A Union of Professionals

VOL. 29, NO. 2 | OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2009

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE Advocate

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF AFT PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

the State of Pay

Inflation deflates salary growth

ON LABOR DAY, the AFT Public Employees department released the 10th edition of its state employee salary survey. The survey of 45 job titles tracks salaries across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

This year's results show that salaries for these job titles rose a modest 2.6 percent to $47,077. The increase is the smallest annual wage increase reported since 2003 around the height of this decade's first state budget crisis. Survey data reflect salaries as of March 1, 2009.

Meanwhile, when salaries are adjusted

Continued on page 6

SURVEY SAYS: Salary gains since 2002 have been undercut by inflation. Overall, state employee salaries increased less than 1 percent per year from 2002 to 2009.

Lifetimes
Retiree's talent for drawing puts her on a new career path PAGE 3

Real Pros
A glimpse at the public services provided by AFT members PAGE 4

Healthcare Reform
Getting the facts straight PAGE 7

State Lines
Affiliates speak out against payless paydays PAGE 8

The conversation we need to have

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

FOR SOME, TAXES evoke negative responses. I prefer to think of taxes, however, as a contribution toward the cost of what I value.

Who do I value? Our nation's elderly and disabled who should not go hungry, or without housing, medical care, pensions or other services that help them lead independent lives. Our children, who must have food, shelter, medical care and access to education.

What do I value? I value safety, including water, food, roads and bridges, and emergency response services. Law and order, including services that help people kick addictions or find jobs. I value government regulation from the workplace to Wall Street. I value peace and prosperity for the nation—both of which have a price.

When is the last time you really thought about what you value? The work of government, our work, protects our individual liberty through rules, regulations, oversight, programs and services.

The services we value—including many provided by AFT Public Employee members—are under immense pressure. Steam is building for public policies that cut programs and services—and this is an affront to my values.

You would not know it by listening to the anti-government folks, but cuts in services affect people of *all* income levels. There's no income eligibility test at the neighborhood library (if it has survived this decade of decimating budget cuts), the neighborhood parks or when you call 911. And we all want to know that we are not only getting what we are paying for at the gas pump or the deli counter, but that it is safe.

One reason public services are being cut is because politicians and taxpayers are allowing—and even demanding—it to happen. Yes, this recession is deeper than any since the Great Depression. But policymakers have options to deal with budget shortfalls other than wholesale reductions in public services.

Citizens are allowing this to happen because we are not having the necessary conversations with public officials and urging them to make decisions that uphold our values. The conversation we need to have is about raising revenue.

> One reason **public services** are being cut is because **politicians** and **taxpayers** are allowing—and even demanding—it to happen.

Since the state and local budget crises began, elected officials have talked about shared sacrifice. Translation, with few exceptions: reduce services; save on payroll through furloughs, layoffs, vacancy savings and retirement incentives; and raise a sin tax here and a fee there.

It is a piecemeal and value-less approach. It is public policy based on outdated tax structures when what we need is policy that promotes a tax system based on values. We need to talk about progressive tax reform and its premise that those who can most afford to pay more, do so.

A good starting point would be state income tax structures. Unlike the federal system, state structures tend to be regressive because they are compressed—fewer tax brackets, which result in the working- and middle class being taxed at the maximum rate along with the wealthy.

Affiliates in New York and Connecticut successfully lobbied for additional income tax brackets this year in response to the budget crisis. New York enacted two new rates, albeit temporary, for higher earners. The first starts with individuals making more than $200,000 and married couples making more than $300,000. The second applies to all earners with incomes above $500,000. Previously, the maximum rate applied to individuals making more than $20,000 and married couples earning more than $40,000. In other words, a couple earning $40,000 a year was in the same state income tax bracket as a couple earning $4 million.

And after years of effort, the labor movement in Connecticut celebrated enactment of a new maximum rate for singles earning more than $500,000 and for couples making more than $1 million.

Six other states also increased their top rate this year in response to the fiscal crisis. But in too many places, the conversations among elected officials have been about saving money. They are taking the shears to our values.

The dire warnings of a second Great Depression are in the rearview mirror thanks to the federal stimulus, but the road ahead is going to be very bumpy. Experts warn that the worst is yet to come for state and local budgets in the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Threats to public services could continue to get worse if we don't have the right conversations with our elected officials, frequently and consistently.

The 10 minutes it would take now and then to share your values with your elected officials in an e-mail is nothing in comparison to the time it will take elected officials to restore what's been taken away from the people and things we value.

A Union of Professionals
AFT Public Employees

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE ADVOCATE (USPS 011543) is published five times a year in April, June, August, October and December by the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079. Phone: 202/879-4400.
www.aft.org

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE ADVOCATE, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2079

MEMBERS: To change your address or subscription, notify your local union treasurer.

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE ADVOCATE is mailed to all AFT public employee members as a benefit of membership. Subscriptions represent $1.75 of annual dues and are available only as a part of membership.

Although advertisements are screened as carefully as possible, acceptance of an advertisement does not imply AFT endorsement of the product or service.

© AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO 2009

RANDI WEINGARTEN
President
ANTONIA CORTESE
Secretary-Treasurer
LORRETTA JOHNSON
Executive Vice President

KRIS HAVENS
Communications Director

ROGER S. GLASS
Editor-in-Chief

KATHY WALSH
Managing Editor

MARY POWER BOYD
Copy Editor

LAURA BAKER
ADRIENNE COLES
JANE FELLER
DANIEL GURSKY
ANNETTE LICITRA
BARBARA McKENNA
MIKE ROSE
Contributing Editors

CHARLES GLENDINNING
Art Director

JENNIFER CHANG
PAMELA WOLFE
Graphic Designers

SHARON WRIGHT
Production Manager

SHARON FRANCOUR
Production Coordinator

SHAWNITRA HAWKINS
ALICIA NICK
Production Support Staff

Catching crooks, one sketch at a time

Retiree's talent for drawing puts her on new career path

AFT RETIREE SHIRLEY Forpe has captured a number of criminals—on paper, that is. Forpe is the forensic composite artist for the Palatine (Ill.) Police Department.

Armed with charcoal pencils and sketchpad, Forpe can render an accurate image for the police within an hour. In 2005, after retiring as an art teacher from Conant High School in Hoffman Estates, Ill., Forpe took a course at Northwestern University to become a certified forensic composite artist. The former NW Suburban Teachers Union president began working for the Palatine Police Department a year later. Forpe says she was inspired to use her talent to help crime victims by a substitute teacher and victims' rights advocate whose daughter was murdered.

To coax an image from the victim, Forpe begins by listening. As the victim details the incident, Forpe flips through her book of facial features. Forpe employs some of the same techniques she once used with her students to encourage responses.

"I try to strike a relationship with the people I'm talking to," she says. "Sometimes they tell me things they don't tell the policemen. People are afraid to make mistakes with the police. With me, they aren't afraid."

Before Forpe came on board, the police department used a computer program to generate images, says Palatine police chief John Koziol. "Computers can get you close but are not as accurate as a composite drawing."

Forpe has no idea how many criminals she's helped capture. "My work is just another clue to solving the crime. It's not the final answer."

LEE BALGEMANN

Retiree Shirley Forpe is a sketch artist for the Palatine (Ill.) Police Department.

2009 Porter Scholars winners announced

Program provides scholarships and grants

MARK KELLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

"Every little bit helps," says Amy McLeod of the $1,000 Robert G. Porter Scholars Program grant.

AMY McLEOD'S DECISION to pursue a master's degree in natural resource management was an investment decision—a $20,000-plus investment in tuition and books, not to mention nearly three years of her spare time.

Thanks to the AFT, McLeod, a natural resource manager for the Mining, Land and Water Division of Alaska's Department of Natural Resources, is getting a little help as a recipient of a Robert G. Porter Scholars Program grant. McLeod supervises multiple staff and is responsible for managing state lands under Alaska statutes and reviewing impacts on ecological systems.

"I put it right toward my tuition," says McLeod, a member of the Alaska Public Employees Association's Supervisory Unit, of the $1,000 grant. "Every little bit helps."

Every year, the scholars program awards grants to AFT members to assist with their continuing education; and scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are dependents of AFT members.

Just Ask! Tips for selecting a college

WHEN PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS and their parents visit college campuses, they are armed with questions about the admissions process, tuition, student life and financial aid.

This fall, the AFT Higher Education division wants students to ask a few more—and consider the implications of the answers to:

- How likely am I to be taught by full-time faculty in my first year?
- What percentage of courses are taught by graduate students? By part-time faculty?
- How much do they get paid per course?
- Do they have offices and hold office hours?

These questions more directly get to the quality of students' educational experience.

The fact is, colleges and universities are investing less in the educators who are crucial to a student's success. Undercompensated and under-resourced faculty aren't exactly what parents and students have in mind when they start dipping into their life savings—or incurring considerable debt—for college.

This is the thrust of the AFT's "Just Ask" campaign kicked off this fall. Its goal is to reach parents, counselors and students to start putting some "consumer pressure" on colleges and universities to end the harmful trend toward using more underpaid and overworked part-time faculty.

In September, the first Just Ask ad appeared in the *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Colleges" issue and online.

Faculty members' working conditions are students' learning conditions. Visit **www.aftface.org** for more information about the AFT's Just Ask campaign.

PATHS TO public service

George Stadnik's environmental conservation job involves science and compliance.

BRUCE GILBERT

Budgets may be strapped but members came to the job to serve

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, in any given newspaper, there are stories about public service cuts and government employee layoffs.

While the news is disheartening, public services are always in demand, and the workforce ready to serve.

More than 100,000 local, state and federal employees are represented by AFT Public Employees. The division is by far the most diverse among the AFT's five constituency groups, with members working in more than 4,000 job titles.

The path to public service is as individual as each member, but one thing members have in common is that they are all *real pros* whose work serves their communities—and the common good.

From corporate manager to substance abuse counselor

In November 2000, Wanda Handy left her management job with Southwestern Bell after 27 years of service. Two months later, she was working toward an undergraduate degree in human services with an emphasis in addiction counseling and gerontology. And today, at 53, Handy is working toward a master's in social work.

"I grew up with parents who were alcoholics," says Handy. "At 38, I married someone with an addiction problem. I wanted to know why addiction takes over lives and how it affects decisions."

The benefactors of Handy's personal experience, education and curiosity for the "why" are the young males who are sentenced to the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex in Topeka where Handy is a certified substance abuse counselor. Upward of 80 percent of the more than 200 youth at the facility have been recommended for substance abuse treatment, either for their own addiction or abuse problem or because of their association with someone who misuses or abuses drugs or alcohol, she says.

Substance abuse counselor Wanda Handy works with juveniles.

ANTHONY BUSH

"Coming from the corporate world to where I am now was quite a road," says Handy, a member of the Kansas Organization of State Employees. She hopes the youth she works with will find new paths of their own. "Although they made a mistake in life, it is just an obstacle. They can continue on."

From Sri Lanka to Colorado

"I venture to say that some of my clients are safer than people with 20-20 vision," says Garrett Mumma, a vision rehabilitation therapist for the Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

It is Mumma's job to help adults with vision loss re-adapt to their home, community and work environments.

He does this by teaching them skills such as how to read traffic auditorily and walking with a cane, as well as orienting his clients with adaptive aids and devices that enable the visually impaired to perform everyday tasks. It is a public service that helps everyone, regardless of income, be safe and independent.

"The best thing about my job is that I can see the impact," says Mumma, a member of Colorado WINS. "I can see how independent they've become."

Mumma's path to becoming an orientation

and mobility specialist started in Sri Lanka where he was teaching English as a Peace Corps volunteer. "I had some blind students," he recalls, "and they taught me some Braille." As fate would have it, Mumma's second Peace Corps tour took him to Morocco where he taught orientation mobility—independent traveling skills for the visually impaired.

The rest is history. Upon his return to the United States, Mumma earned a master's in special education with a specialization in orientation mobility.

Before joining Colorado state government three years ago, Mumma was working with children in the Oakland, Calif., public schools doing the same kind of work.

Orientation and mobility specialist Garrett Mumma teaches skills for independent living.

JOHN WARK

From the surf to the turf

Waterfront property is prime real estate but the great views can come with an unexpected price to marine fish habitat. Enter marine biologist George Stadnik.

In oversimplified terms, it is Stadnik's job to make sure marine habitat don't pay the ultimate price for coastal development, be it a home, a building, a pier or a marina, along the many bodies of water around New York City, including the Hudson River, Jamaica Bay and the Long Island Sound.

"If the project is within 150 feet of the water, you have to come see us," says Stadnik, a member of the New York State Public Employees Federation. His job is part scientist, part compliance officer, part regulator and part investigator.

It's an important public service that many take for granted. Just as waterfront property is a valued asset, marine fish are an invaluable resource for commercial and recreational fishing. "And people love eating their seafood," notes Stadnik.

He knows that first hand. After graduating college, he worked as a commercial fisherman. "It was hard work. It was dangerous," recalls Stadnik of commercial fishing, the rigor of which is depicted by the television documentary "Deadliest Catch."

After a few years, though, Stadnik wanted to use his degree in marine science with a concentration in biology. The Brooklyn born and bred native went to work for the New York Department of Environmental Conservation in 1986. He works in the Marine Habitat Protection Unit.

— **KATHY WALSH**

Bridging the 'appreciation gap'

ELECTED OFFICIALS MAKE policies that affect the services you provide as well as your pay and benefits. In good economic times, public employee compensation is often the last consideration of elected officials during the budget process. In bad economic times, however, it can be the first thing on the table—and under the media microscope.

How can government employees bridge the "appreciation gap" that seems to separate them from elected officials? That was among the topics discussed when several state legislators joined a summer meeting of the AFT Public Employees program and policy council (PPC) in Philadephia.

Alaska state Rep. Harry Crawford's advice: "Replace some legislators." In other words, elect people to office who value and support the work of government employees.

Montana state Rep. Jill Cohenour, who is a member of the PPC, says public employees need to communicate with elected officials—talk about what proposed cuts will mean to the public as well as how those cuts will affect the workers' ability to do their jobs. "Get the faces of the people who do the work in front of the legislature," says Cohenour, president of the MEA-MFT's Federation of Public Health and Human Services.

The PPC meeting was held in July in Philadelphia in conjunction with the National Conference of State Legislatures' annual legislative summit. A delegation of AFT leaders and staff attend the meeting each year to educate state lawmakers on state-level union issues, including tax policies that provide a steady revenue flow to support public services.

AFT VOICES

How has the economic crisis affected the services you provide and your workload?

"For years, we have lost employees to attrition. People retire or move on and the position they vacate is not filled. We are working two and sometime three people's workload depending on the specialty. The public is being shorted. ..."

MICHAEL McCABE
Illinois

"The lack of funding for housing has definitely had an effect on the youth that our agency works with. At present, the budget for my program has not been reduced, but the need for additional funding is obvious."

JEFTY PRATHER
Alaska

"Automotive repair is one of those careers that can't be outsourced; so a lot of people are trying to get into the classes. Unfortunately, we have not been allowed to hire replacements for the instructors [who] have retired. ... The result is that the classes fill up quicker than before, leaving many prospective students unable to sign up."

EVA SCHERB
California

"There are several people in my department with compensatory time of 400 hours! They do not get this paid out or take days off like they should. There is no one to cover for them and no money to pay them."

ANDREA NEMIROW
Rhode Island

"I've been overwhelmed and under-resourced. ... Because we have been addicted to privatization, the cost of providing public goods has gone through the roof and the quality has diminished. Those left in the trenches are left vulnerable to fatigue and feelings of inadequacy. This will not improve until we are able to get our priorities straight and return the 'public' to public service."

WILLIAM FRANKS
Wisconsin

What ideas do you have to build a more civil workplace?

IT'S YOUR VOICE

We want to hear from you! Visit **www.aft.org/voices** today where you can respond to this and other questions.

the State of Pay

Continued from page 1

for inflation, the total increase since 2002 is $2,681 or 6 percent—less than 1 percent a year.

"The trend in state employees' real earnings is very similar to that of private sector workers," says Matt DiCarlo, an associate with the AFT's research and information services department and co-author of the report. "They are both flat."

Report underscores value of collective bargaining

When the 2009 salary data are broken down into jobs with and without collective bargaining, the result is clear: Unionized workers with collective bargaining earn substantially higher salaries.

The 2009 average salary for jobs with collective bargaining is $13,704, or 35.5 percent, higher than the average for jobs without collective bargaining.

Specifically, the average salary in 2009 in jobs with collective bargaining was $52,265, a 3.1 percent increase from 2008, compared with $38,562, a -0.1 percent decline from 2008, for jobs without collective bargaining.

"As this survey has shown us, year after year, collective bargaining representation makes a huge difference in state employee salaries," says Bruce Ludwig, chair of the AFT Public Employees program and policy council and business manager of the Alaska Public Employees Association. "There is still plenty of room for improvement, but the best way to get this done is through collective bargaining."

The value of collective bargaining varies among specific job titles. For example, correctional officers with collective bargaining earn about 55 percent more than their counterparts without collective bargaining; librarians and research analysts with collective bargaining earn about 37 percent more; and social workers with collective bargaining earn about 36 percent more.

"These differences are to some extent attributable to factors such as variation in the cost of living between bargaining and nonbargaining states," says DiCarlo. "The sheer magnitude of these gaps, however, cannot be explained away. The benefits of collective bargaining are substantial and can be as high as several months of pay."

Location, location, location

For the first time in the survey's history, cumulative average salaries have been figured by region. Not surprisingly, regions with higher union density and higher costs of living have higher average salaries.

The West Region leads with an average salary of $55,064, followed by the Northeast Region with an average salary of $48,265. The average salary in the Great Lakes Region is $43,307. The South and Southwest Regions trail at $34,035 and $34,557, respectively.

The average salary deviation from state to state for all jobs is 18.5 percent, which means that the typical salary for a particular job classification varies, on average, plus or minus 18.5 percent among states. The job of agriculture inspector varies the most among states, with salaries varying plus or minus almost 25 percent or $9,759.

2009 leaders and laggers

Attorneys surpassed senior psychologists as the highest-paying job in state government. Architect, senior environmental engineer and senior programmer analyst rounded out the top five highest-paying jobs in the survey.

The lowest-paying jobs were data processing clerk, licensed practical nurse, substance abuse counselor, family support specialist and agriculture inspector.

Data processing clerk, the lowest-paying job of the 45 jobs surveyed with a 2009 nationwide average salary of $28,292, however, is one of several jobs that has seen the most salary growth over the last five years, with the average increasing upward of 44 percent.

The average salary changes from 2008 to 2009 ranged from a high of 8.6 percent or $6,085 for senior psychologists to a low of -1.5 percent or -$749 for chemists.

The pay gap

As expected, the survey shows that the salaries of most state government employees continue to trail those of their private sector peers.

Across the 26 job classifications in which comparisons were made this year, private sector salaries are, on average, 28 percent higher.

In 10 of the 26 jobs, the gap is 30 percent or more. The largest discrepancies are in occupations requiring highly specialized education and skills: geologists, attorneys, economists and chemists.

Salary progression restrained by inflation

IF YOU FEEL your paycheck does not go as far as it used to, you are not alone.

An analysis of salaries from 2002 through 2009 for 45 state employee job titles found that there has been no appreciable increase in pay: $2,681 or 6 percent—less than 1 percent a year.

"My money does not go as far as it used to at the gas station, the grocery store—or even in a department store," says Sue Pape, a tax auditor III with the North Dakota Tax Department.

The salary range of a tax auditor III in North Dakota is $36,984 to $61,632, compared with $44,906 to $69,577 nationally, according to the 2009 survey. The average base salary in North Dakota is $44,976, compared with $58,296 nationally.

Pape, who has worked at the tax department for 10 years, says she makes "a bit under" the average North Dakota annual base salary; and she notes that tax auditors "got some equity money" this year to help address compression issues. "It is a start," says Pape. "But it needs to continue."

WILL KINCAID

Sue Pape is concerned that state government's pay disadvantage will affect recruitment and retention.

While Pape likes her job, she is concerned about the future of public service. "You know the old saying: 'You get what you pay for.' If they want quality employees, they are going to need to pay their employees," says Pape. "Yes, there are people who will stay because of government service, but we have a new generation coming up into the workforce and that is a different ballgame."

The 2009 AFT Public Employees Compensation Survey can be found at **www.aft.org/pubemps/pub-reports**.

Myth vs. Fact

Debunking the myths about healthcare reform

THE AFT BELIEVES the time for guaranteed high-quality, affordable healthcare is long overdue. Unfortunately, there has been a great deal of misinformation spread about healthcare reform initiatives being debated on Capitol Hill. We want to dispel some of the myths.

MYTH: Reform doesn't affect people who already have health insurance.

THE FACTS: Reform affects all Americans who have ever worried about healthcare costs or about losing their coverage if they become too sick, lose their jobs or change jobs. Every day, 14,000 Americans lose their health insurance.

Further, one of the driving forces behind government deficits is the skyrocketing cost of Medicare and Medicaid. A public plan option will provide competition with the insurance industry to help keep costs down. If healthcare costs are not brought under control, there will be fewer resources for education and other important public services. In addition, out-of-pocket healthcare costs for every family, as well as individuals, will continue to climb.

MYTH: A public plan option will force all Americans into a government-run health program.

THE FACTS: Individuals with insurance do not have to join the public option. As President Obama has said: "If you like what you have, you can keep it." Reform will create a health insurance exchange for the uninsured; this will allow individuals to compare prices and health plans to decide which plan (public or private) is right for them and their families. The choice is left up to the individual. The public plan option will benefit uninsured as well as insured Americans by increasing competition and choice in the marketplace. It will hold private insurers accountable, and will lower costs while ensuring affordable healthcare.

MYTH: Reforming healthcare will cut Medicare benefits for seniors.

THE FACTS: The president is committed to improving healthcare for all older Americans and to strengthening Medicare. The healthcare reform plan now being considered will extend Medicare coverage and preserve older Americans' freedom to choose their doctor. It will eliminate wasteful overpayments to private plans (estimated at $160 billion); expand access to and end patient co-payments for Medicare preventive services; increase payments to healthcare providers, which would prevent doctors from refusing Medicare patients; and phase out the Part D "doughnut hole" that has caused many older Americans to do without their medications so they can afford other necessities.

MYTH: America's deficit will increase by $1 trillion due to healthcare reform and force many families to go broke.

THE FACTS: President Obama has said he will not sign a bill that would add to the national debt or deficit. To honor this commitment, he has proposed that two-thirds of the cost of reform be paid for by reducing waste, fraud and abuse in existing programs and ending overpayments to insurance companies. The remaining revenue will come from limiting the itemized tax deductions for couples making more than $250,000 a year.

The current healthcare system results in $700 billion a year in wasteful and inefficient spending—causing financial strain on many families. Placing caps on out-of-pocket expenditures (including co-payments) and limiting extravagant spending by insurance companies are some of the new proposals to hold down rising healthcare costs for many working families.

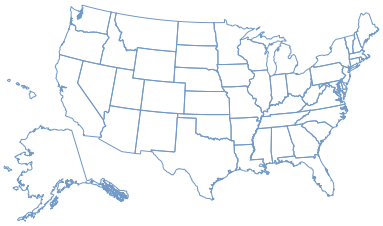
MYTH: Congress is moving too quickly.

THE FACTS: The time to reform our healthcare system is now. Many Americans are uninsured or struggle to pay the soaring costs of care. As costs continue to rise, even those with employer-provided insurance pay a heavy price in forgone pay raises, increases in insurance deductibles and premiums, and greater insecurity about the availability of high-quality healthcare in the future.

Since 2000, employee contributions to company-provided health insurance have increased more than 120 percent, and out-of-pocket costs for deductibles, co-payments for medications, and co-insurance for physician and hospital visits have risen 115 percent. Skyrocketing healthcare costs strain family budgets, burden businesses of all sizes, squeeze state and federal budgets, and are delaying America's economic recovery.

Visit **www.aft.org/fight4america** to learn more about the AFT's position on health insurance reform and take action!

STATE LINES



IL July 15 may have been the first scheduled payday of the new fiscal year, but paychecks were not cut for workers exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), including state employees represented by the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT).

Comptroller Daniel W. Hynes says there is no budget so he has no authority to send out payroll checks, explains Terry Reed, field service director for the IFT, which represents some 2,000 state employees.

FLSA-eligible workers were paid but Hynes modified their wage to the federal minimum wage, Reed says.

Veronica Aguirre, a claims analyst with the Illinois Attorney General's Crime Victims Services Division, received notification from her employer at 4:14 p.m. on July 14, via e-mail, that paychecks would be "delayed."

"People had to scramble, particularly people with mortgage and car payments that are automatically deducted from their bank accounts," says Aguirre.

Although the matter was resolved in days and employees were paid, on July 15, information about the payless payday was not readily available on Comptroller Hynes' Web site. Nor was it featured on the Web sites of Gov. Pat Quinn and the Illinois General Assembly.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that July 15 was payday for as many as 6,000 of the state's 69,000 workers.

PA "Rallies haven't really been part of the state employee union culture in Pennsylvania," says Stephen Fisher, president of the Federation of State, Cultural and Education Professionals. But that changed for a bit in July when state employees and their unions held demonstrations outside government work sites and at the capitol in Harrisburg to protest payless paydays.

Similar to Illinois, the payless paydays were the result of a budget impasse between the Legislature and the governor.

"Depending on how you measure, there was about a three-week delay," says Fisher.

Members impress upon lawmakers the need for healthcare reform

THE NATIONAL CANCER Institute estimates that 19,500 people will die in the United States of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) in 2009.

That is just one statistic of several that counts among its ranks Marlene Kanuck's friend: a breast cancer survivor who was dropped by her health insurance company so she was uninsured—and her NHL went undiagnosed and untreated longer than it should have. Kanuck's friend, a small business owner who second-mortgaged her home to pay for treatment, died of NHL in early August at the age of 58.

Kanuck shared her friend's story with Rep. Tim Holden (D-Pa.) Aug. 27 when a delegation of AFT Pennsylvania members met with the congressman for 30 minutes in his Harrisburg office. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss AFT's principles for healthcare reform, including the need for a robust public plan that will make healthcare accessible and affordable—while ensuring that individuals have the choice of selecting a public plan or keeping their private plans.

Since June, there have been more than 200 meetings between AFT members and their legislators to discuss healthcare reform.

TIM WEIR

Marlene Kanuck and other AFT Pennsylvania members discuss healthcare system reform with Rep. Tim Holden.

Rep. Holden agreed that what happened to her friend shouldn't happen in the United States, Kanuck recalls, "but he was not definitive about whether he would vote for the public option."

Kanuck, a basic education associate in the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support, said the group also voiced opposition to taxation of employer-provided health benefits as a way to pay for healthcare reform.

Kanuck notes that members of her local, the Federation of State, Cultural and Education Professionals, ratified a contract under which members agreed to forgo pay raises for several years "so our healthcare would be solvent."