

AFSCME AUSTIN WORKS

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 1624
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AFSCME Member Appointed as JP



Nic Chu is sworn in as Justice of the Peace, Precinct 5.

On May Day (May 1), also known as International Workers Day, AFSCME member Nicholas Chu was sworn into office as Justice of the Peace for Precinct 5.

On the same day he was sworn in, Judge Chu adopted Chapter 9 with no exemptions! County elected officials can choose whether to adopt Chapter 9 of the employee handbook, which affords their employees Just Cause protection. Under Chapter 9, employees cannot be terminated without documentation of just cause. This is a big deal because employment in Texas is at-will.

We are very proud of Judge Chu's career at the County. He started out as a prosecutor in the County Attorney's office and moved to the District Attorney's office most recently. Judge Chu has remained active with Local 1624 since joining five years ago. He served as Chair of the Committee on Political Education for the Austin Central Labor Council. He has played a prominent role in electing progressives to office in Texas, as well as holding them accountable once elected. He has helped us sign up many County employees and increase political participation through our PEOPLE program.

We know Judge Chu will stay committed to making sure AFSCME has a seat at the table and a strong voice at the County.

A big thanks and congratulations to Judge Chu!



Nic Chu signs Chapter 9.



Jack Kirfman, Nic Chu, Krissy O'Brien

Did You Know?

When union members unite, we can make positive changes for everyone.

Recently, management in a large City of Austin department was investigated after several union members came forward in solidarity to make a formal complaint about mistreatment and misconduct from their management team.

AFSCME representatives helped write a formal complaint on behalf of these members, and the investigations found that managers had been committing several policy violations.

One of our priorities is holding management accountable. As you know, managers should be held to a higher standard than regular employees. After filing the complaint, we worked with human resources staff and executives to identify bad management practices, which resulted in significant corrective action, including an early retirement, demotion, several suspensions, one-year probations and retraining for the managers who violated City policies.

This is proof that we are stronger in numbers. When we stand together and fight against bad management, we can make a difference. The culture at the City is changing dramatically. The old school management practices and conduct are no longer acceptable. Organizing your coworkers to join your union and speak out will help us continue our mission to effect these positive changes.

State Legislative Update

by Krissy O'Brien, Political Organizer



We are close to the end of the 85th Legislative Session. Some important deadlines are approaching, and legislators are working diligently to get their bills moving.

Senate Bill 13

Thanks to union collaboration under the Texas AFL-CIO, SB 13, which seeks to prohibit payroll deduction for union dues, has not been scheduled for a hearing at this point in time. The longer we can hold off that hearing, the better our chances of defeating this bill are. The clock is ticking.

Senate Bill 2

Another bill we are watching closely is SB 2, which would impose tax revenue caps on the City and County budget. This would have a negative impact on services the City and County provide, as well as funding for public employees. We elect our County Commissioners and City Council to make funding decisions for our community, and this bill undermines their power to do so. This bill has passed the Senate and is currently in the House Ways & Means Committee.

Local Control

The state's attempt to overreach into City and County government this session has been a major problem. Most of the legislators leading the effort to weaken local control are not our representatives; we did not get to vote in their races. We elected our local elected officials to govern areas in which we work and live. That is how democracy works. If we can't hold elected officials accountable, then we are cut out of the process. It is important that we stand up for local control and continue to elect strong candidates who won't back down to state interference in our lives.

Pension Program

Perhaps the most devastating news so far for public employees was the appointment of Josh McGee as Chair of the Pension Review Board. McGee comes from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, an organization that supports a shift toward privatization and away from defined benefits that offer certainty for retirees. This appointment was made possible by a vote in which Senator Royce West (D) of Dallas was not present. If he had been present, the Republicans would not have had the votes to appoint McGee. This was a vote for the business community, not for workers, and it is shameful.

So far, bills affecting your pensions have not gained any significant strides this session, and we will continue to monitor until sine die, the end of session on May 29.

Austin Energy

Representative Paul Workman's bills that attempt to deregulate Austin Energy will most likely not make it through the session. We are passed the deadline for which these House bills can be voted out of Committee. This is very good news for public employees at the City. Full disclosure: bills are not dead until sine die.

AFSCME Local 1624 Lobby Day

On April 19, Local 1624 members from the City and County gathered at the Texas Capitol to meet with their legislators and discuss bills filed this session that affect their livelihood. Members visited several offices held by both Democrats and Republicans to talk about the importance of pension protection, payroll deduction for union dues and local control.

We were also joined by AFSCME Local 1550 out of Houston. Our message was well received by both state representatives and senators. It was very important for them to hear from the employees' perspective on the issues that matter most to their constituents. We want to thank everyone for taking time off of work to participate, especially Local 1550 for making the trip all the way from Houston.



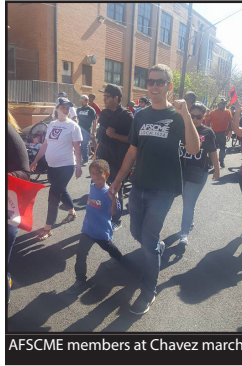
Local 1624 and 1550 members and staff at the Texas Capitol.



Local 1624 members and staff at the Texas Capitol.

Community Action

Now, more ever, we need to remember the leaders who rallied communities in difficult times and helped them discover their power to effect change. On March 25, AFSCME Local 1624 gathered with fellow brothers and sisters to celebrate Cesar E. Chavez and to remember his monumental fight for workers' rights.



AFSCME members at Chavez march

The march ended with a program that included speakers Judy Cortez, AFSCME Local 1624 President, and Jeff Travillion, Travis County

Commissioner. They thanked the participants for the important work they do and reminded them that we will never give up the good fight!



Travis County Commissioner Jeff Travillion speaks at Cesar Chavez march.

Building power and educating our members is the greatest recipe for success. On April 8, we did just that. Travis County members met at our office to participate in Union Steward training, which prepares employees to be union leaders in their work place.

With a strong group of stewards, we can reach our full potential as a union that works together for the greater good of our membership. If you are interested in becoming a steward, please call our office for more information.



Travis County members attend AFSCME Local 1624 Steward training.

and the
WINNERS ARE ...



Aniah Edwards



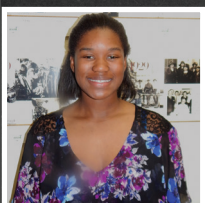
Katryna Dahlberg



Meghan French



Sofia Martinez Gonzales



Deja Hubbard



Justin Rusthoven



Thomas Sanders

AFSCME SCHOLARSHIPS

**COUNTY
EMPLOYEES:
SPEAK UP!**



The Commissioners Court is holding a public hearing to get input on YOUR benefits and compensation. Mark your calendars!

**Thursday, June 22
4:30 p.m.
Commissioners Courtroom
700 Lavaca**



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Email us at 
info@afscme1624.org

Upcoming Events

**June
7**

AFSCME Local 1624 Family Night

**June
17**

County Juneteenth Celebration

**June
22**

County Employees Speak Out