing key issues affecting retirees and the education sector. We were thrilled to have as our guest speaker Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold! Secretary Griswold delivered an inspiring talk on her blue-collar roots and political journey, emphasizing the crucial need to safeguard democracy.



Douglas County Federation President Lucy Squire also spoke, highlighting the prioritization of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, celebrating the passage of measure 5A, and noting the ongoing support for measure 5B. She also praised the positive union-board relationship and the successful change in the graduation venue for Douglas County High School which came about thanks to the efforts of the DCF (Union Power!).

DCF Membership Coordinator Lindsay Lee and Tom Yondorf reported on a new collaboration between the Douglas County Federation (DCF) and DCFR to recruit and engage members.





*DCFR Dinner at Maggiano's with Special Guest: Colorado Secretary of State Gena*

DCFR members will be trained by both Lindsay and DCF Executive Director Fiona Boomer in an all out effort to get DCF membership numbers up. This is a crucial element in DCF's effort to secure a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Douglas County Board of Education.

Lindsay and Tom stressed the importance of membership growth, supported by AFT National, and outlined plans for including retirees in these efforts through personal engagement and also by holding meetings at all the schools in Douglas County.

The DCFR continues to demonstrate its commitment to advocacy, community engagement, and support for retirees and educators, ensuring a strong collective voice within Douglas County. For further information or to get involved, members are encouraged to contact [Bill Hamaker](#), President of DCFR.



*Rallying at the Capitol on May 24, 2024 (DCFR Pres. Bill Hamaker, DCF Membership Coordinator Lindsay Lee & DCF Executive Director Fiona Boomer - along with Fat Cat & Exploited Worker!)*

## STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

925 S. Niagara St., Suite 600, Denver, CO 80224 [www.aftcolorado.org](http://www.aftcolorado.org) 303-947-6709

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.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_