



This page is the official publication of

AFSCME LOCAL 88

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AFSCME Local 88 Meeting Notices

General Membership and Stewards meet the **third Wednesday of every month at 6:15 p.m.** Meeting agenda and minutes drafts may be viewed on the AFSCME Local 88 web page prior to the meeting. Final agendas are distributed at the meeting. If you would like to request childcare to attend a meeting, please email

cabi@afscmelocal88.org. **NOTE: The Feb. 16th meeting will be held virtually.**

Executive Board meets the **first Wednesday of every month at 6:15 p.m.** As always, any member in good standing is welcome to attend. **The March 2nd Executive Board meeting will be held virtually.**



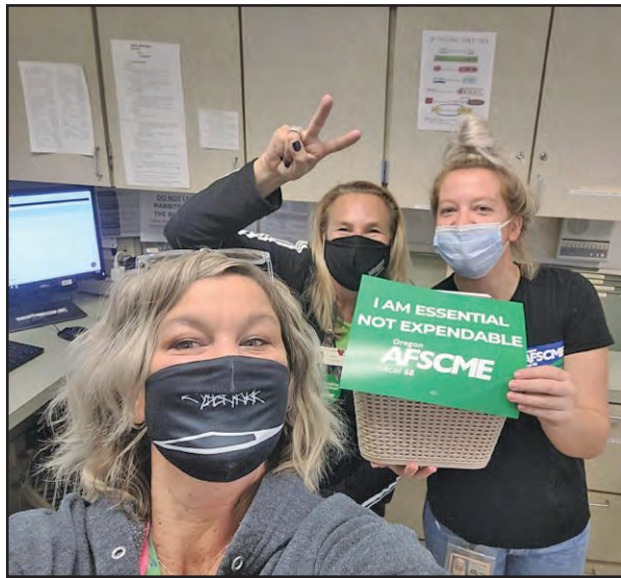
Membership Update

By Joslyn Baker

AFSCME Local 88, President
president@afscmelocal88.org

The Member Action Team

(MAT) is a way for all AFSCME Local 88 union members to get involved in making your union stronger. As we move into our contract bargaining for 2022, we need to build up our MAT so that we can keep our union membership informed and engaged. What are your questions? What do you want to see happen? How can you get involved? If you want answers to any of these questions, please go to <https://www.afscmelocal88.org/> to register for upcoming MAT informational events.



AFSCME Strong 2022 - Show Your Union Spirit!

Here are some details to know about this event:

- **Events will take place Feb 14-20, 2022:** Daily lunch and learn events, member and team gifts, raffle and prizes, general membership meeting fun 2/16/22 (register at afscmelocal88.org).
- Focus is on showing appreciation for union represented employees at all Multnomah County departments, CCC & TPI.
- **Solidarity shout out:** Do you have a shout out for a union member work team or unit that goes above and beyond? Even better include a photo. Please send it to me at president@afscmelocal88.org.
- **Many hands make light work:** Please volunteer to help - email us at president@afscmelocal88.org.
- The goal of AFSCME Strong is to build/increase union engagement & solidarity of individuals and teams and have fun doing this.

Special thanks to AFSCME Local 88 union leader - Robin Easton-Davis for submitting the following information in honor of Black History Month

Black Labor History Makes Our Union Future Possible

There is a rich history of Black leadership and labor organizing in the U.S., but mainstream culture and media mostly focus on the working-class labor struggles of white, male union organizing. Black union members are usually depicted as the supporting cast members, footnotes, pawns, or impediments to labor movements. However, Black workers have and continue to be pro-union, and they have the highest membership rate among all other racial and ethnic groups. This is because union membership provides a way to fight against workplace discrimination and as a way to minimize the racist wealth gap in this country.

All unions have a vested interest to vigilantly work to reduce discrimination, including racism, because it inhibits worker solidarity and union organizing. Unions just benefit from having Black workers fill their ranks, they also benefit when their Black members lead the work. According to the 2015 “And Still I Rise: Black Women Labor Leaders’ Voices, Power, Promise” report, Black women have the highest participation rate of all women in the union, and along with other women of color organizers, they have higher election success rates in forming unions in their units than in units with all white men. Researchers have observed that strong unions with more Black members and members of color have anti-racist effects on their white counterparts. One reason is when white members are focused more on organizing across mutual goals, they begin to focus less on any racist resentments they may hold. These reports demonstrate how Black union members, especially Black women are vital to the future survival and strength of unions.

Beginnings of Black Labor Organizing

Black organizing for their liberation and human rights started as soon as the first Africans were stolen and brought to the colonized Indigenous lands of the Caribbean and South and North America, including what is now the U.S. Africans and their descendants (whether they were considered “free” or enslaved) were terrorized, dehumanized, and treated as disposable commodities in order to create material wealth for white male elites and their descendants throughout the entire U.S. and Europe. However, Black resistance against their inhumane treatment was persistent and they used numerous strategies: work stoppages and slowdowns, the sabotage of equipment, the destruction or theft of “property” (also known as self-liberation), revolts, and killing their captors.

There are documented accounts of Black men and women organizing and participating in labor actions and strikes since the early 1800s. After the Civil War and during the brief era known as the Black Reconstruction, formerly enslaved Blacks worked to push a progressive political agenda, including for women’s rights, and at that same time, the formation of trade unions dramatically increased. The progressive agenda adopted by the Black Reconstructionist, benefitted all Southerners including poor and working-class whites. However, after the federal troops were removed from the South, the forces of white supremacy quickly regained their power and erased those advancements. As a result, all Southern workers have suffered from and fought against regressive labor practices and social conditions ever since. Learn more by reading “Workers on Arrival: Black Labor in the Making of America” by Joe William Trotter.

King Links Labor and Civil Rights Struggle

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King spoke at the AFL-CIO conference on December 11, 1961. His speech was a precursor to his “I Have a Dream” speech, which he delivered on August 28, 1963, during the March on Washington.



King reminds the union conference attendees that the same forces that seek to destroy the labor movement are the very same anti-Black forces that seek to destroy civil rights for Blacks and other oppressed and marginalized peoples. He also told them that it is in our interest to work together because our movements’ successes are interlinked, and our failures to work in real solidarity will mean that white supremacy can and will erode any wins we make separately. King then calls upon the union to resist the reactionary response to shut Black workers down when they pointed out racist treatment in their unions. Instead of rushing to dismiss these claims, the union should be self-reflective and open to self-critique to improve conditions for all workers.

King also explicitly states that Black oppression and class oppression are interlinked and that no just society takes necessities from the many only to give luxuries

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to the few. He adds, the U.S. has never realized its vision of democracy, and that it will never be fulfilled until equality of opportunity and dreams of property and privilege are widely distributed. Democracy cannot exist without ensuring that all of us are taken care of in our society. This should be international “because our gifts and resources should not be held for only us, but in service to all humanity”. Our society can either create an abundance of wealth or an abundance of poverty. Read a collection of the speeches in “All Labor Has Dignity” by Martin Luther King, Jr. Ilhan Omar said of her union experience “Fighting alongside my union for fair wages, health care, and workplace protections allowed me to see firsthand what redistribution of power looks like. The greatest lesson I learned from working within the movement and drawing on the experiences of my colleagues is how to harness power beyond the individual. We organize not to secure protection for ourselves but for everyone. A better future can only be secured when there is a collective fight working toward a greater vision.”

We are witnessing yet another reactionary attempt to erase the history of Black People and other racialized groups by white elites, who are trying to race bait through the demonization of critical race theory to maintain their political and economic power. It is important that we continue to learn and be aware of the legacy of anti-Black racism within the white supremacist, patriarchal, racist, and classist hierarchy, and how it continues to shape systems, institutions, and organizations, including labor unions. It is important for us to always critically reflect on our past to assess where we are now, so that we can then determine how best to achieve future wins in our intertwined struggles for human rights, including racial and economic justice. We are witnessing the injustices caused by capitalist elites who would rather place their own grotesque accumulation and concentration of wealth over the well-being of other humans, animals, and our entire planet. Those same elites will continue to have us fight over the deck chairs as the ship sinks.

To quote the Dub beat poet, activist and organizer, Linton Kwesi Johnson, “it’s no mystery, we’re making history.” There is no middle ground in the fight against white supremacy and for workers’ rights, and we will have to all work together in solidarity if our history is going to make our future possible.

Leave of Absence for COVID Situations Extended thru June 30, 2022



Last year based on the hard work of our union, Expanded Family Medical Leave (EFML) and Emergency Protected Sick Leave (EPSL) were extended to June 30, 2022. These leaves cover a number of COVID related situations including quarantines because of COVID, isolation and recovery if you are COVID positive, caring for a family member who is sick or recovering from COVID, or is caring for their child if the child’s school or place of care has been closed or is unavailable due to COVID-19. For more information please go to our Local 88 website on EFMLA or our updated EFMLA & EPSL slide deck. For more questions please contact your steward. Steward contact information is available at www.afscmelocal88.org or contact the AFSCME SMART Center.



Member Spotlight



Penelope Morton

I grew up in a small town, Klamath Falls in southern Oregon, until I was 18. I always knew that I would leave after high school. I come from a big family of five kids. We’re all very close and we all live in Oregon. I also have a dog named Rocco. I got him through a rescue from the East Coast. HE IS THE BEST DOG IN THE WORLD. I went to college at Southern Oregon University. I have a degree in psychology but never really used it, at least not the way that I initially intended to use it.

I moved to Portland after college and was drawn to the city for the diversity that it has. I started at Multnomah County about 5 years ago. I currently work in Employee Benefits in a Limited Duration Assignment (LDA). I’ve been there for about 7 months. I started out on-call in the Health Department in 2016 and then was hired permanently in the Department of County Management in 2017. I’ve been there ever since.

Previous to working in Employee Benefits I was a Finance Specialist in DCM Business Services—I processed accounts receivable & accounts payable and helped with travel and training for the department. In Employee Benefits I have been working

on the transition from Moda to Cigna, primarily focused on helping employees who have had challenges with the transition get the care that they need. I also help employees understand and navigate accessing their benefits.

I am passionate about employee advocacy and about building power for our union through a strong contract and being a Steward. I love that the union allows employees to have a voice over the way things work in the county. I decided to become a steward for Local 88 around 2019. I wanted to become a steward because I worked for a previous employer who was union when I started and they decided to break the union. I was one of two stewards when I started and by the end I was the only steward for the organization. I did it because I saw the importance of having a steward to represent union members.

We had gone to the bargaining table in good faith but management stopped negotiating and drew things out. They started holding anti union meetings with employees and they were saying things that weren’t true, such as not being able to pay entry level employees above base pay, which the union wasn’t against. They were trying to drive a wedge between employees and the union. They were eventually successful in breaking the union. This is why I’m so passionate about Local 88 and having a union for Multnomah County employees.

I am the Lead Steward for DCM and would like to invite employees to contact me for steward assistance or if they have any questions. You can find my contact information in the current steward list found at (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17Q_7hMT-GCV19_y-RIEi-5c01HuRFXDhZppbgs7G4_WA/edit#gid=0)

