

# The Public Employee

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 1624  
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Fall 2008

## Travis County Employees Put Off Again “Grits Ain’t Groceries!”

It was made painfully clear that, in spite of all the lip service to make fair compensation for non-civil service employees a priority, the Commissioners Court voted to continue inadequately funding market studies.

Providing a 1% pay adjustment for a one pay grade increase is grossly inadequate when the Travis County pay schedule specifies a 7% increase.

AFSCME’s 2% increase proposal would have applied to each pay grade increase and would have extended retroactively to all previously studied groups.

Our proposal would have provided employees who had received a 3 pay grade increase a 6% pay increase instead of the measly 2% the Court approved.

AFSCME’s proposal was a reasonable alternative which would have brought some consistency and logic to market adjustments. The funding was available, and yet the Commissioners Court rejected it, then went about approving other budget items totaling over \$10 million.

To add insult to injury, the Court also **rejected** a one-time lump sum pay adjustment which would have brought the 3% cost of living adjustment much closer to the Consumer Price Index Inflation rate of 5.2%.

The Commissioners Court is tentatively scheduled to authorize a Compensation Committee to address the market study funding and other pay issues beginning in October.

AFSCME will be very active on the committee to push for a sustainable and equitable policy so we may once and for all resolve this decade-long problem.

It was not lost on our members or anyone else in attendance at the many Commissioners Court sessions regarding employee compensation that the only persons or organization fighting for Travis County employees was **AFSCME** and our members.

There are over 500 AFSCME members at Travis County, and we thank you all for your continued support.

It is apparent that until we have majority support in AFSCME, Travis County employees will continue to get the short end of the stick.

The Sheriff’s Officers received full funding for their market adjustments because they are 95% organized.

The answer should be obvious: the stronger you are, the better the results.

That’s why they got the goldmine, and we got the shaft.

**Congratulations** to all the TNR road and bridge, parks and facilities maintenance workers that just got a \$2 an hour raise. That raise was a direct result of **AFSCME**’s efforts working with the Department over a six month period to get these underpaid employees some immediate relief.

This raise was directly tied to AFSCME’s membership strength at TNR and their continued support of this union. **Thanks** to all of our members that made this happen.

## Meet and Confer Update

AFSCME leadership has been meeting with **Senator Kirk Watson** and the Travis County Legislative delegation to strategize and refine our Meet and Confer bill which will bring bargaining rights to AFSCME and City of Austin workers.

We are seeking a City Council Resolution which expresses their support for this Legislation and to include our Meet and Confer bill among their legislative priorities.

The success of this bill rides on a lot of variables-not the least of which is the outcome of the November elections. It is imperative we pick up support in the Texas House and Senate as well as maintain our support on the City Council.

All this speaks to the need for our union, our members and all public employees to be active in politics.

Our jobs and working conditions as public employees ride on the outcomes of these elections.

We cannot afford to be lazy, apathetic or leave to chance who may emerge in these public offices. These are the people who will make the decisions which will affect your life and your livelihood.

That is why we formed PEOPLE, our Political Action Committee. It is the PEOPLE Committee's mission to make the connection between politics (specifically, the City Council, Commissioners Court, Texas Legislature and Congress), the decisions they make and how it affects our jobs, our lives and families.

AFSCME has a broad vision of an America that works for American working families, that encompasses real family values, a protected environment, healthcare and education for all, safe working conditions and a

fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

On the local level, we focus on the politics of the paycheck:

- **Adequate cost of living adjustments**
- **Affordable healthcare coverage**
- **Job security through Just Cause protections**
- **Collective bargaining rights to achieve better pay, benefits and working conditions**

These things do not just happen. They are achieved through hard work, keen focus and political action.

If you want to enjoy the benefits of AFSCME's vision, then you must get involved.

Join AFSCME and join PEOPLE.

Get registered. Get out and vote. Support those who support you.

The deadline to register to vote is Monday, **October 6th**. Early voting begins Monday, **October 20th** and ends Friday, **October 31st**.

Please see the enclose insert of AFSCME and Austin AFL-CIO -endorsed candidates. We will help get them elected and then hold them accountable.



## Community Care Employees Update

The transition of Community Care clinics and 425 of its employees continues toward the February 2009 deadline.

As a result of AFSCME bringing a number of employee concerns to the forefront, the City and Hospital District made improvements to the Paid Time Off (PTO) accruals, made provisions for employees to receive full credit for their vacation and sick leave balances and made assurances that their positions will transfer seamlessly to the District.

AFSCME is still working on provisions that will allow employees with fifteen years or

more tenure to continue their ERS retirement contributions to achieve full retirement benefits.

AFSCME intends to follow our members and the workforce to the Healthcare District. It is likely that we will be able to file for a National Labor Relations Board-sanctioned election to establish AFSCME as the bargaining agent for Hospital District employees. AFSCME and the employees would then be in the position of negotiating a **binding contract** which covers pay, benefit and working conditions.

A case where good can come out of something bad.

## AFSCME's 38th Biennial Convention

Nearly 6,000 AFSCME delegates assembled in San Francisco in July for five days of debate, decision-making and solidarity.

Highlights of the Convention include:

- ⇒ **Speeches by Senator Barack Obama, Senator Hillary Clinton and Al Gore, which called for unity and strength in support of Barack Obama for President. AFSCME's delegates resolved to pour into that campaign AFSCME's full political weight and resources.**
- ⇒ **Adoption of Resolutions calling for:**
  - **A national healthcare plan**
  - **An end to the war in Iraq**
- ⇒ **Election of AFSCME Officers: Local 1624 Business Manager, Greg Powell, was reelected to a third term as an International Executive Board member representing the Southwest District.**



AFSCME International President Gerald McEntee delivers his keynote address to a crowd of almost 6,000 delegates.

Our Local 1624 received its third AFSCME PEOPLE Achievement Award in recognition of having over 10% of our members participating in our political action program (PEOPLE).

**Paul Chambless**, Local 1624's PEOPLE Chairperson, accepted the award on behalf of our union.

This award goes to the several hundred members in our union who continue to support our political program.



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## AFSCME 2008 Scholarship Winner!

### Congratulations to:

#### De'Audra Ansley



De'Audra is the daughter of Local 1624 member and Travis County Health and Human Services employee Janis Ansley.

De'Audra recently graduated from Lehman High School in Kyle, where she was a cheerleader, Vice President of Choir and a member of the Leo Club, which is an organization that provides opportunities for youth to serve their community.

De'Audra is currently attending the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she plans to pursue a degree in Biomedical Engineering.

Do you have a son or daughter that is currently a high school senior and plans to attend college in the fall of 2009? If so be sure to look out for our 2009 Scholarship Program announcement in our Spring 2009 newsletter.

# ELECTION 2008

In one of the most hotly-contested and historic Presidential elections, it is oftentimes easy to cast your vote for President and Congressional candidates and overlook the many important races that are going on down-ballot.

We ask our members to fully exercise your voting rights and support the state and local candidates whose decisions have every bit as much impact on your lives.

AFSCME carefully screens all local candidates to secure their support and commitment to AFSCME and the public employees we represent.

## U.S. Presidential Endorsement:

U.S. President: **Barack Obama**

## U.S. Senate Endorsement:

Senator: **Rick Noriega**

## U.S. Congressional Endorsements

District 10: **Larry Joe Doherty**

District 25: **Lloyd Doggett**

## Court of Appeals Endorsement:

Chief Justice, 3rd Court Of Appeals: **Woodie Jones**

## State Representative Endorsements:

The state Representatives endorsed by AFSCME have all committed to secure passage of a Meet and Confer Bill for City of Austin employees, which will bring historic bargaining rights and a binding contract to our pay, benefits and working conditions.

District 45:	<b>Patrick Rose</b>
District 46:	<b>Dawna Dukes</b>
District 47:	<b>Valinda Bolton</b>
District 48:	<b>Donna Howard</b>
District 49:	<b>Elliott Naishtat</b>
District 50:	<b>Mark Strama</b>
District 51:	<b>Eddie Rodriguez</b>
District 52:	<b>Diana Maldonado</b>

## Judicial District Courts Endorsements:

53rd District Court:	<b>Scott Jenkins</b>
98th District Court:	<b>*Rhonda Hurley</b>
126th District Court:	<b>Darlene Byrne</b>
167th District Court:	<b>Mike Lynch</b>
200th District Court:	<b>*Gisela Triana</b>
345th District Court:	<b>Stephen Yelenosky</b>
353rd District Court:	<b>Scott Ozmun</b>
390th District Court:	<b>Julie Harris Kocurek</b>
427th District Court:	<b>*Jim Coronado</b>

\*Denotes AFSCME members

# ELECTION 2008 CONTINUED

## Travis County Endorsements:

Travis County elected officials have administrative authority over the policies and working conditions of those Travis County employees working in their offices.

They also are responsible for setting their own budget priorities, including pay recommendations for their employees. Our endorsed candidates have committed to making **fully-funded** market salary adjustments their priority in upcoming budget hearings.

<b>District Attorney:</b>	<b>Rosemary Lehmborg</b>
<b>County Commissioner, Precinct 1:</b>	<b>Ron Davis</b>
<b>Judge, County Court at Law #8:</b>	<b>Carlos Barrera</b>
<b>County Attorney:</b>	<b>*David Escamilla</b>
<b>Sheriff:</b>	<b>Greg Hamilton</b>
<b>Tax Assessor-Collector:</b>	<b>*Nelda Wells Spears</b>
<b>Constables:</b>	
<b>Precinct 1:</b>	<b>Danny Thomas</b>
<b>Precinct 2:</b>	<b>*Adan Ballesteros</b>
<b>Precinct 3:</b>	<b>*Richard McCain</b>
<b>Precinct 4:</b>	<b>*Maria Canchola</b>
<b>Precinct 5:</b>	<b>*Bruce Elfant</b>

\*Denotes AFSCME members

## City of Austin Propositions:

Voters within Austin city limits will also decide on two proposed Charter amendments. AFSCME urges our members to support these initiatives.

### Proposition 1:

Proposed changes to the City Auditor's appointment and term of office. If approved, the City Council will appoint a City Auditor to a five-year term, during which the Auditor may only be removed from the position with a three-fourths vote from Council or at the conclusion of the term by a majority vote from Council. Currently, the City Auditor serves at the discretion of a majority of the Council with no definite term.

**Vote yes** ✓

### Proposition 2:

A citizen initiative to prohibit the City from providing financial incentives as part of future or certain existing development agreements for projects that include one or more retail uses. The citizen initiative resulted from a petition drive by a group called Stop Domain Subsidies.

**Vote yes** ✓

## Austin Independent School District Tax Ratification Election:

### Proposition 1:

Approving the ad valorem tax rate of \$1.2020 per \$100 valuation in the Austin Independent School District for the current year. A rate that is \$0.0390 higher per \$100 valuation than the school district rollback tax rate.

**Vote yes** ✓ so that AISD school teachers and employees will get a pay raise this year.