

# What's the Buzz 1067?

AFSCME Local 1067

## Updates from the Prez.....

### Legislative Action

#### Health Insurance issue:

Representative Martin Walsh is circulating among the House of Representatives a letter in support of maintaining state employee health insurance premiums at current levels. The last update I received was that 53 representatives had signed the letter. We need each of you to contact your state representative and ask whether he/she has signed the letter of support. If he/she has, please thank him/her for this action. If he/she has not, please ask for their support.

#### Early Retirement Bills:

Please contact your state senator and state representative and ask for an update on these bills. Also, ask them what can they do to help move this issue forward?

#### Public Safety Issues:



Both the retirement issue and the death benefit issue remain in committee. Recently, Council 93's legislative guru Jim Durkin and several AFSCME members met with legislators to clarify some questions the legislators had on the retirement issue. Thanks to our members who did a fantastic job! Brother Dean Bruno from Salem State has been working with Jim Durkin coordinating testimony and input from the officers.

#### Futures Convention

The inaugural Mass AFL-CIO Futures Convention was held in Natick on February 8 and 9. Over 70 young union members from across the state and across the public, private, and building trades sectors met. It was a great

opportunity to learn more about the labor movement and to network with passionate young union members who will lead us in the future. I had the opportunity to address the delegates as a member of the Young Leadership Panel. Jennifer Springer, Assistant General Counsel and Area Coordinator for Metro Boston for Council 93, was also a member of the panel. Many thanks to Mass AFL-CIO President Robert Haynes for the opportunity and for his vision.

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### Local 1067 Officers

- President Lisa Field (Fitchburg State College)
- Vice-President Denise Brown (MCLA)
- Treasurer Marzi Carpoli (Berkshire Community College)
- Secretary Thomasine Corbett (Northern Essex Community College)
- Trustee James Klim (Massasoit Community College)
- Parliamentarian David Charbonneau (Greenfield Community College)

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## PHENOM

### Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts

PHENOM had a fabulous campaign kickoff at the State House on February 14. Well over 100 people rallied, lobbied, and celebrated Valentine's Day in style as we began the **Higher Ed** campaign to **FIX IT! FUND IT! AFFORD**

#### IT!

We are asking legislators to take three specific steps.

**FIX IT:** We ask the Legislature to pass the capital bond bill.

**FUND IT:** We call on the Legislature to increase the higher

education budget by at least \$56 million this year.

**AFFORD IT!** PHENOM is supporting the Board of Higher Education's call for a \$17 million increase and \$16 million in start-up funding toward free community college.

## Testimony to members of the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development February 13, 2008

On behalf of the more than 3,000 state higher education employees who belong to AFSCME Local 1067, I write to request your support of HB1866 and SB1088, both of which would extend long-overdue occupational safety protections to employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Specifically, these bills mandate that federal occupational safety and health (OSHA) standards be used as the minimum standards at any state workplace in the commonwealth.

As committee members may be aware, employees in the private sector have enjoyed the workplace safety protections of

OSHA for nearly four decades. These standards require the implementation of certain safety practices and training; protect workers from overexposure to hazardous materials; mandate the use of certain types of equipment; and require employers to keep records of workplace accidents and illnesses. Aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating workplace injuries and deaths, OSHA standards have proven to be quite effective in the private sector. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the fatality rate for private sector employees has been cut in half since the inception of OSHA in 1970.

Yet incredibly, only private sector workers are protected by these critical standards in Massachusetts.

It's important to note that when federal OSHA standards were established in 1970, states were given the option of providing OSHA protections to their employees, but were not required to do so. However, since that time, nearly half of our states have opted to provide these protections to their employees.

In addition to being the right thing to do for workers, implementation of OSHA standards also makes good financial sense.

## Testimony Continued

While bringing state facilities into compliance with OSHA standards would require a significant financial investment, the state would save money in the long run in the form of reduction in workplace injuries and the ensuing medical treatment, workers' compensation and lost productivity costs. Moreover, according to the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health, if a state adopted OSHA guidelines,

the federal government would pick up 50% of the cost.

The commonwealth's workers need and deserve the same occupational protections as their counterparts in the private sector. As such, I respectfully request prompt and favorable action on HB1866 and SB1088. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or require addi-

tional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 978-665-3065.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Field*

Lisa Field

President AFSCME Local 1067

## MassCOSH From [www.masscosh.org](http://www.masscosh.org)

MassCOSH is a non-profit organization whose goal is to bring workers, unions, community groups, and health, safety, and environmental activists to organize and advocate for safe, secure jobs, and healthy communities.

Since 1976, MassCOSH has provided training to more than 20,000 workers, union representatives, and community groups. As of 1980, MassCOSH has also been involved in eleven legislative campaigns to



pass and enforce laws that ensure worker's rights with a special emphasis on young

people and immigrants.

MassCOSH has been deeply involved in the legislative campaign to extend occupational safety protections benefits to employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as well as the legislation on Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals. The website is a great place for information on identifying and addressing workplace hazards. MassCOSH also offers training workshops on a variety of topics.

## Fighting for the Rights of Employees with Disabilities From [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, public services, public and private transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications services.

### Who are persons with disabilities?

A person with a disability is anyone who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity (such as performing manual tasks, caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, speaking, learning, or working);

- has a history of or as recovered from such an impairment (such as cancer or emotional illness); and/or
- Is perceived as having an impairment (such as a facial disfigurement or the mistaken belief that a person has AIDS or is HIV infected)

Current users of illegal drugs are not protected. Individuals who are enrolled or who have completed drug or alcohol rehabilitation programs are protected.

### How does the ADA affect employment?

The ADA bans employment discrimination

against a **qualified individual with a disability** who, with or without a **reasonable accommodation**, can perform the **essential functions** of a job that he or she holds or desires. An employer does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation if doing so would impose an **undue hardship** on the employer's operation.

### What is a reasonable accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation means making modifications or adjustments to a job application process or work environment that makes it readily accessible and usable by people with disabilities. Examples are buying new equipment, modifying work

## Fighting for the Rights of Employees with Disabilities Continued

schedules, re-allocating marginal job functions, altering a worksite, restructuring jobs, assigning a person to a vacant position, providing interpreters.

### What is an undue hardship?

Undue hardship means significant difficulty or expense that would be unduly disruptive to the employer. Considerations include the nature and cost of the operation, including the composition, structure, and

functions of its workforce; and the geographic, administrative, and fiscal relationship between the facility and the employer or any parent organization.

### What is the role of collective bargaining agreements?

Collective bargaining agreements can be taken into consideration when making reasonable accommodation or when deciding whether an accommodation will cause un-

due hardship.

### How are the essential functions of a job determined?

The employer can decide what the essential functions are. However, other considerations include written job descriptions and experience of past and current incumbents.

## Central Labor Councils From [www.massaflcio.org](http://www.massaflcio.org)

The Massachusetts AFL-CIO is the umbrella organization for local unions within Massachusetts. There are thirteen Central Labor Councils which perform similar work on a regional basis, linking local unions together, and working to build stronger community alliances.

These councils promote organizing as the labor movement's top goal, recruit and support candidates who champion working families, organize in support of economic

development strategies while establishing worker friendly community standards, mobilize against anti-union employers, and host forums and events to educate union members and the community. The councils are a great place to network with others who are passionate about labor!

The thirteen councils are Berkshire Central Labor Council, Central Mass AFL-CIO, Greater Boston Labor Council, Greater Southeaster Mass Labor Council, Hamp-

shire/Franklin Labor Council, Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council, Norfolk County Labor Council, North Shore Central Labor Council, North Worcester County Central Labor Council, Pioneer Valley AFL-CIO, and Plymouth/Bristol Central Labor Council.

Our goal is for AFSCME Local 1067 to be represented on as many of these Central Labor Councils as possible. For more information, contact Lisa Field.



## AFSCME Local 1067

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**We Make America Happen**  
**AFSCME Local 1067**



AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, is the largest union for workers in the public service with 1.4 million members nationwide. AFSCME organizes for social and economic justice in the workplace and through political action and legislative advocacy. AFSCME represents a diverse group of service and health care workers in the public and private sectors including nurses, EMTs, bus drivers, child care providers, custodians, and librarians.

Local 1067 represents over 3,000 clerical, technical, maintenance, trades, storekeepers, and public safety employees at the 9 state colleges and the 15 community colleges in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## Upcoming Events for the Month of March

### Thursday March 6

PHENOM meeting at noon at Framingham State College.

MIRA (Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Group) meeting on In-state Tuition Planning at 4:30 PM in Boston.

PHENOM-MIRA-SIM Dinner at 5:30 PM in Boston.

### Saturday March 8

WILD (Women's Institute for Leadership Development) in the Winter. From 9AM to 1PM at Plumbers and Gasfitters Local 12, 1240 Mass Ave, Boston.

### Monday March 10

Labor Guild's School of Labor Relations spring semester starts and runs until May 12.

Union caucus for contract negotiations at Worcester State College from 9AM until 3PM.

### Tuesday March 11

Monthly meeting of Local 1067's Executive Board.

### Saturday March 15

WILD in the Winter West. From 8:30AM to 1:30 PM at UMASS Labor Center at Amherst.

### Thursday March 20

Jobs with Justice Annual Dinner. Special tribute for Father Ed Boyle from the Labor Guild.

Labor Extension Program's workshop on *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards* at UMASS Lowell from 6-9PM.

### Tuesday March 25

Tentative Step IV hearings.

### Thursday March 27

Labor Extension Program's workshop on *Introduction to the Family Medical Leave Act* at UMASS Lowell from 6-9PM.

### Saturday March 29

Class Action workshop on the Color of Class from 9AM to 5PM in Holyoke.

### Monday March 31

PHENOM: Public Hearing on Affordability and Access to Public Higher Education in Massachusetts at Fitchburg State College from 3-4:30 PM.