



# THE CLASSIFIED

AFSCME Local 4041 State Employees Union



Winter 2016

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## Can I Bring My Child to the Meeting? - Iris West, Committee Chair

Communications

### Committee

### The Case for Mothers Who Want to be Active with their Unions.

When talking to my fellow workers I have to quickly convey the importance of their participation in union meetings and events. Union membership and activism are the way they can have the power to take a seat at the table and secure the benefits that affect their families. There is a direct correlation: unions provide better wages, job security, health insurance for your kids, a retirement fund, and much more. Therefore, it is your duty to actively attend meetings to protect those benefits from being taken away from your family. If you have been paying any attention, you know that they are constantly in jeopardy.

*Although not all chapters are the same and not all circumstances are equally applicable, talk to your union brothers and sisters and see how they can accommodate your need to bring your child with you when necessary.*

However, the reality for many working mothers wanting to participate, is that childcare is often barely affordable, and that doesn't include time after the standard workday. Attending a meeting after work is complicated when you need to pick up your child from daycare and feed them dinner.

My husband works teaching night classes at the local community college, which means that if I need to attend a meeting or any other activity after work, my 3-year-old comes along. I always thought this would be a problem, especially when it came to keeping my kid sitting quietly at the union hall.

My first meeting dispelled any doubts I had about having my child with me. My biggest surprise at the meeting was the warm reception from the local chapter members. The oth-

er union members saw me for the first time arriving with my then toddler, armed with a box of coloring books and crayons. Not only were they welcoming to me, but they also took the time to welcome her to the room and even produced a fun Mrs. Potato Head that she could play with.

She whispered to my ear in awe of the new toy, "She is sooo beautiful!" and had a ball after the meeting talking to new people and practicing her conversation skills.

I figured things would change after I got elected as president of my chapter. But, during the meetings she sat quietly eating her snacks in a chair next to me and coloring her books. Not even the short run to the bathroom with her was very much of a disturbance to the meeting. We survived just fine.

I decided we made a great team so I included her in my first excursion as volunteer for a political campaign. She participated shoulder to shoulder with me throughout the campaign season, going door to door, hanging out with me at the party offices while I made phone calls, and even doing her best to endure whole rallies with very little fuss. Through the process she met all kinds of people, sharing precious moments filled with laughter, dance, songs, and conversations with every person she met during those months. She made loving friends, who are now spread all over this country and who she still talks to over the phone. Her confidence has grown exponentially, and I have to thank my involvement in my union for that. - continued on next page.



Champ Biden, a present my daughter got from Vice President Joe Biden at a rally.

- ▶ Iris West—Chair
- ▶ Harry Schiffman
- ▶ Peggy Bohn
- ▶ Cedric Williams
- ▶ Sonja Whitten
- ▶ Richard Zemke

### AFSCME Local 4041 Office Locations

Open:  
Weekdays from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm  
Closed:  
Weekends and all federal

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Las Vegas, Nevada 89106  
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Fax: 702-331-3066

## Can I Bring My Child to the Meeting — Cont...

I never realized until writing this piece, about how important that first meeting at my AFSCME local chapter was. Had they been reluctant or uncomfortable about my toddler, I would have probably stopped attending, but instead we have grown accustomed to this, and it has given us a larger family to rely on.



*Playing with Jennifer Garner at a voter registration event.*

While all of the above is important and beautiful, there is still something even bigger which I have my eye set on. My daughter, from a young age, is becoming aware of the importance of her community. Her world has expanded, and I hope she will grow understanding the value of service and fighting for the welfare of that community. She has developed an attachment to my meetings that goes further than a monthly reunion. She knows people at a level that we as adults can't achieve so easily as children do. She talks to Ana, wants to visit with Bertha, practices her language skills with Maria, misses Peggy's hugs and does not shy from starting a conversation with Richard's children.

How many leaders grew attending their parent's union meetings? How many of them usually saw them at home discussing the future of their workplaces? How many children were touched by the love and generosity of other workers?

People like our very own Laura Reyes is the child of union workers. I don't have the data to prove it, but I'm willing to believe that being exposed to our work as activists will resonate strongly in the lives of our children. Activism gives children the notion that they too can make changes in their communities, that fighting for equality and justice is a call they too can answer. In a way, I feel that bringing my child with me to our meetings means that my voice will be amplified and will continue to resonate in the future she will own.

Although not all chapters are the same and not all circumstances are equally applicable, talk to your union brothers and sisters and see how they can accommodate your need to bring your child with you when necessary.

## Communications Committee Chair & Classified Editor — Peggy Bohn, Washoe Chapter

The new editor of the Classified is Iris West and we welcome her to this new post and look forward to working with her to produce and continue to provide the Classified! Best of Luck, Iris!!!

The Story of Nevada AFSCME: Nevada AFSCME began in 1954 as an independent union, formerly known as SNEA: State of Nevada's Employee Association and it remained that way for 40 years. On the 41st year, we incorporated as AFSCME in 1994 and have transitioned from SNEA to SNEA/AFSCME to the name we proudly carry

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Washoe Chapter Spaghetti and Presidential Debate Watching Gathering 2016—Peggy Bohn

## Excerpt From Sierra Range Newsletter — November 2016

### FROM YOUR PRESIDENT – CEDRIC WILLIAMS

Dear Carson City Local 4041 Members,

**JUST LIKE LAST YEAR... THIS YEARS CHRISTMAS PARTY WAS AWESOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

This year's Christmas Party took the place of our November 9th meeting and was held at the Fandango Hotel & Casino here in Carson City, Nevada. There were 92 members and guests that entered our doors and each one was given a free raffle ticket and as promised, a chance to win over \$2,000.00 in prizes to include a Flat Screen Television, Laptop, Electronic Notebook, DVR Player, Gift Baskets, Gift Cards, Cash Cards and much, much more. Of course, you could purchase extra raffle tickets at one raffle ticket for one dollar or six raffle tickets for five dollars. We would like to give a special, "Congratulations"! To Peggy Bohn, who was our grand prize winner of the 55" Flat Screen High Definition Color Television



In this time of the year, people are spending more time thinking about friends and family. For me, it's Thanksgiving and the huge feast and the food coma that comes with it. Then there's Christmas, where I get a chance to see relatives who, for some reason, all choose this time of year to come to Vegas and visit. I've spoken to people. I'm not alone; this is not an isolated incident.

So, today's concept of family has changed since I've been too young to think about things other than what I was going to get for Christmas. We all have people in our lives that are not blood-relatives, but we consider family: Your childhood friend, who you may consider a brother or sister. Your significant other; you're not married, but you can't imagine your life without them. Your co-worker, who you've worked with for so long that you know how they'll react to any given situation.

Being part of AFSCME is like being part of a family. The people who've been with the union for a while call each other brothers and sisters. That's because we are a family. You have the brother who's a goofball. You have the sister who's never there when the heavy lifting is required, but always there to reap the reward. You have that cousin who'll do anything and be there at a drop of a hat because you're family. And as family members we are always trying to do what's best for our family. We may have different approaches, but we are trying.

For this issue, I'm going to talk about what I do at my job at the Department of Corrections. I work in Re-Entry Programming. We are educators. Our job is to present inmates, that are soon being released, an opportunity to change their thinking. It's a simple concept, but with everything involving people, it's easier said than done. Yes, there are some individuals who have been institutionalized and cannot live in society. But there are others who would give anything to turn back time, and not do the thing they did to end up in prison.

Not many people think about prison. Most don't care who's in there. Not many people understand that inmates will eventually get out. Prison is not a roach motel. People go in, and they do come out. These people are family members. They are people you interact daily. They serve your food. They repair your cars. They sell your clothes. They're your neighbors.

There are people in society; there are people in the Department of Corrections, who believe that investing money in trying to educate inmates are a waste of time. These people committed crimes and should be punished. Yes, they did. And yes, they should be. But, what happens after they've done their time? Wouldn't it be better if they stopped committing crimes? Warehousing inmates and making them think about what they did is only part of it. "Yes, I did a bad thing". What happens after that? They realize their behavior was bad. Shouldn't they have an opportunity to see that there was another way they could have acted? Re-Entry tries to show inmates that their approach to their decision making was wrong. It was wrong because it led to prison.

There are other state agencies that are trying to help released inmates. What happens when they get out? They're dropped off on the street after their time. Maybe some of them have family who'll pick them up. Maybe they don't have anyone. What happens then? That's where we have our sister agencies in our State of Nevada family to help after the Department of Corrections had our time with them. Is it enough? Not nearly. But, we are instructed to do more with less. So we do. Communicating better between departments is a must. Partnering up with the private sector who want to help is a must. But there is more that can and must be done for our family members. From one family member helping family, to another family member helping family. Something to think about this time of the year.

## AFSCME Local 4041

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AFSCME Local 4041



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Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

Phone: 702-431-3113

Fax: 702-331-3066

## A Partial AFSCME History Timeline, continued from our last edition



### Power Through Organizing and Political Action

**Mid-1970s** Over 60 independent employee associations affiliate with AFSCME

**1978** The New York Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), with 250,000 members, affiliates with AFSCME and pushes membership over the 1 million mark

**1980s** In an era of anti-public worker sentiment, AFSCME greatly increases its political activism and visibility and helps elect AFSCME-endorsed candidates at all government levels; collective bargaining rights are won in three new states: Illinois, Ohio and Nebraska

**1981** President Ronald Reagan breaks a strike by PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization), beginning an era of attacks on workers in both the public and private sectors

AFSCME's 60,000-member delegation, the largest from any single union, leads the AFL-CIO Solidarity Day — a massive demonstration in Washington, DC, demanding fair treatment for American workers

City workers in San Jose, Calif., members of AFSCME Local 101, wage the first strike in the nation's history over the issue of pay equity for women workers

AFSCME President Jerry Wurf dies

Gerald McEntee is chosen as the union's third International president. He began his AFSCME career in 1958 as a member and continued as an organizer and leader in Pennsylvania. He led the drive to unionize more than 75,000 public service workers in Pennsylvania — the largest union mobilization in the United States at that time

**1989** The National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees (NUHHCE) affiliates with AFSCME and solidifies the union as the leading voice for the rights of health care workers

**1990** AFSCME membership surpasses 1.2 million

**1998** Delegates at AFSCME's Convention commit to a bold program of aggressive organizing