We care.
We fight.
We show up.
And We vote.

For a better life, for our students and patients, and for our families and our communities.

A Union of Professionals

STATE OF THE UNION 2016–2018
OUR MISSION

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.
We Care, We Fight, We Show Up—and We Vote

We’re in a “which side are you on?” moment the likes of which I’ve not seen in my lifetime. It’s a moment when our country seems to be questioning what it really wants to be, and a moment of huge demographic shifts. Latinos are the country’s largest ethnic minority, and people of color and young people make up a rising majority of the electorate. Indeed, millennials are now the largest voting bloc in the country. Yet 80,000 votes in three states handed Donald Trump the presidency, despite his losing the popular vote by 3 million votes. The gap continues to grow between rising incomes at the top and stagnant wages for millions of working people. And while Trump campaigned as a populist, he is governing for the wealthy and big corporations and trying to undo fundamental rights and President Obama’s entire legacy.

The Koch brothers and other right-wing groups are mobilizing. They’re spending millions of dollars to “defund and defang unions,” go after voting rights and attack public education—the vehicles for opportunity and voice in our country. So we’ve become a rallying nation: From the Women’s March to the teacher walkouts, from the campaign to save the Affordable Care Act to the effort to stop Betsy DeVos from defunding and destroying public education, from condemning hatred and bigotry after Charlottesville to reuniting migrant children ripped from their parents’ arms—millions of Americans are rising up to defend our values and fight like never before.

Throughout it all, the AFT has been caring, fighting and showing up for our members and our communities. We’ve focused on engaging our members and partnering with community around issues that unite us: good jobs that pay a living wage and provide a voice at work and a secure retirement; affordable healthcare so people are not one illness away from bankruptcy; safe, welcoming, well-funded neighborhood public schools and affordable college; a strong and vibrant democracy; and safeguarding the rights of all.

We’ve formed human shields for our students to demand the funding our schools need, taken to the streets to confront racism and fear-mongering, and secured contracts that provide a better life for our members and those we serve. We’ve elected representatives who will serve “we the people,” and hundreds of our own members are running for office themselves. And, even in these troubled times, we’ve organized thousands into our union.

Strong unions create strong communities and a vibrant middle class; that’s why the right wing is intent on taking us out. The conservative majority on the Supreme Court handed Betsy DeVos and the Koch brothers a win in the Janus v AFSCME 31 case, which overrules decades of precedent and, as Justice Kagan wrote in her dissent, weaponizes the First Amendment. But nobody should count unions out. The other side may continue to send deceptive mailings and spend millions on ads to try to split the union and our members, but workers are overwhelmingly making it clear that they are sticking with the union.

Workers are sticking with their unions because unions are still the best vehicle working people have to make a difference in their lives and their workplaces. Unions negotiate everything from manageable class sizes to safe staffing levels for nurses to parental leave to minimum salaries for adjunct professors. As the recent teacher walkouts showed, the states where union density is the lowest have sharply cut back spending and investment in public education. Teachers, bus drivers, firefighters, nurses and other public employees nationwide are signing recommitments to their unions, because they know that unions make possible what is impossible for individuals to accomplish on their own.

Today the AFT is at its highest membership ever. According to a recent poll of our members, 74 percent had a favorable view of the AFT, and just 4 percent had a negative view. And 72 percent say it is important to belong to a national union. More than 535,000 members out of about 800,000 in states directly affected by Janus already have recommitted to their union. And, on the same day the Janus decision was announced, we welcomed 2,400 new members from Oregon State University.

The public gets it, too. Even in our hugely polarized country, polling shows that people support teachers unions and the recent school walkouts. And popular support for unions has risen to its highest level in 15 years. As I said, don’t count us out.

The 2018 elections will determine the course of our country in countless ways. We care, we fight and we show up—and now we and our communities must vote.

We must bring all this activist energy to the polls this November because that is the only enduring way we will change America for the better. There will always be forces that want to rig the economy for their benefit and crush organized threats to their power. We’ve got to make sure our side serves as a check on those forces—to ensure strong public schools; good middle-class jobs; accessible, affordable healthcare; and a democracy that works for everyone.

These are the stakes. You don’t always have opportunities in life to shape something bigger than yourself, to advance social and economic justice, to help things go in the right direction instead of very, very wrong. We have that opportunity now, and we can make the most of it by sticking with the union. By talking to our colleagues about what’s at stake. By not giving a bunch of right-wing billionaires the satisfaction of stripping working people of their shot at a better life. And by voting, so we can change America for the better—for our families, for those we serve and for our communities.

—Randi Weingarten
**Good jobs: A living wage, a voice at work, a secure retirement**

Unions fight for good jobs where workers earn a living wage, have a voice at work and can retire with dignity. This is what unions do. It’s what called the AFT into existence 102 years ago in Chicago, and it remains in our DNA, our North Star. And we are succeeding at this mission: Not only is our membership the highest in our history, but since our last convention we’ve added more than 117,000 new members—our biggest increase between conventions since 2002. (See the “AFT Membership” report on p. 21.

Even though we’ve been preparing for the possibility since February 2015, the day the Janus v. AFSCME decision was announced, June 27, 2018, will long be known as a dark day in American jurisprudence—a blatant political attack against working Americans in favor of the wealthy and powerful. Swung by a Trump-appointed justice with a long history of ruling for the wealthy and corporations over regular people, the Supreme Court overturned a 40-year unanimously decided precedent that has given teachers and firefighters, nurses and cops, a path to a better life for themselves and their communities. “The dissenting justices saw this case for what it really was,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten—a warping and weaponizing of the First Amendment, absent any evidence or reason, to hurt working people.”

Knowing what was on the horizon, the AFT committed last convention to a massive member-engagement campaign: to talk personally to every single member of the union, to run re-sign and recommit campaigns nationwide, to do our best to create a climate where our members would choose “sticking with the union.” And it has worked. Dozens of locals and state federations around the country are hitting 90-plus percent recommit rates, and our polling shows that 74 percent of our members have a positive feeling about the national union—and only 4 percent feel negatively. Fully 72 percent believe their local should be part of the national union. The right wing thought it could kill us with this decision. Instead, it’s energized us like never before.

Take the Oregon School Employees Association, which has put together a comprehensive statewide, member-led organizing and recommit campaign. Several OSEA chapters increased their membership from 70 percent of the unit to 90 percent. At last count, OSEA had converted more than 1,350 agency-fee payers to full membership.

The Janus decision put a national spotlight on unions and provides a moment of unprecedented opportunity for current members to recommit to our union and new members to join. Nationally, support for labor unions has risen to its highest level in years, and public employees—including educators, health professionals and public safety workers—are more determined than ever to stick together.

Look at the teacher and school staff uprisings in Arizona, Kentucky, Oklahoma and West Virginia, where teachers packed state capitos and turned themselves into human shields protecting their students and communities from the GOP’s slash-and-burn tactics of the previous decade. In all four of these right-to-work states, teachers, school staff and other public employees walked off the job, filled the streets of capital cities, and won the battle for public opinion, which then led to winning billions of dollars in salary increases, pensions and new investment in education. Our members and allies are showing precisely why the right wing is trying to destroy us. The era of passive resignation is over; look at these settlements demonstrating the power of collective bargaining:

In Philadelphia, teachers got their first raise in five years as part of a $395 million deal that also provided retroactive payments to make up for the lack of raises during the contract stalemate. And our paraprofessionals in Philadelphia are doubling—that’s right, doubling—their salaries.
contract. In Newark, N.J., 500 teachers won back $1.6 million in wages they were owed, and control of the schools finally returned to the city. In Detroit, where we once faced the real possibility that public education wouldn’t even survive, the Detroit Federation of Teachers has made an extraordinary comeback. It kept open 24 schools the state wanted to close last summer. It also settled a lawsuit against Detroit Public Schools to dramatically improve building maintenance; bargained for a new three-year contract with 7 percent raises in the first two years; and negotiated a new approach to filling 200 teacher vacancies that included bonuses to current teachers and the return of funds teachers lent the district in 2010. And AFT Michigan won a huge decision at the state Supreme Court, returning $550 million to our members who had been coerced into “contribution” 3 percent of their salaries toward their retirement healthcare.

In Washington, D.C., Michelle Rhee’s old district, 4,300 members of the Washington Teachers’ Union got a new three-year contract providing for 9 percent raises, which served, Weingarten said, as “yet another sign that the old era of attacking and def-professionalizing teachers is over.” More than 4,200 San Francisco teachers, librarians, paraprofessionals, school nurses and social workers not only got an 11 percent raise over three years. Because they helped pass a communitywide parcel tax, they’re looking at a total 16 percent increase. In Boston, the 6,500 members of the Boston Teachers Union received a 2 percent retroactive raise as well as a 3 percent raise going forward. And in New York City, the United Federation of Teachers won a landmark agreement with the city’s Department of Education that included paid parental leave for thousands of UFT-represented New York City employees. The new deal provides six weeks of time off at full salary for maternity, paternal, adoption and foster care leave; when combined with current sick leave provisions, new birth mothers could have a total of 12 to 14 weeks of paid leave.

Already one of the largest labor unions in Oregon, OSEA has doubled down on organizing and signed up more than 3,500 members in the past school year alone. In Ohio, following years of the district’s focus on wrongheaded policies like performance pay, the Cleveland Teachers Union negotiating team was able to eliminate performance pay and ensure fairness in the wage scale, while the 2,600-member Toledo Federation of Teachers successfully ended a long and public contract campaign in May 2017 with a huge win: 5 percent increases over two years and another $4.8 million in year three, as well as 15 additional teacher leader positions. Statewide, a bill decoupling test scores from teacher and paraprofessional evaluations has passed both houses and will likely be signed soon. In St. Paul, Minn., “bargaining for the common good” was on full display during this last round, as the union secured 30 new full-time equivalent staff for English language learners and 23 more support positions for special education. (See p. 4 for a look at the Restorative Practices program.) Minnesota has also organized 16 new PSRP units since the last AFT convention. Meanwhile, AFT Connecticut has launched a statewide organizing effort targeting PSRPs.

No one could stop the GOP tax giveaway to the wealthy, but AFT advocacy did help get rid of a punitive proposal to tax graduate student tuition waivers as income—which would have decimated graduate education by making it unaffordable except for the wealthy.

As the largest higher education union in the country, the AFT continues to organize full- and part-time faculty, as well as graduate students, bringing increased protections—and much better pay—to the most vulnerable teachers in higher education. At Temple University in Philadelphia, where 1,400 adjunct faculty voted in 2015 to join the 1,400 members of the AFT-affiliated Temple Association of University Professionals to negotiate a landmark joint contract, the bargaining team delivered in 2017, with a 15 percent wage increase, job protections, and a crucial first step for adjuncts to gain the professional respect and security they deserve. Nine faculty unions at public institutions across southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey now make up the United Academics of Philadelphia—a hotbed of AFT density and activity. And in New York state, the more than 35,000 members of United University Professions, the nation’s largest higher education union, bargained for a six-year contract retroactive to 2106, providing 2 percent wage increases each year, a new minimum pay for adjunct faculty, and the first union agreement with the state for paid family leave benefits.

After a decade of organizing, graduate
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES FOR KIDS
A PSRP and her union stop preK-2 suspensions

Thanks to a heart as big as Texas, along with strong support from her union, PSRP activist and former attendance specialist Trassel Underwood got the Austin, Texas, school board to ban public school suspensions of toddlers through second-graders. In 2017, the school board adopted the no-suspension policy, which strongly emphasizes restorative practices and parental involvement.

Led by Education Austin, dozens of parents, educators and students had urged the board to address kids’ emotional needs instead of throwing them out of school. The ban also prohibits placing children younger than third-graders in an alternative disciplinary setting, except as required by law. Other wins for kids include training for every school employee who works with children; additional staff members to support classroom management; more coaches for social and emotional learning; and a visit to a “mindfulness” or “cool-down” room instead of an in-school suspension, which helps children get back to class within a couple of hours or the next day.

Underwood herself became deeply experienced on this topic in her dozen years with the district. As a former middle school attendance specialist, she would track students’ whereabouts, entice them to come to school, and work as a parent liaison. Before that, as secretary to a vice principal, she wrote up suspension paperwork but often went above and beyond: conducting home visits, calling parents and working closely with the parent support specialist to connect students with available services. “Some would consider that beyond my job description,” but she respectfully disagrees.

The issue got personal for her as well. During the course of her advocacy, Underwood’s own 3-year-old son was suspended three times. “She’s proud that her “union decided to take up this issue,” Underwood says. “After immigration, it’s our most important cause.”

students at the University of Chicago voted last fall to form a union representing 2,500 graduate employees. At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2,700 graduate teaching assistants went on an 11-day strike, the longest in the university’s history, before reaching a five-year settlement providing raises, pathways to promotion, better health insurance and stable tuition waivers.

And just as we went to press, two huge wins came to fruition. The Lecturers’ Employee Organization at the University of Michigan won a contract—in a right-to-work state—that boosted entry-level salaries a minimum of 44.9 percent. They mobilized members and community allies and engaged the university’s Board of Regents, which refused to vote on a budget until $2.5 million was added to the LEO package. AFT Michigan’s field rep reported, “The team was so shocked by their win that they just sat there silent for about three minutes, then started crying and cheering all at once.”

Then, on the same day as the Janus decision, the Oregon Employment Relations Board officially certified the 2,400 members of United Academics of Oregon State University, capping a three-year organizing effort by hundreds of teaching and research faculty in a variety of jobs and academic disciplines.

AFT nurses and healthcare professionals have been organizing up a storm. Every single healthcare state affiliate grew its public sector hospital membership through member-engagement campaigns.

The AFT-affiliated Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals won four separate elections, gaining first contracts and more than 1,500 new members. When more than 350 respiratory therapists, pharmacy technicians and other healthcare professionals in the technical unit at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield, Ore., they boosted the number of AFT-represented healthcare professionals throughout the PeaceHealth system in Alaska, Oregon and Washington to more than 5,000.

The Ohio Nurses Association has grown by more than 1,000 new members since 2016 through election wins and bargaining in new members. And right at press time, 1,500 ONA-affiliated nurses at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center ratified a new three-year contract that not only gained an average 5.7 percent wage increase in the year one, but also base-pay increases and a longevity bonus for nurses at the top of the wage scale. Just as important, the nurses used their union platform to address issues plaguing the hospital, such as retention and safe nurse staffing, establishing a new staffing model designed to reduce nurse fatigue and improve patient care.

The Washington State Nurses Association has grown by 2,000 members since 2016, through new member elections, public sector member engagement, and bargaining in new units.

In Lafayette, N.J., a group of workers in the addiction treatment center Sunrise House had the support of Gov.-elect Phil Murphy when they fought a national hedge fund investment group to gain their first contract, one that significantly improved wages, safety and staffing.

In Lima, Ohio, 275 nurses at Lima Memorial Hospital negotiated a three-year contract providing an 11 percent raise, with 5 percent in the first year. In Connecticut, 415 Backus Hospital nurses bargained for a contract with Hartford HealthCare after a great member-engagement campaign, and 1,700 AFT nurses and technicians at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital negotiated a three-year extension—with raises—of their contract set to expire in 2019. “Our working conditions are our patients’ healing conditions,” said Stephanie Lancaster Johnson, president of the LPN & Technical Unit. “Collective bargaining to make improvements doesn’t just benefit our members; it benefits our community, too.”

Montana’s public employees agreed. The independent Montana Public Employees Association joined our affiliate in Montana to create the new 25,000-member Montana Federation of Public Employees, by far the largest union in the state. Together with the AFT-affiliated Montana Nurses Association, our union there will now represent about 30,000 members, a testament to the fact that power lies in numbers and that union members will accomplish much more together than they ever could individually.

AFT members regularly bargain for retirement benefits so that they can have genuine economic security after a lifetime of service. It turns out, though, that fully 80 percent of Americans worry about whether they’ll have enough in retirement, and for good reason:
Half of all working Americans work for a small to mid-sized employer that hasn’t set up a retirement plan. That’s why the AFT has done some polling and advocacy work around establishing Guaranteed Retirement Accounts, a method of potentially helping all Americans gain some retirement security.

**High-quality, affordable healthcare for all**

When four National Federation of Nurses affiliates joined the AFT and we became the second-largest nurses’ union in the country, we doubled down on all things healthcare, guided by two overriding principles: expanding access to affordable healthcare, and protecting what we’ve gained.

No battle defined the AFT more in the early Trump administration than the nationwide fight to preserve the Affordable Care Act against Republican efforts to repeal it outright. At town halls, on phones and computers, in the halls of Congress, and in the streets, thousands of our members helped beat back repeal: not once, not twice, but three separate times. There seemed no end to the GOP’s shameless efforts to make Americans sicker and poorer while delivering huge tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We helped keep the ACA alive, with outstanding educational activism directed toward undecided Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and John McCain (R-Arizona). TOTEM Association of Educational Support Personnel in Anchorage, Alaska, played a critical role in this effort due to its ongoing, issues-based working relationship with Murkowski.

This administration has yet to propose a positive healthcare plan. Instead, by cutting subsidy payments, Trump destabilized the insurance markets and drove premiums higher. By refusing to advertise during the open enrollment period, and by finally killing the individual mandate in the tax giveaway bill, he further weakened the ACA by depriving it of younger, healthier enrollees.

A signature provision of the ACA provides federal support for Medicaid expansion for people who earn up to 138 percent of the poverty level, which has brought health coverage to millions of previously uninsured Americans. When Trump allowed the Children’s Health Insurance Program to expire, risking the health of millions, the AFT helped get it restored in the Omnibus Spending Bill.

Since convention 2016, more Americans have died from opioid overdoses than in World War I or the Vietnam War. This crisis may have snuck up on the media, but not on our nurses, our healthcare technicians, our teachers, our first responders and our social workers. Every unit of the AFT has been affected by the crisis, suggesting that what we need most is a true communitywide response, in which everyone doing the work—

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“I am so thankful that we have employee unions to stand up for what’s right for working people.”

—Sarah LaFrenz

STATE WATER SCIENTIST

(Topeka, Kansas)

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**PUBLIC SERVICE CUTS HURT**

**A lesson from Kansas, ignored**

An AFT activist from Kansas went to Washington, D.C., last fall, warning lawmakers not to slash taxes for the rich and gut public services under the delusion that you can cut your way to prosperity.

Kansas had already suffered dangerous lapses in services. Ever since Gov. Sam Brownback began enacting his ruinous tax-cutting experiment in 2009, the state has been increasingly unable to pay its bills. The tab just grew and grew—until the Legislature finally overrode the governor’s veto last year just to pay off expenses the state already had incurred.

That’s why Sarah LaFrenz, a state water scientist from Topeka and then union steward for the Kansas Organization of State Employees, warned us not to do what Kansas did. That fiasco, said the mother of three, is personal for her: Everyone she knows has been hurt by cuts that resulted in 25 percent fewer state employees, from nursing home inspectors to air and water quality monitors. Kansas even shortened its school week.

“I am here today to implore you all to learn from Kansas,” LaFrenz told rallyists on Capitol Hill, saying that when public services are starved, “our lives are endangered, we are harmed, and sometimes we lose people altogether”—like the 70 foster children Kansas lost track of, and the state correctional officer who took his own life under the stress of brutally long hours from understaffing.

“I am so thankful that we have employee unions to stand up for what’s right for working people,” LaFrenz says, “because right now, that is the main and singular voice we have for telling the truth and shedding light on the problems we face.”

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STATE WATER SCIENTIST

(Topeka, Kansas)
from education, prevention and emergency response, to treatment and follow-up mental health services—has a seat at the table. As part of that response, we’re launching an hourlong online course with Harvard Medical School intended for all of us, to begin getting our affiliates more engaged.

Locally, the AFT pushes for workplace policies and collective bargaining language that provide resources and protection to those on the front lines, including school nurses, who need access to the opioid-overdose antidote naloxone. Systemically, we advocate for policies increasing treatment resources, strengthened employee assistance programs, decreasing the stigma attached to addiction, and bringing down the price of overdose reversal medication.

At a moral level, the AFT is going after some of the truly bad actors in this story: calling out and pressuring pharmaceutical companies and their hedge fund enablers who’ve gotten rich from the irresponsible overprescription of opioids. Incredibly enough, some of the same companies that, with one hand, are shoveling addictive pain pills to doctors, have the nerve to reap millions from for-profit treatment centers with the other.

Because Medicaid is such a major funder of hospitals and mental health and addiction services, the Trump administration has, despite declaring a national emergency, actually made the crisis worse. It has invited states to raise eligibility requirements for Medicaid recipients; the attorney general is expanding the criminalization of drug use, threatening to incarcerate another generation of drug users; and the president’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis is widely considered useless.

Safe staffing in hospitals may sound like inside baseball, unless you’re a nurse juggling eight patients simultaneously, or one of the patients being juggled. Because nurses understand how crucial safe staffing can be—it allows them to avoid the fatigue that can lead to risks for their patients and for themselves—AFT nurses are launching and joining campaigns for safe staffing levels, including the three-year-old Nurses Take DC rally. (See the sidebar "Patients before Profits," on p. 11.)

**Safe, welcoming, well-funded neighborhood public schools, and affordable college**

At the National Press Club, just 11 days before Donald Trump’s inauguration, AFT President Randi Weingarten warned that nominating Betsy DeVos as secretary of education would send the wrong signal to the country. She challenged DeVos to spend time in public schools, worried that after years of taking a wrecking ball to public education in her home state of Michigan, she planned to bring her campaign to destabilize, defund and privatize public schools to the national level.

We had just witnessed—and played a key role in—a rare consensus on Capitol Hill to pass the Every Student Succeeds Act. Indeed, President Obama described its passage as a Christmas miracle. The AFT had successfully fought for the law to protect the Elementary and Secondary Education Act’s original intent of mitigating poverty, get the federal government out of teacher evaluation, and offer states the opportunity to reset testing and accountability. And Weingarten recognized that the wrong choice for secretary of education could hinder implementation efforts and derail the promise of ESSA.

Never before had a Cabinet nomination inspired such action. AFT members alone made more than 100,000 phone calls opposing her nomination. Despite our activism, and embarrassing hearings that demonstrated her deep ignorance of educational issues, DeVos squeezed through confirmation, courtesy of Vice President Mike Pence’s tiebreaking vote. However, by defining DeVos for the American people prior to confirmation, we were able to undermine her credibility and weaken her authority.

The concerns of Weingarten and our
members proved well-founded. Although, early on, DeVos agreed to spend a day with us touring the outstanding rural Van Wert, Ohio, public schools, in a district that voted overwhelmingly for Trump, she quickly betrayed her priorities. From day one, Trump and DeVos have—as Weingarten warned—pushed so-called school choice; vouchers, for-profit charters, tuition tax credits and other privatization schemes.

And of course, they have repeatedly pushed for deep cuts in public education funding. For two years running, we have led successful efforts to beat back the draconian budget cuts DeVos, with the support of the president, proposed.

As the people most familiar with her performance, we collected 80,000 “report cards” on her first year in office. Overwhelmingly, the message was that her performance was in great need of improvement. However, when parents, students and teachers tried to deliver that message, DeVos cemented her reputation as the least competent secretary in history by locking the department doors.

The AFT continues to fight back against her harmful efforts, including her unconscionable decisions to close 1,200 civil rights investigations, effectively disbanding her department’s civil rights division; halt the investigation of complaints from transgender students about bathrooms they are allowed to use in schools; and welcome back into the department predatory student loan servicers with demonstrated histories of exploiting borrowers. We partnered with dozens of youth-serving organizations to save after-school programs supported under Title IV, as well as professional development programs enabled by Title II. When longtime right-to-work advocate DeVos attended oral arguments in the Janus case, she sent a signal no one missed.

Even as we fight at the federal, state and local levels for the funding and policies needed to improve schools and their capacity to serve students, we never lose sight of what the AFT and its members know is most critical within the walls of each and every school—

“We may have problems, but we have a union to deal with them. It’s so good to have a voice.”

—Mary Milton
REGISTERED NURSE
(MILWAUKEE)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WORKS
Healthcare workers fight to keep the ‘saint’ in St. Francis

St. Francis Hospital is a full-service facility nestled in Milwaukee’s south side and has served the increasingly diverse working-class community since 1956. Many of the nurses and health professionals who work at St. Francis live in the community, and they have been in the hospital’s workforce for generations. St. Francis, along with St. Joseph Hospital in Milwaukee, was part of the Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare system until the system was bought by St. Louis-based Ascension Healthcare.

Having an outside corporation take over their community hospital was a major concern for the hospital’s 1,200 workers as well as the union that represents them, the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (WFNHP). What worried union members most was Ascension’s reputation for shuttering hospital services, outsourcing and violating workers’ rights.

“I was concerned about the possible closing of the hospital,” says Tracey Schwerdtfeger, a patient care associate at St. Francis and a WFNHP member. She has been working in the mental health unit but is studying to be a registered nurse. Schwerdtfeger’s concern led her to get actively involved in the union’s campaign to “Keep the ‘Saint’ in St. Francis.”

Trying to ensure that Ascension would operate the hospital as a responsible corporate owner, WFNHP circulated a petition urging the new owner not to cut the hospital’s services or staff, decrease pension or other benefits, or outsource jobs. More than 1,000 community members signed, while WFNHP also worked closely with community organizations and local lawmakers to create a coalition to keep St. Francis a true “community” hospital.

“We participate in the local economy, and many of us live in the nearby neighborhoods. Any type of layoffs, service closures, or other drastic or even moderate changes to our hospital, could potentially have severe ripple effects throughout the community,” says Candice Owley, WFNHP president and an AFT vice president.

Efforts like the one at St. Francis are helping AFT’s nurses and health professionals to not only use collective action to secure patient care standards for the common good, but also to drive a far-reaching grass-roots campaign to push the message that communities, not corporations, are the best judge of their healthcare needs. That message comes from the AFT Nurses and Health Professionals national campaign, Patients Before Profits, which promotes transparency in healthcare quality and financial information, affordability of care, community control, and strong voice for healthcare workers in the healthcare delivery system.

Registered nurse Mary Milton, president of the St. Francis nurses’ local, who has worked at the hospital for 39 years, says she and her fellow union members waged a proactive campaign—which made all the difference. “We serve a very diverse patient population,” she says, and the people who have worked at St. Francis for years “like the hospital and are proud of the care we provide. That’s why people stay—we believe in the work of this hospital.”

The community agreed, and stepped up in a big way. “Once we talked with them, people really got on board,” Milton says. WFNHP and the hospital began negotiating a new contract. In a textbook example of “bargaining for the common good,” WFNHP members focused on bringing the hospital workers together with the community to keep their voice in the workplace and to succeed in keeping the south-side community strong. On the first day of bargaining, dozens of community members packed the room to share how much the hospital and its workers meant to them.

The nurses and health professionals at St. Francis now have a wonderful new contract. “Sometimes things happen that serve as a wake-up call, making you realize that you can’t be complacent,” says Milton. “We may have problems, but we have a union to deal with them. It’s so good to have a voice.”
and that is the “four pillars to achieve powerful, purposeful public education”:

- Promoting children’s well-being;
- Supporting powerful learning;
- Building teacher and staff capacity; and
- Fostering cultures of collaboration.

Half of all public school students face the daily stresses of living in poverty. Our members meet them where they are and do their best to meet their students’ physical, emotional and social needs. As, unfortunately, we have had to see time and time again over the past couple years, when our students experience disasters like hurricanes, or traumas like school shootings, educators stand up and put children’s well-being first.

In and out of the classroom, the AFT works to take down these barriers to learning created by trauma and poverty, including by providing training on trauma-informed practices. Additionally, our highly popular Center for School Improvement Leadership Institute was the largest ever, bringing together district-union-community partnerships from around the country to deepen their understanding of, and capacity to foster, healthy school climates and culture. Several of those same CSI locals are in the 55 cities and towns across the United States where the union is partnering in the planning, implementation or expansion of community schools.

Thinking about the future career trajectories of our members and the very future of the profession itself, the AFT continues to grow the AFT Teachers Leaders Program, which will reach 1,000 alumni next year from more than 25 locals. We convened our first-ever summit on teacher diversity with 15 locals working to “grow their own” diverse teacher pool. And we are enhancing our support, service and engagement with new teachers following an intensive three-day listening session convened with a representative sample of locals.

AFT national, state and local professional development reaches many thousands every year. By participating in one of the 20-plus AFT Professional Learning courses, attending Summer Educator Academy, or taking courses on the AFT’s eLearning platform or a customized course in their locals, members receive the necessary tools, resources, techniques and skills they need to create classroom environments that foster success for their students, as well as earning them continuing education credits. Approximately 1.3 million registrants are now a part of Share My Lesson, an online bank of 400,000 lessons and resources organized by grade level, topic and the four pillars. In a section called “Today’s News, Tomorrow’s Lesson,” we post

LESSONS IN SUSTAINABILITY
Members win a Green Ribbon for their school

Steve Von Osten, a member of the Rio Rancho School Employees Union in New Mexico, has helped spearhead environmental education at his elementary school, so much so that he found himself among the AFT members honored at the 2017 Green Ribbon Schools awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Successes at Sandia Vista Elementary School include an after-school green team that runs the school greenhouse and garden, a sharing program during lunchtime in which students can swap unopened food from a cooler, and a repurposing program through the school cafeteria in which food scraps go to feed local chickens and pigs. In fact, Von Osten says, everything the school does is “a byproduct of green thinking”—right down to its switch from plastic utensils to reusable silverware, and its decision to quit using Styrofoam, which takes up a quarter of the nation’s landfills.

The fourth-grade teacher loves imparting an understanding about our interdependence with the earth. “It’s a good grade to teach,” he says. “They still care what the teacher thinks.”

The school has recycling bins in every classroom and recycles far more than it trashes. Older students teach younger ones about sustainability, not just during the after-school program but throughout the school day and during outdoor activities complete with excursions to explore the natural environment. Master gardeners come in and teach skills such as composting, planting bulbs and harvesting runoff water from the school’s roof, which is then used to water the garden.

AFT New Mexico President Stephanie Ly is proud of the collaboration between the school’s principal and green team, a partnership she credits for making Sandia Vista a green school in practice, not just in name.

“They’re such a great team,” Ly says. “This kind of national recognition is what happens when everybody works together to put children’s health and well-being first.”
lessons on topics ripped from the headlines. You can look up collections of resources on #FamiliesBelongTogether as well as gun violence in the United States. And just last week, we launched a new update that personalizes Share My Lesson to your grade level and subject, creating a new dashboard for members to engage online with each other.

Since 2004, the AFT has been co-producing Colorín Colorado—a nationwide bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners—with PBS station WETA. Three million users have access to an extraordinary range of teaching and learning resources, from classroom instruction videos, guides and multicultural book lists, to reading tips for parents and educators.

The AFT’s partnership with First Book has distributed more than 5 million books since we began with a small literacy project in Charleston, W.Va. There are now 150,000 AFT members registered with First Book, giving them ongoing access to low-cost, high-quality books, school supplies and basic needs items.

Collaboration among educators, staff, administrators, students, families and communities is the glue that holds all our work together. This has never been so clear as in McDowell County, W.Va., where an AFT-led community partnership—not a top-down state takeover of the public schools—raised graduation rates by double digits. Or in Tulsa, Okla., where AFT Local 6049, representing all the school support staff in the Tulsa School District, organized a successful citywide campaign called “Stop for the Bus—Our Kids Are Worth the Wait,” to remind drivers to stop for school buses with their flashing lights on and stop arms out. Or in San Antonio, Texas, and Delaware, where PSRP members of AFT locals have partnered with First Book to help students while raising the profile of PSRPs in the community.

Even in times of austerity, the AFT remains committed to scaling member-led innovation, and new partners are joining us in those efforts. Since 2009, when the AFT first placed a big bet on the wisdom of educators—“their ideas, ingenuity and passion to work for their students and communities,” as Weingarten put it—our Innovation Fund has awarded more than 45 grants totaling $16 million to local affiliates. That funding has supported everything from restorative justice in New Haven, Conn., to a statewide digital learning platform for Montana educators, to an online “Career Cruising” platform connecting students, schools, teachers and businesses in Peoria, Ill., to help 70 students land jobs in less than 18 months.

The AFT has long advocated commonsense gun laws that would reduce the likelihood of the mass shootings—many of them at schools—that now characterize our era. After the shootings at Parkland High School, following the lead of those brave, eloquent survivors, we supported their national walkout, the enormous March for Our Lives, and coordinated a Day of Action on Gun Violence April 20. Weingarten stood with the heroic student and union leaders in Florida as they beat back most of the absurd proposals to arm teachers in the classroom.

Using its business clout, the AFT told Wells Fargo Bank, which handled our member mortgage program, it “can be the bank for American’s teachers, or it can be the bank for the NRA and gun manufacturers”—but not both. The NRA attacked, Wells Fargo ducked, and we took our business elsewhere. The AFT also released a special edition of our “Ranking Asset Managers” report, calling on all investors to evaluate the risks associated with investing in gun manufacturers and “use their power to compel those gun manufacturers to take meaningful action to address these risks.” The national conversation around guns and schools may be starting to open up, and the AFT is helping to drive that change.

For far too many Americans, college seemed affordable until they began paying off their student loans. The reality is that student debt, which has far outstripped credit card debt in America, cripples borrowers and drags down the economy. It also disproportionately burdens people of color: Research shows that black graduates default at five times the rate of white graduates. The AFT has offered at least 100 student debt clinics for members, reaching at least 6,500 borrowers in person. (See the sidebar “Student Debt Clinic,” on p. 13.) Tens of thousands more have gotten student debt help from the AFT website.

A strong democracy, a thriving labor movement, and the right to vote

For most of the last decade, our democracy has been held hostage to a nationally coordinated, targeted, state-based right-wing effort to suppress voting by low-income people.
and people of color. From restrictive voter-ID laws to partisan gerrymandering following the 2010 census, governors and state legislatures have disenfranchised millions of Democratic leaning voters—even while Barack Obama won election and re-election.

After the 2016 convention, the AFT sought to engage everybody in the union family in the political process. We invested our limited resources strategically, both up and down the ballot, for president and Congress as well as in state, county and local races.

Using national and state solidarity funds (see pp. 22-26 for the detailed “AFT Solidarity Fund” report), we helped:

- Defeat the proposed charter cap increase in Massachusetts;
- Defeat efforts to establish statewide charter schools through the so-called Opportunity School District in Georgia;
- Resoundingly defeat the proposed constitutional convention in New York;
- Pass a healthcare referendum in Oregon;
- Pass a key California Proposition to provide $4 billion to $9 billion annually for K-12 education;
- Defeat efforts in Louisiana to end paycheck deduction for public employees;
- Override Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback’s veto of a budget to repair the disastrous consequences of his 2012 tax experiment;
- Defeat Koch brothers-supported, anti-public education candidates to ensure a pro-public education school board in Douglas County, Colo.

When we engage the public, by supporting public schools and fighting for communities and the public services that make them work, we very often win. All the more reason for AFT locals and state federations to focus on community involvement—where we find our greatest density. (See the sidebar “Public Service Cuts Hurt,” p. 5.) We need to learn from the West Virginia walkout, where our teachers and school support staff engaged their communities so well that they received overwhelming support from parents, superintendents and school boards throughout the state.

Soon after the initial shock, mourning and anger after the 2016 presidential election, we began channeling those emotions into the resistance. Our activism meshed with a national, even worldwide, democratic resurgence, as women’s outrage galvanized millions around the globe into the largest demonstration in world history. Democracy was in the air, but it wasn’t just demonstrations that beckoned.

After all, the machinery of politics didn’t grind to a halt on Nov. 9 or Jan. 20. Special elections and off-year gubernatorial and legislative elections were coming; it was time to get busy.

Our No. 1 political asset in the AFT has always been our members, who by their nature are civically engaged in their communities. From this, our members have stepped up and are making a difference by running for office. The AFT and many affiliates have developed, or partnered with, allied organizations to participate in political and candidate trainings.

And how our members delivered!

During the 2016 elections, in Connecticut, our endorsed candidates won in 26 towns, often flipping mayors and school boards. We endorsed 100 candidates and 72 won. Out of 29 members who ran, 23 won. In Illinois that November, our members helped elect Tammy Duckworth to the U.S. Senate.

Since the 2016 election, our members have helped flip 44 state legislative seats from Republican to Democrat—including one in Wisconsin that Trump won by 17 points. The “writing’s on the wall,” said Gov. Scott Walker.

In Florida, in the wake of the Parkland shootings, our members helped pass the strongest piece of gun legislation in decades in defiance of the NRA—establishing a three-
day waiting period, raising the age for purchasing firearms from 18 to 21, and banning so-called bump stocks.

In 2018, at least 29 members of New York State United Teachers won election to school boards across the state, the latest successes for NYSUT’s “Pipeline Project,” which has encouraged, trained and helped elect more than 100 educators to public office over the last four years, including the state Assembly, county legislatures and local school boards.

In fact, the AFT has had two really good years. On Long Island, our member Christine Pellegrino won a special election in a formerly Republican New York State Assembly district. Elsewhere:

- In Virginia, members helped elect a new Democratic governor, Ralph Northam, and so many new members of the House of Delegates that they just expanded Medicaid to more than 400,000 Virginians. Elections, as Barack Obama, liked to say, have consequences.
- In Alabama, members played a key role in electing Doug Jones, the state’s first Democratic senator in 25 years.
- In New Jersey, where the blustering, teacher-bashing bully Chris Christie held forth for eight long years, members helped elect a progressive governor, Phil Murphy, and re-elect State Senate President Steve Sweeney.
- In Maine, members helped approve Medicaid expansion.
- In Washington state, members helped Democrats regained control of the state Senate.
- In Detroit and St. Paul, Minn., members helped elect AFT-endorsed mayors.

Pennsylvania has seen some of the AFT’s biggest victories since the last convention. We helped elect a new Philadelphia mayor; finally got control of the public schools returned to the city; and elected a brand-new state Supreme Court that threw out the gerrymandered partisan congressional maps that had disenfranchised millions of Democratic voters. We then helped flip a district that had gone to Trump by nearly 20 points in 2016—and elected Democratic Rep. Conor Lamb in a 2017 special election.

In the 2018 primaries, hundreds of AFT-endorsed candidates advanced to general elections, and nearly 300 of our own members are running for office, more than doubling 2014 and 2016 numbers. When democracy strikes, it strikes hot.

PATIENTS BEFORE PROFITS
Standing up for safe staffing

“Putting safe staffing standards in hospitals is a national issue,” says Jeri Brandt, a registered nurse at Jersey Shore University Medical Center in New Jersey and an AFT member active in the national campaign for safe staffing.

Last September, as the Massachusetts Nurses Association kicked off a signature-gathering effort to put safe staffing limits on the state ballot for 2018, Brandt joined advocates and unionized nurses from Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island who traveled to Boston. The nurses say the campaign is a great opportunity to help nurses in other states in their fight for safe staffing and to show solidarity—they can accomplish much more collectively than any one of them can achieve alone.

“This could be the catalyst for establishing safe staffing legislation for the country,” says Brandt. “A win for Massachusetts is a win for us all.”

Dozens of research studies and reports demonstrate the need to set a limit on the number of patients who can be assigned to each registered nurse at one time to avoid mistakes, serious complications and preventable readmissions. Research reinforces the experience of nurses and health professionals themselves.

“Safe staffing is important to all health professionals,” says AFT member Bill Garrity, a registered nurse at the University of Connecticut Health Center. “A ballot initiative lets the voters decide, and because nurses garner a lot of respect, many of the people we’ve talked to are overwhelmingly supportive.”
That is why the AFT is all in on the 2018 elections. Voting affects everything. In the words of AFT President Randi Weingarten, “we must create a legislative check on Trump’s hateful policies and prevent the further erosion of our democracy.”

The AFT tried to stop the GOP tax scam—the only legislative “achievement” of this cruel and incompetent administration—but did not succeed. The only policy that unites all Republicans, even our allies on the ACA, seems to be giving money away to the wealthiest corporations and richest individual Americans. A giveaway as shortsighted as it is unpopular, the tax bill double-taxes communities and states committed to funding public education in the face of DeVos’ attacks. We need to hang this bill around the necks of GOP candidates and use it to wrest back control of the House and Senate.

We also need an intellectual and pedagogical response to Trumpism. So, the AFT has not stopped at political opposition; we have also sponsored increased public conversation about civics: the practical workings of American democracy. As a former civics teacher, Weingarten points out that the Parkland students, along with activist teachers and school support staff, are leading the country in a giant civics lesson—demonstrating the power of public advocacy around issues related to gun violence and support for education. At the Albert Shanker Institute, the AFT sponsored a public conversation with Yale historian Tim Snyder and Washington Post columnist Danielle Allen on civics and American democracy in the Trump era. Weingarten distributed copies of Snyder’s book, On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century, to everyone who attended TEACH 2017, and the current issue of American Educator is dedicated to “The Power of Active Citizenship: A Renewed Focus on Teaching Civics Education.”

Civil rights for all—fighting discrimination against everyone

It’s been two difficult years for those of us committed to civil rights and the fight against discrimination: whether against black and brown people, immigrants, Muslims, women, members of the LGBTQ community, the poor, the disabled, the disenfranchised, or the incarcerated. Rarely have elected leaders offered so little compassion or empathy to the most vulnerable Americans, while directing so much overt hostility, hate speech and unapologetic lying their way.

In the face of this onslaught by tweet, executive order, proposed legislation, prosecutorial discretion, and Department of Justice reversals, AFT officers and members have stood firm. We opposed the president’s ban on Muslim immigration to the United States, which was just upheld on flimsiest of “national security” grounds.

In the wake of surging hate-fueled harassment, vandalism and assault after Trump’s election, we organized a coalition of organizations that wrote the president-elect asking him to denounce these acts, many of them committed in his name. He also ducked this request.

The AFT has consistently supported the extension of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, featuring our own DACA-eligible members. (See the sidebar “Undocumented and Unafraid,” p. 3.) Our members and leaders have organized, demonstrated, spoken, marched, written, testified and committed civil disobedience on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Part of the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, the AFT sponsored a “Build Schools, Not Walls” rally on May Day, 2017. We have urged school boards to adopt sanctuary school policies, and called on mayors and governors to adopt sanctuary ordinances. We are publicly supporting colleges, universities and school districts that transform their schools and campuses into sanctuaries for students, faculty and staff. The AFT website features a rich array of resources for staff, students and activists on our website.

In the wake of the deadly “Unite the Right” demonstrations in Charlottesville, Va., the AFT denounced such displays of hate, helped shut down an appearance by white supremacist Richard Spencer at the University of Florida, and uploaded teaching materials to Share My Lesson, which held its largest webinar to date, “When Hate Is in the Headlines,” where a record number of educators came together to learn from each other.

In June 2018, we filed a formal complaint with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights objecting to Trump’s policy of separating families at our southern border, and AFT President Randi Weingarten led a delegation of educators and labor and faith leaders to the border, bringing books
and supplies to children who have been ripped away from their parents and caged.

We bargain social justice into our contracts, such as the GEO graduate workers’ union in Michigan, which negotiated for paid diversity-worker positions, or the gender and racial equity provisions demanded by our faculty union at Rutgers University in its contract negotiations. We’ve championed restorative practices (see the sidebar “Restorative Practices for Kids,” p.4), which help break the school-to-prison pipeline, and we support programs that help diversify the educator workforce. We’ve advocated for the rights of transgender students. As white nationalist and neo-Nazi groups have proliferated after Charlottesville, we produced a guide for unionists who want to fight white supremacy on campus. And we’ve proudly joined the Rev. William Barber’s modern-day Poor People’s Campaign.

While this administration continues to flout deeply held American norms and values, the AFT continues to speak, write, organize, march, demonstrate and advocate for an end to discrimination against the vulnerable, and for strengthening civil rights protections for every resident of this country.

The AFT also brings the power of a national union to bear on the difficulties faced by our most vulnerable and marginalized fellow citizens. When the hurricanes smashed into Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the AFT raised millions through our Disaster Relief Fund to help our brothers and sisters recover. AFT nurses went to Maria-ravaged Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to help address health emergencies our own government was ignoring.

The AFT teamed up with First Book and the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation to create the Essentials for Kids Fund—to provide educators and their students in need across the country with high-quality books, classroom resources, and supplies such as hygiene products and clothing.

Last, but surely not least, the AFT assembled a collaboration with the Hispanic Federation, Operation Blessing International, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, a collaboration that became Operation Agua—which has distributed more than 80,000 water filters throughout Puerto Rico, providing safe drinking water to U.S. citizens effectively abandoned by their government. With our new affiliate there, Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico, we’ve been fighting efforts to close hundreds of schools.

As higher education costs continue to surge, student loan debt is skyrocketing. This year, it hit $1.48 trillion, an average of $40,000 per borrower, hundreds of billions more than Americans’ credit card debt.

However shocking, these numbers don’t tell the real story, which lies in the experiences of people like our members: public school teachers so debt-burdened they think about leaving the very profession they borrowed all that tuition to be able to join; nurses and other health professionals who can’t see their way clear to start their own families; and recent college grads so overwhelmed they return home to their parents.

To help our member borrowers, the AFT has been sponsoring student debt clinics across the country, providing paths to debt relief—from income-based repayment plans to public service loan forgiveness.

Unaware of debt assistance programs, many borrowers are deeply grateful for what they learn in the clinics. The need is so great that AFT staff members have added “train-the-trainer” sessions for union leaders who are able to share sessions with their membership.

On a larger scale, the AFT continues to fight the systems that created such a ripe climate for soaring student debt, advocating for policies that make college more affordable to more people and defending restrictions on predatory student loan servicers. AFT members and leaders have rallied, written articles and letters, and testified before federal policymakers to press for states to more fully fund public colleges and universities—so that students would not have to borrow so much to make tuition—and to make loan servicers more accountable and less likely to bilk borrowers.
Given the unprecedented number of challenges—ranging from hurricanes and other natural disasters to violence in schools to disinvestment in our public infrastructure, services, schools and health facilities—we are honoring AFT members who rose to the occasion often under extreme conditions, making personal sacrifices to care, fight and show up for our communities and our professions, and to assist those in need.

HELP THE FORGOTTEN IN PUERTO RICO

Just weeks after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, two dozen AFT nurses, health professionals and public employees donated their time and expertise and saw firsthand the desperate conditions that our fellow Americans were struggling to overcome.

As part of a delegation of more than 300 AFL-CIO volunteers, these AFT members put their lives on hold and answered the call for help without hesitation. They spent two weeks in Puerto Rico assessing the health needs of communities, providing direct care in hospitals and clinics, and assisting with relief efforts.

Days started at 7 a.m. and often lasted past 9 p.m. for two weeks as teams fanned out through remote mountainous regions and urban neighborhoods to establish pop-up clinics and go door-to-door looking for people who needed help. “They were so incredibly grateful just to have somebody there,” says Joan Davis, a registered nurse from Camden, N.J., adding that the people felt as if they had been forgotten.

Along with treating injuries, AFT members educated people on the dangers of drinking polluted water, and coordinated efforts to get medication, food, water and supplies to the people in need. In addition to treating their physical needs, they provided the much-needed and appreciated human touch and words of comfort to remind stranded seniors sleeping without a roof over their heads, or families living without electricity or running water for weeks on end, that they had not been forgotten.

“I’m often asked what I will remember most about this trip,” says Patsy Trowbridge, a medical surgical nurse, member and steward of the New York State Public Employees Federation.

“It is the union leaders who worked tirelessly to support us, the bonds formed among my fellow volunteers and the warm hearts of the Puerto Rican people. I will also remember vividly how much work still needs to be done.”
KAREN GUMMERSHEIMER
“I hope I taught them that they can give back to others.”

Just weeks after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, the AFT and partners launched Operation Agua to provide water filters to Puerto Rico and help ensure that our fellow Americans on the storm-ravaged island had access to safe and reliable drinking water.

Since then, teachers and students across the country have stepped up to raise money to support the people of Puerto Rico through Operation Agua. To date, more than $1.9 million has been raised and 80,000 filters distributed to schools, families and communities still struggling to access safe drinking water.

Karen Gummersheimer is one of those teachers who seized this opportunity to teach her students the lesson of giving back to others.

Gummersheimer is a special education teacher at Gateway Michael Elementary in St. Louis, a school for children who have physical and mental challenges. After retiring a few years ago, she continued to volunteer at the school. When one of the teachers there died suddenly just weeks before the start of school, Karen stepped up and became the full-time classroom teacher for grades 7-8. She didn’t want the students’ learning to be disrupted or for the kids to have to spend their final year with an unfamiliar teacher.

Each year, the eighth-grade students at Gateway Michael choose a service project; this year they chose to help the people affected by Hurricane Maria. When she saw an Operation Agua email from the AFT asking for donations to help buy the filters, she knew that any money the students were able to collect would be put to good use.

As one of her students said, “It made me happy to collect money.”

Gummersheimer sees her students as being capable of doing much more than people often expect of them. Even though many of her students come from families that struggle to make ends meet, she says, “I hope I taught them that they can give back to others.”

KRISTEN MCCLINTOCK
Teachers working in Houston shelters

Just days after Hurricane Harvey catastrophically flooded the Houston area, knocked out power to more than 300,000 people and forced thousands of families to flee their homes and seek shelter, Kristen McClintock was making plans for how she could help.

A special education teacher, McClintock knew the toll it would take on children, especially not knowing when they could go back home or even if they had a home to go back to.

That’s when she decided to volunteer and then organized a program called Teachers Volunteering in Shelters.

With help from her union—the Houston Federation of Teachers—to spread the word, more than 1,700 teachers volunteered as well. McClintock was able to start day camps in shelters to “help bring the classroom” to children who would not be returning to school right away.

Teachers would often volunteer during the day and then return home at night to clean their flood-damaged homes.

McClintock took special care to make the shelter experience more bearable for children with disabilities or emotional challenges who often are overwhelmed by the noisy and chaotic nature of the shelters.

The volunteers were not just a godsend for the students but also for parents. By knowing their children were in good hands, parents were able to take time to apply for assistance, check on their homes, and get their families back into safe environments and out of the shelters sooner.

“That sense of community, that sense of caring, that sense of understanding what a union is all about, really is the silver lining in the clouds of this storm,” said Zeph Capo, president of the Houston Federation of Teachers and an AFT vice president, about McClintock’s program, which brought hope and solidarity at a time when so many people needed it.
Feb. 14, 2018—the day 14 students and three teachers lost their lives at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.—is a day most teachers and school staff wish they could forget. While many of them heroically put their lives on the line for their students, it is just as inspiring to see how they continue to protect and stand up for the students.

After the tragic shootings, Parkland community members came together to support one another. As integral members of that community, the teachers and school staff at Stoneman Douglas have done so much to help their students and colleagues heal and recover, continuing to mentor and guide students forward and urge them not to succumb to fear.

By creating safe and welcoming classrooms, teachers and staff at Stoneman Douglas are helping their students handle the trauma they experienced and funnel it into positive action. From marches and rallies to voter registration drives, the guiding hands of educators are helping students stand up for themselves and ensuring that students in other communities experiencing gun violence have a voice, too.

Members of the Broward Teachers Union are supporting their brothers and sisters at Stoneman Douglas. In March, many BTU members traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the March for Our Lives, as the Stoneman Douglas teachers chaperoned and supported the students on stage who helped plan the march. Stoneman Douglas teachers also have given time and energy to testify on Capitol Hill, march on Tallahassee, Fla., lobby lawmakers for commonsense gun safety legislation, and call for public employee pensions to remove gun manufacturers from their investment funds.

By continuing to fulfill their mission as educators and provide their students a strong educational foundation, showing them the power of civic engagement and how to use their voices for change, their students have become leaders in a nationwide youth-led effort for comprehensive changes to make schools and communities safer for all.

The sound of music was missing for more than three decades in Public School 48 when music teacher Melissa Salguero arrived seven years ago. But today, that silence has been replaced with a cacophony of musical notes floating through the air from early morning band practice to chorus and daily music classes where students make carrot recorders and electronic banana keyboards.

The students who attend the South Bronx school are among the most disadvantaged in New York City. Most of their families earn less than $25,000 a year, and more than 20 percent of the students are homeless. Many kids can’t afford to pay for instruments, let along music lessons or to go to concerts. For many students, the first time they go to Salguero’s class or join the band is the first time they have held an instrument. But once they do, they are often hooked.

“It’s not every day that you meet someone so important in your life and who will teach you a bunch of things about life and stuff,” says Luis Galvez, one of Salguero’s fifth-graders who gets up before dawn to be able to play the drums in those early morning band practices.
Gianee Martinez, one of Salguero’s first music students at P.S. 48, now performs in community theater productions and attends a competitive performing arts high school.

“They come to school for the music,” says Salguero.

For her tireless commitment to bring music into the lives of her students, Salguero received the 2018 Grammy Music Educator award. Along with the award, she received a $10,000 grant for her school’s music program. And that is music to her ears.

MEMBERS ON A MISSION TO THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

AFT nurses and healthcare professionals had one goal in mind on their mission to the U.S. Virgin Islands this past April: to perform vision and hearing screenings for all the public school students on the islands. As the U.S. Virgin Islands continue the process of recovering and rebuilding from back-to-back hurricane damage from Irma and Maria, schools are trying to make ends meet with very limited resources, severely damaged buildings and a shaky public infrastructure.

“Since the hurricanes, our school nurses have struggled with limited supplies and other support,” says Carol Callwood, president of the St. Thomas-St. John Federation of Teachers. “Our members and the national AFT leadership view this situation as a national concern. When our students have difficulty hearing or seeing in the classroom, they can’t learn.”

The AFT volunteers were hosted by members of the St. Thomas-St. John Federation of Teachers and the St. Croix Federation of Teachers, who were deeply touched by the support of their fellow AFT members.

“We appreciate their efforts in helping us with our students,” says Cava Emanuel-Pemberton, a teacher at one of the schools the nurses visited. “The parents are appreciative too, and it takes a little stress off of them. It’s very helpful.”

Although the days were long, the stories are endless and unforgettable, such as one about a little boy who had been held back a grade because of learning difficulties, but thanks to this effort, the nurses discovered he couldn’t hear and helped him get a hearing aid.

“I’ve been a union member for a long time, but when I do things like this, it’s such a great feeling,” says Jorja Dougherty, a retired nurse and member of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals. “It’s a feeling of solidarity, and I’m so glad that I’m a part of the union for that reason.”
The executive council has adopted policies and programs that address every major issue facing the AFT and our members and uses these core values to guide its work:

- Good jobs that pay a living wage and provide a voice at work and a secure retirement;
- Affordable healthcare so people are not one illness away from bankruptcy;
- Safe, welcoming, well-funded neighborhood public schools, and affordable college;
- A strong and vibrant democracy that includes a free press, independent judiciary, a thriving labor movement, and the protection—not the suppression—of the right to vote.
- Fighting bigotry and discrimination against everyone.

Other strategies deal with addressing issues of paramount concern to our diverse membership, such as implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act and the policies of the Department of Education under Secretary Betsy DeVos; a healthcare industry that too often puts profits above patients; disinvestment in higher education and the growing problem of student debt; and damaging austerity approaches—and union-busting legislation—in state and local governments.

The council faced the existential threat that the Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 case poses to public employee unions with an unflinching eye and met the challenge head-on—adopting strategies to increase member engagement and community involvement. We have allocated staff and other resources to support our state and local affiliates and to help them prepare and hold member-to-member conversations, which have resulted in more member activism than ever before. As a result of this forward-thinking approach, the AFT stands ready to meet this challenge and continue to help create better lives for our students, our patients, our families and our communities.

The council has tackled other crucial issues as well—ranging from common-sense gun control efforts to make our schools and public spaces safer for all, to economic inequality, to pressing for safe staffing ratios and the need to upgrade our public health infrastructure, to addressing the need to guarantee retirement security for all, to resolving the continuing crisis of immigration and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients.
The AFT executive council meets periodically by AFT constitutional mandate to “deal with all the affairs of the federation in the period between conventions.” The council consists of the president, secretary-treasurer, executive vice president and 43 vice presidents, who are elected every two years.

The council’s duties include adopting the AFT budget; granting state and local charters; approving contributions to community and labor organizations and campaigns; approving appointments to AFT task forces, commissions and standing committees; approving financial assistance for defense cases; and approving new AFT benefit programs. The council also addresses proposals for constitutional amendments and policy resolutions to be considered by delegates at the AFT convention.

In addition to handling the union’s routine business, the council discusses all matters that relate to the welfare of AFT members and to the institutions in which they work, and the body adopts policy between AFT conventions.

Council duties, responsibilities and committees

- Executive Committee
- Audit Committee
- Constitutional Amendments and Convention Committee
- COPE Committee
- Defense Committee and Militancy Fund Trustees
- Democracy Committee
- Human Rights and Community Relations Committee
- Member Benefits Committee
- Executive Committee
- Audit Committee
- Constitutional Amendments and Convention Committee
- COPE Committee
- Defense Committee and Militancy Fund Trustees
- Democracy Committee
- Human Rights and Community Relations Committee
- Member Benefits Committee

The AFT executive council also has standing committees that represent constituencies or special concerns within the organization. They include:

- **AFT Advisory Committee on State Federations**, which explores ways to help state federations become stronger as events at the state level have increasing impact on AFT members and locals.
- **AFT Career and Technical Education Committee**, which acts as our sounding board for CTE policy analysis and recommendations, provides guidance on legislation and advocacy and updates on high-quality CTE programs in our locals.
- **Committee on Civil and Human Rights**, which guides the union’s efforts to develop and strengthen relationships with organizations that work for educational, social and economic justice. Focusing on the issues that affect our society’s most disenfranchised communities, the committee helps move members to take action in support of local and national legislation and campaigns related to women, communities of color, the LGBTQ community, public education and labor.
- **Committee on Retirement and Retirees**, which serves as a voice within the union for retired AFT members and provides a clearinghouse for information on retirement issues.
- **Organizing Committee**, which explores strategies on how the union can organize new members within our current constituencies as well as potential membership in new categories of workers.
- **Women’s Rights Committee**, which tracks women’s issues and keeps members updated on relevant laws and legislative trends.

The AFT program and policy councils of each AFT division are: Teachers, PSRPs, Higher Education, Public Employees, Nurses and Health Professionals and RNs.
AFT Membership

In the two years since our last convention, the AFT’s renewed commitment to member engagement and organizing has resulted in unprecedented growth for our union. At 1,755,015 members, the AFT’s membership is the highest ever in our 102-year history.

The AFT continues to be one of the fastest growing unions in the labor movement, despite a recent onslaught of well-funded, well-coordinated attacks on working people and unions. In recent years, the ultra-wealthy, corporate titans and right-wing policy advocates have ramped up efforts to “defund and defang” unions. At the same time, the AFT has reaffirmed our commitment to growing and strengthening our union.

At our 2016 convention, AFT delegates passed a resolution committing our union, leaders and organizers to holding 1 million one-on-one conversations with members. The goal was to speak to 100 percent of our membership. We also invested in new organizing efforts throughout every constituency of the union. As a result, our union has grown by more than 117,603 members since our last convention.

In the past two years, as our union has weathered numerous challenges and assaults from every direction, we also have built our strength by adding to our numbers in each of our constituency areas. We have organized 96 new units—in 18 states, Puerto Rico and the District Columbia—with a total of 52,646 workers.

**Big organizing gains.** AFT organizers scored a number of big wins over the past two years. We affiliated more than 30,000 members of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico and its local union, AMPR-Local Sindical, in Puerto Rico. In Montana, some 7,000 public employees from an independent union joined with our merged affiliate—the Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers (MEA-MFT) to form the Montana Federation of Public Employees. Just before press time, the AFT, in coalition with its partner the American Association of University Professors-AFT. We added nearly 300 new members when adjunct faculty members at Arcadia University voted to join with the AFT-affiliated United Academics of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. In Florida, faculty members at three different colleges—Tallahassee Community College; State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota; and Florida Polytechnic University—voted to join our statewide higher education affiliate, the United Faculty of Florida, adding 342 new members.

**Educators in charter schools** are continuing to fight for a voice to advocate for better teaching and learning conditions. We have organized 24 new charter schools in Illinois; Louisiana; Michigan; Minnesota; New York; Ohio; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Washington, D.C.; and Massachusetts, where we are just beginning to organize charter schools. The AFT now represents 252 charters throughout the United States.

**Organizing the unorganized.** The AFT has engaged in a deliberate effort to encourage our affiliates to research and identify opportunities for new organizing. For example, AFT Connecticut has launched new organizing of school and college support staff and public employees that netted an increase of 18 new PSRP and Public Employee units with more than 1,000 workers. And Education Minnesota organized 14 new PSRP units representing more than 1,100 employees. In a similar effort, the Newark Teachers Union in New Jersey ran a successful card check campaign that led to union representation for some 300 community engagement specialists, facility managers and techs.
The Solidarity Fund was created in 2002 to help states counter initiatives and campaigns that seek to weaken public education and public services, bargaining rights, and hard-earned benefits such as healthcare and retirement security. The Solidarity Fund receives money through an allocation from a specific portion of dues set aside for the fund, and that allocation is shared between the national union and state affiliates.

**TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED FOR AFT NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND:** $30,201,711  
**TOTAL DISBURSEMENT FROM AFT SOLIDARITY FUND:** $36,687,599  
**BALANCE OF AFT NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND (through April 30, 2018):** $18,640,109

### Disbursements from National Solidarity Fund

**American Federation of Teachers**

Resources were provided for the AFT’s political and legislative mobilization campaigns during the 2016, 2017 and 2018 election cycles and legislative sessions. Activities were organized around and aligned with promoting the AFT’s five core values, and included, but were not limited to: the AFT’s and labor’s member-to-member programs; independent expenditures for federal, state and local elections across the country (including presidential, gubernatorial, state legislative, mayoral and school board races); building coalitions with and engaging community partners and allies; fighting the anti-worker, anti-education Trump/DeVos agenda; education and mobilization of the general public; state and local affiliate legislative fights; and union efforts related to state ballot initiatives and referendums.  
$33,642,599

**California Federation of Teachers**

Support was provided for a campaign to pass Proposition 55, a ballot proposition extending the temporary personal income tax increases on earnings over $250,000. It would generate between $4 billion and $9 billion in annual revenues to be allocated to K–12 schools, California Community Colleges and, in certain years, healthcare. The proposition passed.  
$250,000

**AFT Massachusetts**

Resources were provided to defeat Measure 2, an initiative that would have lifted the charter school cap and allowed up to 12 new charter schools each year—opening the floodgates to privatizing public education. Voters successfully defeated Measure 2.  
$900,000

**Montana Federation of Public Employees (formerly MEA-MFT)**

Resources were provided to support the 6 mill levy, a legislative referendum that has been voted on every 10 years. It provides approximately $20 million per year to the Montana University System. The levy will be on the ballot in November 2018.  
$300,000

**New York State United Teachers**

Funds were provided to the campaign to oppose a ballot question calling for a state constitutional convention. A constitutional convention would have had far-reaching effects, potentially transforming the state constitution with haphazard and deleterious changes that could have altered working conditions, retirement security and members’ ability to provide a sound and basic education. The campaign was successful as voters elected not to hold a constitutional convention.  
$500,000

**Oregon (Joint request from AFT-Oregon, Oregon Nurses Association, Oregon School Employees Association and Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals)**

Resources were provided to support Measure 97. The measure would have increased the corporate minimum tax for corporations with at least $25 million in Oregon sales. It would have imposed a minimum tax of $30,001 plus 2.5 percent of the amount of sales above $25 million. Measure 97 did not pass.  
$1,000,000

**Oregon (Joint request from AFT-Oregon, Oregon Nurses Association, Oregon School Employees Association and Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals)**

Measure 101, the Healthcare Insurance Premiums Tax for Medicaid Referendum, was on the ballot as a veto referendum. A “yes” vote supported upholding certain assessments/taxes on healthcare insurance and the revenue of certain hospitals to provide funding for Medicaid expansion. Voters successfully passed the measure.  
$95,000

**TOTAL AMOUNT DISBURSED FROM THE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND:** $36,687,599
AFT Solidarity Fund

Income and Distribution of Funds Since 2016 AFT Convention (May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2018)

Under the AFT bylaws and state finance laws, where applicable, state affiliates receiving funds are required to establish separate holding accounts for those funds, as well as separate accounts from which the funds would be disbursed. Affiliates also are required to obtain a written legal opinion verifying that their use of their solidarity funds is in compliance with all applicable state and local laws. All states that have asked to participate in the fund have provided written assurance through counsel that they have met those requirements.

TOTAL FUNDS DISBURSED TO STATE AFFILIATE SOLIDARITY FUNDS: $17,185,607

Disbursements from State Affiliate Solidarity Funds

Affiliates that have reported spending from their solidarity funds in support of activities of critical importance to members, and the amounts spent, are listed below.

**Alaska Public Employees Association/AFT** $84,552
Funds were spent training members on internal organizing to combat the effects of an adverse decision in Janus v. AFSCME Council 31. The Alaska Public Employees Association trained members on how to improve political engagement with their representatives, and it continued publication and distribution of its association newsletter. APEA contributed to members of the legislature who worked to resolve the fiscal crisis. The House was able to protect vital services, including increasing funds to K-12 education, which was the first time schools saw an increase in more than three years. The new House majority was able to secure $10 million this past session to help with ongoing costs. In addition, the state’s solidarity funds helped candidates running for local office across the state.

**AFT Arizona** $4,117
AFT Arizona used its solidarity funds to support legislation that would address intervention for chronically misbehaving students and bullies in the public school setting. The funds were also used on lobbying efforts.

**California Federation of Teachers** $1,059,324
The California Federation of Teachers used solidarity funds for its top priority—Proposition 55—a measure to achieve stable funding for the state. Funds were also used to pass Proposition 58, which repealed a proposition mandating English-only education in California’s public schools. The CFT also used funds to support Proposition 57, which sought to increase parole and good behavior opportunities for felons convicted of nonviolent crimes; Proposition 62, which would have eliminated the death penalty in California; and Proposition 63, which required firearm background checks and limited sales of high-capacity magazines.

**AFT Colorado** $69,700
AFT Colorado used funds to contribute toward coalitions that helped to protect and expand a Democratic majority in the Colorado House of Representatives and Senate and to assist in school board races. Additionally, solidarity funds were used to help with legislative fights on pensions, collective bargaining and school funding.

**AFT Connecticut** $505,796
AFT Connecticut used its funds to create a member organizing program to engage members in political and legislative efforts. In addition to these efforts, funds were used to survey members regarding political and union priorities, and to strengthen relationships with community partners.

**Florida Education Association** $639,265
The Florida Education Association used solidarity funds to conduct extensive polling and research aimed at affecting the 2017 and 2018 legislative session, and to do pre-election and post-election tracking of our 2016 campaign efforts. Some funding was used for targeted voter education and issue advocacy regarding public education funding, and union decertification. Funding was also used to assist with projects to recruit and train women to run for office, minority voter education, and efforts to increase participation such as voter registration, vote by mail and early voting. The FEA has utilized solidarity funding to assist with efforts to affect Florida’s Constitution Revision Commission.

**Georgia Federation of Teachers** $31,570
Solidarity funds were used as contributions to elect supporters to public office. The Georgia Federation of Teachers helped elect a commissioner in Fairburn, helped a state school superintendent candidate reach runoff status and retained several friendly legislators in the Georgia General Assembly.

**Illinois Federation of Teachers** $1,603,804
The Illinois Federation of Teachers regularly makes contributions to the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, Citizen Action, Illinois Working Together, Illinois Women in Leadership, and the Illinois AFL-CIO. In the 2016 general election, the IFT and other labor partners were engaged in targeted state House and Senate campaigns. In the 2018 primary election, the IFT supported pro-union candidates for other statewide offices such as attorney general, comptroller, treasurer, and many incumbent legislators who had opposition because of their support for a much-needed state income tax increase. Finally, funds were spent on communicating with membership on legislative issues and contested elections.
AFT Indiana

AFT Indiana spent primarily in three areas: member engagement/training, which included having members meet with legislators other than at the statehouse, training regarding effects of new legislation and application of legislation, and legislative and political engagement activities; lobbying/political action, which included visiting legislators at the statehouse and legislator contact campaigns; and campaign contributions to individual campaigns, appropriate caucuses and the state party.

AFT-Kansas

AFT-Kansas used its funds for legislative and electoral work. Funds were also used to help with coalition work: Keeping the Kansas Promise, Sunflower Community Action, and Rise Up Kansas. After replacing more than 50 right-wing legislators in 2016, coalition and legislative partners claimed victory in 2017 by overriding the governor’s veto, in order to try to repair much of the budgetary damage wrought by Gov. Sam Brownback’s 2012 tax experiment.

Louisiana Federation of Teachers

The Louisiana Federation of Teachers used its solidarity funds to defeat multiple legislative efforts to end paycheck deduction for public employees. Funds were also used for communication and mobilization around political priorities, and to support candidates who support public education, public pensions and the rights of educators.

AFT-Maryland

Solidarity funds supported the Bring Back Baltimore initiative to engage citizens and encourage them to enroll their students in public schools. Funds were also used to host a number of lobby events to get members to communicate their positions on several bills and issues. Funding was used to communicate with members on political issues and provide them with election guides, lists of endorsed candidates, GOTV mailers, and postcards for surveys on political and legislative priorities. Some funding was used for partnership projects with allied organizations on voter registration and voter turnout.

AFT Massachusetts

AFT Massachusetts used funds for communication and organizing efforts around ballot initiatives. The most notable success was defeating the Save Our Public Schools ballot initiative, which would have lifted the charter school cap. Though this initiative was heavily supported by dark money contributions, the coalition, including AFT Massachusetts, successfully defeated the initiative.

AFT Michigan

AFT Michigan used funds to engage in key campaigns, build strategic alliances with community partners, and increase the capacity of Michigan locals in the face of “right to work.” In addition to supporting local funding and board races, AFT Michigan helped form a coalition to defend party-line voting and is working to expand voting rights in Michigan. Additionally, AFT Michigan supported several core community allies in their work to organize students, parents and community leaders around educational justice, safe schools and equitable funding. It also contributed directly to organizations on the ground fighting for clean water in Flint.

Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota used its funds to help locals win local referendums and school board races. It also used funds to broaden member activism through conferences that trained more than 1,000 members in political action. Finally, Education Minnesota invested in legislative coalitions and lobbying activities that have protected public education funding.

AFT Mississippi

AFT Mississippi used solidarity funds to assist a pro-education/pro-public school funding candidate in a run for the Mississippi House of Representatives, District 60. The campaign generated the beginning of a get-out-the-vote campaign throughout the district. The AFT Mississippi GOTV committee has partnered with other community groups to increase voter education and registration in the state.

AFT Missouri

AFT Missouri has used its solidarity funds to assist with lobbying on legislative issues such as right to work, paycheck deception and school voucher laws. AFT Missouri also used funds to work with coalition partners and to participate in community activities, including several racial inequality marches.

Montana Federation of Public Employees (formerly MEA-MFT)

MEA-MFT/Montana Federation of Public Employees spent all proceeds from its solidarity fund on the following purposes: independent expenditures to successfully re-elect Steve Bullock as governor; independent expenditures supporting Melissa Romano’s campaign for superintendent of public instruction; successful opposition to I-181, a measure that would have utilized state bonding authority to subsidize medical research in Montana in an unaccountable and fiscally irresponsible manner; support of a 6 mill levy (LR-128) for funding Montana’s public university system; and support of I-185, a proposed ballot measure to raise cigarette taxes to fund Medicaid expansion and increase state revenues (this initiative is in the signature-gathering stage).

AFT-New Hampshire

Funds were used to communicate with and engage members on political and legislative issues. Funds helped create material to send to members regarding legislative issues and candidate endorsements. Some funding helped members attend specific events that foster partnerships with labor coalitions and progressive and community allies. Examples of this are the Labor Day breakfasts sponsored by the AFL-CIO, and the NH Progressive Summit, where AFT-New Hampshire worked to bring together progressive allies.

AFT New Jersey

AFT New Jersey solidarity funds were used for building coalitions, and for political and legislative efforts in support of workers’ rights. Funds helped AFTNJ work with student organizations to organize and develop programs for student outreach and support for suicide prevention. Funds were also used to support nine state universities in their day of action, which were intended to educate and engage members and the community around important issues. Additionally, funds were used on initiatives to protect public employee pensions. Finally, funds were used to hold an annual conference of members, legislators, community leaders and union leaders.
Health Professionals and Allied Employees (New Jersey) $132,000
Health Professionals and Allied Employees spent solidarity funds on a number of legislative issues, and also on encouraging members to participate in community engagement events with allied and partner organizations. They were also instrumental in informing and mobilizing members around the successful passage of laws supported by HPAE, including the Out-of-Network Consumer Protection Act, the Equal Pay Act and the New Jersey Paid Sick Leave Act. Funds were also used to support the New Jersey Healthcare Quality Institute, which provides research and data analysis on important issues.

AFT New Mexico $198,000
Solidarity funds have been crucial for not only local education but also accountability projects for our elected leaders. Solidarity funds were used to reach out to communities in school districts represented by AFT New Mexico to promote participation in local school board elections using a message of resistance and engagement. Also, solidarity funds promoted programs like Emerge New Mexico, which recruits, trains and supports women to run for office. Solidarity funds were used to help conduct a labor-to-labor political outreach program to support endorsed candidates and encourage members to vote. Finally, AFT New Mexico has used its solidarity funds to help sponsor dozens of community events and to partner with allied organizations.

New York Public Employees Federation $520,564
The Public Employees Federation used funds for a three-month statewide billboard campaign featuring PEF members on the job. The campaign targeted lawmakers and the public to bring attention to the high-quality work and services PEF members provide to New York state communities. Funds were also used for a weeklong member engagement blitz that resulted in engaging thousands of PEF members through home visits, work-site meetings and phone calls. Funds were also used for a statewide campaign with community groups, religious groups and other labor unions to successfully defeat the proposition calling for a New York state constitutional convention. Material was produced with the message “Vote No on a Constitutional Convention.”

New York State United Teachers $3,925,409
New York State United Teachers used a portion of its solidarity funds to coordinate a mass media campaign against the state constitutional convention. A portion was disbursed to NYSUT locals as solidarity grants. In addition, funds were used to fund regional political organizers throughout the state. They have been instrumental in successful initiatives including a pledge-to-vote campaign, trainings on running for office, a continuation of its member-to-member organizing initiative (Education Summer and Education Autumn), and a successful statewide Member Organizing Institute and Union Value campaign. Funds were also used to cover rally expenses and legal and policy advocacy.

North Dakota United $82,761
North Dakota United used its solidarity funds for critical electoral, legislative and member-engagement needs. NDU was able to educate our members and the public about the importance of Measure 2 in 2016, which helped stabilize K-12 funding in the midst of a budget crisis. Solidarity funding allowed NDU to continue the successful trainings with the North Dakota AFL-CIO and the North Dakota Farmers Union, training more than 30 candidates and campaign staff. Solidarity Fund resources were also used to identify and activate 1,527 political activists, who helped defeat legislation to put guns in schools and attempts to cut public employee health insurance and other benefits. Resources were used for opinion research among our members to gauge where they stood on key races, issues and ballot initiatives.

Ohio Federation of Teachers $448,864
The Ohio Federation of Teachers used solidarity funds to run a media campaign and a member mobilization effort to raise awareness about the Every Student Succeeds Act and its potential impact for changing the way we educate children. The OFT used funds to support the Ohio Unity Coalition’s efforts to promote new voter registration among African-Americans in urban areas. Additionally, the OFT used solidarity funds to support the work of the Universal Health Care Action Network Ohio, which has been instrumental in getting people signed up for healthcare, fighting for the continuation of Medicaid expansion in Ohio, and fighting against negative healthcare policies such as work requirements for Medicaid.

AFT-Oklahoma $26,700
AFT-Oklahoma used funds to donate to school board races in Oklahoma City Public Schools and Tulsa Public Schools. Three of the four supported candidates were elected, including the chair of the Oklahoma City Public Schools Board of Education. AFT-Oklahoma contributed to city council candidates and state legislative races, including donations to AFT members running for state House of Representatives races. Two members supported by AFT-Oklahoma were elected to the House.

AFT-Oregon $566,521
AFT-Oregon used funds to support a ballot measure campaign that successfully preserved and expanded healthcare (Medicaid) for more than 500,000 Oregonians. AFT-Oregon contributed to state races to preserve pro-worker control of the state House, Senate and governor’s mansion. This pro-worker majority enabled AFT-Oregon to successfully push for an expansion of the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act for public university faculty in the 2017 session.

AFT Pennsylvania $746,710
AFT Pennsylvania used its funds to strengthen its communications program and member engagement efforts around political campaigns and legislative issues. Additionally, funds supported the continuing battle to save pensions, fairly fund schools, and defend dues deduction and collective bargaining, and also supported allied community groups and partners.
Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals  $172,775
Solidarity funds helped fund regional and local strategic planning sessions to inform local leaders about the Janus case and help coordinate a clear message. The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals also used funds to assist locals in building stronger, more unified unions through member communication and mobilization. Solidarity funds were used to support the Brown University graduate assistants’ organizing efforts to unionize. Funds were also used for campaigns aimed at restoring funding to the developmentally disabled community and to support efforts to give local communities authority over approval of charter schools opening or expanding in their districts. Solidarity funds are currently being used to support a coalition of organizations aimed at encouraging Rhode Islanders and their legislators to support the Fix Our Schools initiative.

Texas AFT  $706,828
Texas AFT used its funds to improve member engagement through programs linking policies and politics. It successfully used digital advertising, direct mail, matching grants and field tactics to bring out members to participate in the elections process. Funds have helped Texas AFT work as a leader with coalition partners, and have helped fund voter registration, legislative and political work with partner organizations. Funds were also used to participate in lobbying activities not only by working with labor allies but by adding additional staff and bringing members to the state Capitol to increase Texas AFT’s impact on the legislative process.

AFT Vermont  $51,000
Most of AFT Vermont’s solidarity funds were spent on lobbying. Its lobbyists are very strong advocates in the statehouse, promoting the union’s social justice agenda and garnering support for its members. AFT Vermont also helps engage members on various issues. Some funds were used to donate to an organization called Rights and Democracy, which engages citizens in electoral change for the public good.

AFT Washington  $82,855
Solidarity funds went to support and strengthen community partnerships with social justice and labor organizations. Funds were also used to pay temporary staff to carry out member-to-member political and electoral programs, and to communicate directly with members about candidates, ballot measures and GOTV efforts. Funds allowed AFT Washington to host events where members came together to engage with the union. They also were used to create organizational branding, allowing AFT Washington to continue building solidarity both internally among members and externally with partners and stakeholders.

AFT-West Virginia  $204,332
AFT-West Virginia primarily spent solidarity funds through grants to locals. AFT-West Virginia has been successful in identifying and supporting new leadership and activists and in establishing permanent structures in locals. Additionally, funds were used for community events, labor rallies, educational conferences, affiliate strike relief, and political education and outreach directly to members after the successful strike during the legislative session. Solidarity funds have allow AFT-West Virginia to be effective in building sustainable structures in local unions, as membership continues to grow and they see less attrition between school years.

AFT-Wisconsin  $46,911
AFT-Wisconsin has used funds to contribute to partner organizations such as Voces de La Frontera, Emerge Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans, the South Central Federation of Labor, One Wisconsin Now and Wisconsin Progress. Funds were used for member engagement in social justice events, such as, the women’s marches in both Washington, D.C., and Madison, and Forward Wisconsin. Funds were used for advocacy materials to oppose cuts to higher education funding and tenure.

Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals  $40,853
Funds supported efforts to recruit and train progressive, worker-friendly candidates at the city and county levels. Solidarity funds were also used to support member education and mobilization, and to increase GOTV efforts. Funds were used to educate and mobilize the public sector bargaining unit in preparation for annual recertification elections. Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals partnered with Citizen Action of Wisconsin to create a “Healthcare for All” Organizing Cooperative that unites patients, nurses, doctors, healthcare professionals and businesses to protect and improve access to quality, affordable healthcare for all. Additionally, WFNHP used solidarity funds to support pro-worker allies in the religious community, in the progressive community, and in civil, women’s and immigrants’ rights’ organizations.

TOTAL AMOUNT DISBURSED FROM STATE AFFILIATE SOLIDARITY FUNDS:  $14,309,336
## American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

### Balance Sheet

**December 31, 2017**

**Unaudited**

### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Fund</th>
<th>Militancy/Defense Fund</th>
<th>Building Fund</th>
<th>Solidarity Fund*</th>
<th>Post-Retirement Benefits Fund</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>$85,084,073</td>
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| Furniture, equipment and leasehold improvements, net | $5,884,559 | $— | $— | $— | $5,884,559 |

**Other assets**

- Loans to affiliates, net: $2,139,116
- Israel bonds, at cost: $200,000
- Investment in limited partnership: $18,010,530
- Due (to)/from other funds: $21,519,012
- Accrual to cash adjustment: $—

**Total other assets** | $(22,055,615) | $(5,823,365) | $26,709,614 | $21,519,012 | $20,349,646 |

**Total Assets** | $52,687,490 | $10,283,164 | $26,822,398 | $21,525,226 | $111,318,278 |

*Solidarity Fund reports on cash basis*

### Liabilities and Fund Balances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Fund</th>
<th>Militancy/Defense Fund</th>
<th>Building Fund</th>
<th>Solidarity Fund*</th>
<th>Post-Retirement Benefits Fund</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$3,399</td>
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**Other liabilities**

- Severance and vacation pay: $11,640,957
- Post-retirement – Accrued medical and life insurance: $40,302,927
- Post-retirement – Accrued officer defined-benefit plan: $12,152,065

**Total other liabilities** | $11,640,957 | $— | $— | $— | $52,454,992 | $64,095,949 |

**Fund balances**

- $20,282,963 | $2,328,478 | $26,818,999 | $21,525,226 | $(54,026,621) | $16,929,045 |

**Total Liabilities and Fund Balances** | $52,687,490 | $10,283,164 | $26,822,398 | $21,525,226 | $111,318,278 |
# American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

## Statement of Income and Expenses

### General Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Six Months Unaudited Dec. 31, 2017</th>
<th>Program Budget 2017–2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita dues</td>
<td>$88,463,347</td>
<td>$177,109,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Militancy/Defense Fund allocation</td>
<td>(3,205,437)</td>
<td>(6,474,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Building Fund allocation</td>
<td>(493,144)</td>
<td>(996,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund per capita</td>
<td>84,764,766</td>
<td>169,639,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less state federation rebate</td>
<td>(840,845)</td>
<td>(1,760,408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net General Fund per capita</td>
<td>83,923,921</td>
<td>167,879,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State AFL-CIO collections</td>
<td>414,545</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions, advertising and literature</td>
<td>5,835</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program administration</td>
<td>591,315</td>
<td>1,232,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Benefit Trust/Union Privilege</td>
<td>(75,000)</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and related company reimbursements</td>
<td>751,645</td>
<td>1,670,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>319,391</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$85,931,652</td>
<td>$172,907,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>$36,240,412</td>
<td>$72,302,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliations, fund allocations, rebates etc.</td>
<td>20,820,302</td>
<td>39,294,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>1,002,895</td>
<td>2,726,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>428,057</td>
<td>1,171,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding our priorities</td>
<td>3,227,763</td>
<td>18,675,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance and operations</td>
<td>2,454,556</td>
<td>4,813,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and ideas</td>
<td>2,064,664</td>
<td>4,974,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization and organizing</td>
<td>10,502,418</td>
<td>22,205,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and strategic initiatives</td>
<td>315,673</td>
<td>602,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics, legislation and collective bargaining</td>
<td>3,949,026</td>
<td>6,141,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$81,005,766</td>
<td>$172,907,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Excess/(Deficit) of Income Over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$4,925,886</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Audited June 30, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unaudited Dec. 31, 2017</th>
<th>Audited June 30, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita</td>
<td>$168,783,726</td>
<td>$177,302,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Militancy/Defense Fund allocation</td>
<td>(6,330,587)</td>
<td>(6,474,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Building Fund allocation</td>
<td>(986,472)</td>
<td>(996,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund per capita</td>
<td>$161,466,667</td>
<td>$169,639,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less state federation rebate</td>
<td>(1,967,978)</td>
<td>(1,760,408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net General Fund per capita</td>
<td>$159,498,689</td>
<td>$167,879,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State AFL-CIO collections</td>
<td>414,545</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions, advertising and literature</td>
<td>10,028</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program administration</td>
<td>2,064,664</td>
<td>2,726,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Benefit Trust/Union Privilege</td>
<td>315,673</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and related company reimbursements</td>
<td>751,645</td>
<td>1,670,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>319,391</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$166,434,137</td>
<td>$172,907,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>$63,816,609</td>
<td>$72,302,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliations, fund allocations, rebates etc.</td>
<td>40,320,302</td>
<td>39,294,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>1,002,895</td>
<td>2,726,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>428,057</td>
<td>1,171,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding our priorities</td>
<td>3,227,763</td>
<td>18,675,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance and operations</td>
<td>2,064,664</td>
<td>4,813,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and ideas</td>
<td>2,064,664</td>
<td>4,974,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization and organizing</td>
<td>10,502,418</td>
<td>22,205,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and strategic initiatives</td>
<td>315,673</td>
<td>602,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics, legislation and collective bargaining</td>
<td>3,949,026</td>
<td>6,141,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$159,498,689</td>
<td>$172,907,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Excess/(Deficit) of Income Over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$4,925,886</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Militancy/Defense Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unaudited Dec. 31, 2017</th>
<th>Audited June 30, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita</td>
<td>$3,205,437</td>
<td>$6,330,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locals insurance</td>
<td>763,448</td>
<td>1,519,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment revenue and market adjustment</td>
<td>460,924</td>
<td>972,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4,888</td>
<td>16,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$4,434,697</td>
<td>$8,838,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
<td>$1,331,904</td>
<td>$6,586,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locals insurance</td>
<td>1,179,784</td>
<td>2,531,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$2,511,688</td>
<td>$9,149,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Excess/(Deficit) of Income Over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$1,923,009</td>
<td>$310,354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Solidarity Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unaudited Dec. 31, 2017</th>
<th>Audited June 30, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita</td>
<td>$11,765,931</td>
<td>$39,590,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$11,765,931</td>
<td>$39,590,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to State Solidarity funds</td>
<td>$6,433,248</td>
<td>$10,136,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot initiatives and campaign expenses</td>
<td>2,506,686</td>
<td>23,489,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>527 Solidarity Fund</td>
<td>1,084,144</td>
<td>14,782,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$10,029,078</td>
<td>$48,408,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Excess/(Deficit) of Income Over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$1,736,853</td>
<td>$(8,817,802)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Building Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unaudited Dec. 31, 2017</th>
<th>Audited June 30, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita</td>
<td>$493,144</td>
<td>$986,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>113,672</td>
<td>1,527,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity in income of limited partnership</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3,749,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$606,816</td>
<td>$6,264,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent and Operating expenses</td>
<td>$79,615</td>
<td>$392,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,480,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$79,615</td>
<td>$2,837,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Excess/(Deficit) of Income Over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$527,201</td>
<td>$3,390,212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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  @rweingarten

- Lorretta Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer
  @LorrettaJohnson

- Mary Cathryn Ricker, Executive Vice President
  @mcricker

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