

We make Austin happen.

Austin Works

Summer 2023



Rally to Save Telework

Union members protest City telework proposal at City Hall



AFSCME Local 1624 Business Manager Carol Guthrie rallies protestors at City Hall on June 1.

Hundreds of union members gathered at Austin City Hall for AFSCME Local 1624's Rally to Save Telework on June 1. We had a great turnout and sent a warning to the interim city manager that we will not accept arbitrary teleworking restrictions, nor will we allow a policy limiting telework to be rushed through without a thorough assessment of the City's current telework practices, which have been in place for more than three years. We demanded the City gather this information and other data to develop a long-term telework strategy that aligns with their recruitment and retention goals,

climate and strategic mobility plan, and public service standards.

After the rally, the interim city manager took a step in the right direction by delaying implementation of new telework policies until January 2024 to give staff time to gather data to support the policy decisions. We believe data will show that most of the City's teleworking practices have been successful and that the current policy proposal, which would mandate 3 in-office days per week for most employees, would increase the City's real estate footprint, harm retention and recruitment efforts, and impede the City's climate and



Rebecca Batchelder, Austin Water



Rebecca Summers, Victim Services



Council Member Vanessa Fuentes, Local 1624 President Ben Suddaby, Organizer Krissy O'Brien and Council Member Zohaib "Zo" Qadri

strategic mobility plan.

We are committed to improving your work-life balance, equity for essential workers and workers who cannot telework, climate protection, and ensuring that the City continues to deliver quality public services. Our engagement in this process is driven by these commitments.



DID YOU KNOW?

As you may know, it is illegal to fire or discriminate against workers because of pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions. As of June 27, pregnant workers now have additional job protection.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) is a new law that requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations to workers who have limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Prior to the PWFA, employers weren't

required to provide workers with reasonable accommodations unless the worker had a disability. Workers with limitations related to pregnancy or childbirth were forced to take family and medical leave in most cases. In some cases, they were granted light duty, but it was not guaranteed, and it was not offered consistently.

Now, employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations to these employees unless they can show that the accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the employer. The EEOC provides examples of reasonable accommodations, which include:

the ability to take leave to recover from childbirth, sit or drink water, be excused from strenuous activities or those that involve exposure to compounds not safe for pregnancy, receive closer parking, have flexible hours, take additional break time, and receive appropriately sized uniforms or safety apparel.



Budget Update

City and County FY 2023-2024 Budget Highlights

CITY OF AUSTIN

- 4% cost-of-living wage increase
- No increase in health insurance premiums
- 1% increase in contribution to employee retirement system
- No change to short-term disability insurance or retirees' healthcare *
- Service Incentive Pay: \$100 for every year of continuous service after three years **
- Living wage increase from \$20 to \$20.80 in October 2023

* We fought against proposals to cut short-term disability and force retirees into a Medicare Advantage program.

** Will appear on December 8 paycheck.

TRAVIS COUNTY

- Minimum 4% cost-of-living wage increase; We are pushing for 5%.
- 2% increase in health insurance premiums
- Countywide market study now expected to be completed in April 2024.



Local 1624 members at budget hearing for County employees on June 1



Local 1624 members and staff joined Congressman Greg Casar in Washington, D.C., for a thirst strike to amplify the voices of construction workers and other field workers who demand and deserve safety measures that would protect them from the dangers of working in extreme heat.

Pictured above, AFSCME Local 1624 President Ben Suddaby, AFSCME member Sarah Campbell and organizer Krissy O'Brien cheer on Congressman Casar as he ends his 9-hour thirst strike.

Shortly after the strike, the Biden Administration announced measures to enforce safety protections for the most vulnerable workers, including funding to improve weather forecasting.

We are proud of our membership and our Congressman!



Cierra Casarez
Parent: Francisco Casarez, Austin Water



AFSCME Local 1624 2023 Scholarship Winners



Eva A. Gonzalez
Parent: Rosa Gonzalez, Austin Water



Atha Pearl Phillips
Parent: Atha Phillips, Mayor & Council's Office



Joshua Rowan
Parent: Robert Rowan, Jr. Financial Services



Mark Spells
Parent: Dorcas Moore, Housing Department



Paige Thomas
Parent: Leticia White, Juvenile Probation



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Upcoming Events

email info@afscme1624.org for event details

**Aug.
24** General Membership Meeting

**Aug.
29** VOTE PAC Meeting

**Sept.
01** Labor Day Fish Fry

**Sept.
28** General Membership Meeting

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