



Colorado Connection

4th Quarter 2024



Welcome back educators!!!

Happy fall everyone!

AFT Colorado wants to welcome two new local union presidents. We welcome Lymon Sneed of Emily Griffith Technical College and Richard Wagner, the new president of Metropolitan State Faculty Federation (MSFF).

We want to send get well wishes to our AFT Colorado Secretary/Treasurer, Sarah Mesmer, as she recovers from surgery. Come back soon!

We have an upcoming event in April of 2024, our next AFT Colorado convention. The date is Saturday April 26th, 2025.

All members are encouraged to attend this very important meeting. Registration will start at 8:00 am and the convention will begin at 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

More information will come out soon. SAVE THE DATE!!!!

If you have any questions about the AFT Colorado convention please get a hold of Cheryl Reiling via email: creiling@aftcolorado.org.

Happy holidays to all and be safe.

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





From your Executive Director

By: Kallie Leyba

Election results in Colorado are, for the most part, positive. We codified marriage equality and abortion rights. We defeated a measure that would have opened the door to public school vouchers and defeated a billionaire's scheme to change the rules of voting in Colorado in order to get his way—with a budget 1/30th of the opposition! We elected many pro-public education and pro-labor candidates to serve in the House and the Senate. Unfortunately we lost one amazing labor and public education champions in the House, Mary Young and the outcome of the HD 16 race, Stephanie Vigil, is still not determined and will be subject to a recount. The other races we lost were challengers who promised to be champions—I hope we see them run again in two years. Yadira Caraveo lost CD 8—a true blow to our policy priorities.

Unfortunately, national results are disappointing for supporters of public education and unions (and many other groups). The incoming administration has proposed draconian policies that harm our institutions. The vast majority of Americans support public education and 67% of Americans approve of unions. The incongruent result with the majority of Americans voting for candidates who oppose the policies they support is truly confounding.

Worrying about what might happen isn't productive though. We are union members, we know that this is the time for organizing—for talking to our co-workers and for supporting each other. There are members of vulnerable groups that are under attack and they, especially, need our support.

November is also a month for gratitude.

Our successes in Colorado were won because of people who answered the call to DO SOMETHING. Our members who got involved – whether it was donating to COPE, serving on the COPE committee, writing postcards for candidates or issues, phone or text banking, canvassing for candidates or initiatives, painting car windows, or some other action- made a difference.

I'd like to recognize some staff who worked extra hard this election season as well. Cheryl Reiling, the AFT CO Office Manager, keeps us organized and helps get donations out the door. When you read all the endorsements below, you will

get an idea of how much work Cheryl has done. For every endorsement that comes with a donation, she not only processes the letters of donation, checks for the donations, but also makes sure that we are in compliance with all our donation reporting. Our meeting minutes are complex during this time of year, with extra meetings and much on the agenda, and Cheryl keeps it all recorded accurately. Thanks Cheryl!



Lindsay and Kallie (below) Painting Car Windows for the DCSD 5A Campaign

Thanks also to Fiona Boomer and Lindsay Lynn with the Douglas County Federation, who, for the second year in a row, spent hours and hours working on the local funding initiative – including cutting turf, managing a huge member volunteer postcard campaign, staffing canvas locations, and of course writing postcards and canvassing.



Thank you to our COPE Chair Sheila Rucki, who responds right away to my barrage of requests for endorsement and donation. And thank you to our members of our COPE Committee who have responded quickly as well and wrapped their heads around A LOT of information quickly. The increased meeting time during this season is appreciated. And of course, thank you to our Executive Board who also has been meeting and making decisions throughout the election season.

And finally, thank you to our national organization, AFT, for their support, financial and otherwise, for much of the success we had this election in Colorado.

The results of the election related to our endorsements are below. Today is a great day to sign up to donate to COPE so we can start saving for the next election. Please complete the form at the end of this newsletter and return it to your local office or to the address at the top of the form to start contributing to COPE or to increase your donation.

In solidarity,
Kallie Leyba

Election Results

Initiatives we supported that passed:

Amendment 79: Constitutional Right to Abortion

Amendment J: Repealing the Definition of Marriage in the Constitution

Amendment JJ: Retain Additional Sports Betting Tax Revenue

Amendment KK: Firearms and Ammunition Excise Tax

Douglas County 5A Bond (endorsed by local)



Canvassing kickoff for DCSD 5A Bond Campaign

Initiatives we supported that failed:

Amendment K: Modify Constitutional Election Deadlines

Initiatives we opposed that failed:

Amendment 80: School Choice

Proposition 131: All Candidate Primary and Ranked Choice Voting

Initiatives we opposed that passed:

Proposition 120: Establish Veterinary Professional Associates

Candidates we endorsed and results:

Federal

President

Lost: Kamala Harris & Tim Walz (endorsed by our National)

Congressional District Candidates endorsed by our National and results:

Won:

CD1 Diane DeGette

CD2 Joe Neguse

CD6 Jason Crow

CD7 Brittany Petterson

Lost:

CD3 Adam Frisch

CD4 Trisha Calverese

CD8 Yadira Caraveo

State

State Board of Education Candidates we endorsed and results:

Won:

CD2 Kathy Gebhardt

Lost:

At-large Rhonda Solis

CD3 Ellen Angeles



Sen. Hickenlooper at GOTV kickoff with Douglas County Democrats

CU Regent Candidate we endorsed and results:

Won:

At-large Elliott Hood

Colorado State Senate Candidates we endorsed and results:

Won:

SD 12 Marc Snyder

SD 14 Cathy Kipp

SD 16 Chris Kolker

SD 18 Judy Amabile

SD 19 Lindsay Daugherty

SD 21 Dafna Michaelson Jenet

SD 26 Jeff Bridges

SD 28 Mike Weissman

SD 29 Janet Buckner

SD 31 Chris Hansen

SD 33 James Coleman

Lost:

SD 2 Jennifer Brady

SD 5 Cole Buerger

SD 6 Vivian Smotherman

SD 13 Matt Dean Johnston



**Alyssa Nilemo (HD 44)
Canvass kickoff**

Colorado State House Candidates we endorsed and results:

Won:

HD 1 Javier Mabrey
HD 2 Steven Woodrow
HD 3 Meg Froelich
HD 4 Cecelia Espenoza
HD 5 Alex Valdez
HD 7 Jennifer Bacon
HD 8 Lindsay Gilchrist
HD 9 Emily Sirota
HD 10 Junie Joseph
HD 11 Karen McCormick
HD 12 Kyle Brown
HD 13 Julie McCluskie
HD 17 Regina English
HD 18 Amy Pascal
HD 23 Monica Duran
HD 25 Tammy Story
HD 26 Meghan Lukens
HD 27 Brianna Titone
HD 28 Sheila Lieder
HD 29 Shannon Bird
HD 30 Rebekah Stewart
HD 32 Manny Rutinel

Lost:

HD 22 Michael Pierson
HD 39 Eric Brody
HD 44 Alyssa Nilemo
HD 45 Chad Cox
HD 50 Mary Young



AFL-CIO members for Alyssa Nilemo, including Mike Cerbo, AFT member

HD 33 William Lindstedt

HD 34 Jenny Willford

HD 35 Lorena Garcia

HD 36 Michael Carter

HD 37 Chad Clifford

HD 38 Gretchen Ryden

HD 40 Naquetta Ricks

HD 41 Iman Jodeh

HD 42 Mandy Lindsay

HD 43 Robert Marshall

HD 46 Tisha Mauro

HD 49 Leslie Smith

HD 52 Yara Zokaie

HD 53 Andrew Boesenecker

HD 57 Elizabeth Velasco

HD 59 Katie Stewart

HD 61 Eliza Hamrick

HD 62 Matthew Martinez



Fun fall canvassing day for Kallie

*HD 16 Stephanie Vigil the outcome is still not determined and will be subject to a recount

In solidarity, Kallie Leyba

SAVE THE DATE

AFT Colorado Bi-Annual Convention

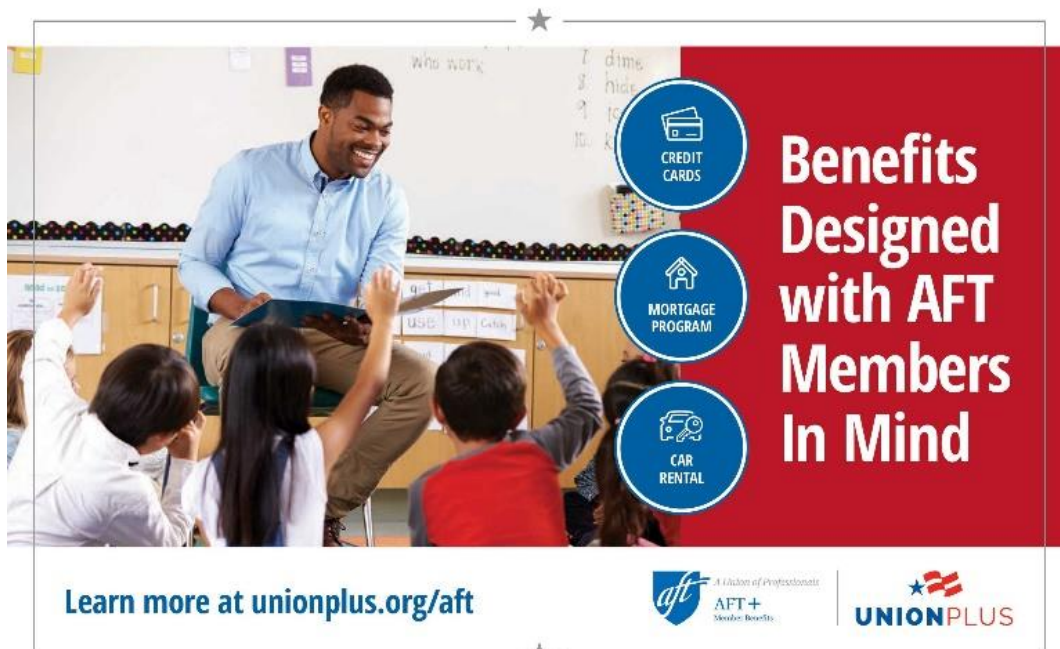
Saturday, April 26, 2025

Members may contact their local union if they are interested in running for any officer position or would like to attend as a delegate. Terms of office are for two years.

AFT Colorado will be awarding The Meyer/Mall Volunteer, Ellen Slatkin Loyal Unionist and Friend of Public Education Awards at Convention. Contact your local union to nominate someone who is deserving of one of these awards.

The AFT Colorado Convention delegates will consider proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, and proposed resolutions. Delegates will also nominate and elect State Federation officers.

We encourage you to take part in this process. Please contact your local union leader if you wish to attend, nominate an officer, or recommend an award recipient.



A promotional graphic for AFT benefits. On the left, a photograph shows a male teacher in a light blue shirt sitting on a stool in a classroom, smiling and interacting with a group of diverse young students. The background includes a whiteboard with some writing and classroom shelves. On the right, a red vertical banner contains the text "Benefits Designed with AFT Members In Mind" in white. To the left of this banner 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 with the text "Learn more at unionplus.org/aft" on the left, the AFT logo (a blue shield with "aft" in white) and "AFT+ Member Benefits" in the center, and the "UNIONPLUS" logo (a red star above the text "UNIONPLUS") on the right. Small stars are placed at the top and bottom center of the graphic's border.

Local Union Updates



Douglas County Federation Worked Hard on 5A Bond Campaign, Passes with Overwhelming Support

The members of Douglas County Federation worked hard this election cycle to pass a bond that will provide for much needed capital improvements in schools across the district.

In fall of 2023, DCF worked hard to pass both a bond and MLO and, unfortunately, only the MLO passed. After some post election analysis, it was apparent that the bond messaging was not as clear as it should have been and voter turnout among our pro-education base could have been higher. So this fall, DCF focused on voter turnout and clear messaging knowing, the presidential election would help get more people to the polls.

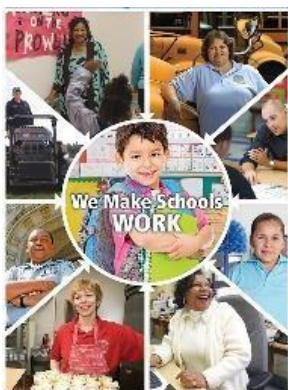
To that end, DCF hosted weekly door knocking events every Saturday, wrote thousands of postcards to voters, painted hundreds of car windshields with messages of support, and contacted over 50,000 voters via text encouraging them to vote “yes” on 5A.

Our efforts were a success and the bond passed with 59% of the vote. We believe passing this bond helps us build more momentum toward our goal of reinstating collective bargaining.

In Fall 2025, four of the seven Douglas County School Board seats will be up for election and it is our intent to pressure candidates to commit to recognizing DCF as the sole bargaining agent for staff in the district. To do that, we must continue to grow our membership and build our power. This Spring, we will continue to strengthen our union’s infrastructure and establish relationships with community groups to help support our upcoming school board campaign. We will work on “bargaining for the common good” messaging and continue to have as many organizing conversations as we can.

DCF is going to make a comeback!

In Solidarity -
Fiona Boomer
Executive Director
Douglas County Federation



Denver Federation Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees

DFP-NSE Update: On the Move!

Dear AFT Members and Supporters,

We've been hard at work these past few months, making an impact in our community and beyond! Here's what we've been up to:

Book Drive Success: 2,000 Books Given Away!

We are thrilled to announce that our recent book drive was a huge success, with over 2,000 books given to children in our community. It was a heartwarming experience to see so many young faces light up with excitement. One little girl, in particular, touched us all when she excitedly told her mother that the cover of a book looked just like her—bright brown eyes and big curly hair. Watching these kids connect to the stories that represent them melted our hearts and even brought tears to our eyes. It's moments like these that remind us why we do this important work.

T-Shirts on the Move

Our members are proudly sporting the new **Harris-Walz** t-shirts, and they've been a hit! These shirts have become a symbol of our community, and we're so happy to see them being worn by so many.

Recruitment in Full Swing

We're also staying busy with recruitment efforts. As we continue to grow, it's incredible to see more and more people join us in our mission to make a lasting difference.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to sharing more exciting updates with you soon!

In solidarity,
Deidre Smith
President

STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

1777 S. Bellaire St., Suite 440, Denver, CO 80222 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: _____