

# **MICHIGAN AFSCME COUNCIL 25**

## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT** **October, 2015**

<not distributed to Board>

Prepared by  
**NICK CIARAMITARO**  
Director of Legislation and Public Policy  
[nick@miafscme.org](mailto:nick@miafscme.org) 313-330-5313 (cell)

## **AFL-CIO CITIZENS LOBBYISTS**

REMINDER -- We are very much in need of volunteers – particularly from units close enough to Lansing and/or with sufficiently flexible work hours to be able to contribute a Wednesday morning or full day to meet with Legislators in their Lansing offices. Each Wednesday morning at 8:30 A.M. a member of the Labor Lobbyist core will meet with volunteer citizen lobbyists to brief them on an issue important to the labor movement likely to come up that week or the following. (Both the House and Senate Democratic Leadership meet with the professional labor lobby corps on Tuesdays allowing a free flow of information, coordinated effort and strategic planning.) We will provide talking points and targeted legislators to meet with (appointments are arranged ahead of time by AFL staff based on number of citizen lobbyist signed up).

The impact of this effort has great potential in both providing new faces that get more attention than the lobbyists they see every day and battling our opponents who argue our organizations do not represent the views of our members. In addition, it is a great tool in organizing and maintaining membership by incorporating membership action and participation.

PLEASE HELP IDENTIFY MEMBERS OF YOUR LOCAL AND OTHER LOCALS IN YOUR REGION WILLING TO ASSIST. THIS WILL GO A LONG WAY IN REBUILDING THE LABOR MOVEMENT. Contact me with the names and contact information of members willing to volunteer.

## **TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

The House Republican leadership has begun to recognize that additional revenue is needed and less General Fund support is available for roads. So the Speaker is now discussing a proposal within the Quadrant to split the \$1.2 billion bill between \$800 million new revenue (gas/diesel tax, registration fees and a number of smaller items) and \$400 million general fund redirection. But he concedes that he does not have the support of the House Republican Caucus and would need a lot of Democratic votes. Further, to deliver a significant number of House Republican votes he has asked for a decrease in the State Income Tax which would generate a bigger hole in the General Fund at some point and would make our overall tax system even more regressive as low and moderate income tax payers would receive little relief in comparison to the gas tax costs they would bear while high income taxpayers would see just the opposite effect.

The Republicans continue to resist any increase in business taxes.

## **PREVAILING WAGE**

Extreme right wingers lead by non-union contractors have filed a petition drive to force a legislative vote (and avoid a threatened gubernatorial veto) on an initiative drive to eliminate Michigan's prevailing wage law. Both Republican legislative leaders have made passage of the repeal a priority. Efforts to allow the measure to go to the ballot (where polls indicate labor would win) are meeting with resistance.

## **SENATE BILLS 280 AND 279**

Senator Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) efforts to make collective bargaining more to pass Senate Bill 280 and 279 which would prevent a local unit of government from allowing the use of paid leave time for any “union business” and prohibit school employees from receiving any retirement credit while on union leave *even if the district is reimbursed by the local union* have slowed in the State Senate with the help of a number of Senate Republicans who have finally tired of picking on labor as their only pass time. The bills remain a threat though due to the extensive Republican majority in the Senate.

Labor and management representatives both testified against the bills but the Senate Education Committee none-the-less reported both bills to the Senate floor where they may get consideration at any time.

## **OUT OF THE ARAMARK AND INTO THE TRINITY FOODS CORPORATION**

Early indications are that Trinity Food Services is little better than Aramark. Claiming a major victory Trinity Foods claimed “only” 5 stop orders in their first three weeks of operation – compared to 9 in Aramark’s first month. They forgot to mention that 5 is still more than a decade of stop orders for AFSCME workers.

## **MAJOR WIN ON JOINT EMPLOYER STATUS AT FEDERAL LEVEL MET BY EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE NLRA AT STATE LEVEL**

The National Labor Relations Board handed private sector workers a major victory by returning the definition of a joint employer to the standard in the pre-Reagan era days – holding that an employer was a joint employer under the NLRA if it had authority over employee wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment even if it did not exercise that authority.

Public sector workers are governed by state law and anti-labor forces have begun to mobilize to minimize the NLRA ruling. Two bills have already cleared a Senate Committee that would clarify that the NLRB definition does not apply to workers disability compensation or franchise agreements. The Workers’ Comp bill would probably be constitutional though the franchise bill would likely face a fierce preemption challenge particularly from low wage earners in fast food chains. The bills are being pushed by the Michigan Restaurant Association.