

MARCH 11TH, 2021

# AFSCME 3 NEWSLETTER

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## Governor Acknowledges Frontline Workers with \$1,000 Bonus, Not Raises

On Monday, March 8th, Governor Hogan announced a \$1,000 bonus for all state and higher education employees in Maryland going into effect on April 14 for most employees, and April 21 for University System of Maryland employees. This will be helpful to the tens of thousands of Maryland public employees who have been working on the frontline throughout the pandemic under dangerous conditions.

The Governor's announcement today proves that the state has been in stable financial condition despite the Governor's attempt to cut our pay by 5%, cut healthcare, and cut positions last summer and into the fall. The Governor praises himself for avoiding furloughs despite attempting and failing to enforce them all last year! We know who he really is.

What the Governor is offering is a small acknowledgment of a large undertaking by our state workforce. The Governor has continually refused to bargain meaningful wage increases. Instead, he offers a one-shot cash bonus. It doesn't permanently raise wages, and it doesn't help recruit and retain state workers already working without enough staff and resources. This has been an incredibly difficult year for frontline state employees but it's clear that the state's economy is still thriving. Now is the time for the Governor to invest in our frontline employees to ensure we can recruit and retain staff! When we fight, we win!

[Visit our website to send a Letter and Urge Legislators to Make This Bonus a Permanent Increase!](#)

We are urging legislators to make this one-time bonus a permanent increase by amending the Governor's submitted budget. State and higher education employees who have been on the frontlines deserve more than a bonus, especially after Governor Hogan tried to cut our pay for months as the virus spread. Stay tuned for more updates & send your letter now!

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## HB73 Telework Policy Reform Passes the House

On Thursday, March 4th, HB73 Telework Policy Reform passed the Maryland House of Delegates by a vote of 100-22. It will now crossover to the Maryland Senate, so we're one chamber down, one to go.

Whether telework is mitigating the potential exposure to a deadly virus, assisting in reducing pollution, or aiding in the recruitment and retention of workers during a staffing crisis, allowing employees the flexibility of choosing their work location has proven to be an important tool in improving quality of life. HB 73 makes improvements to existing law by including local government, judiciary, legislative, and private employees under the telework program mandate. It also provides much-needed guidelines for cybersecurity in state government. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has also forced the discussion of who can telework into the forefront.

While existing state law established a telework program for state employees, and in 2013 the Maryland General Assembly placed a 15% participation goal among eligible employees—changes are necessary to ensure that all employees who are capable of working remotely have equitable access to participate in the state telework program.

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## Higher Education Members Organizing for Safety on Campus

Members of AFSCME who work in our public universities continue to fight against COVID every day without agreements on health and safety. Outbreaks have occurred across the state at Salisbury, Frostburg, Bowie and College Park where the second major outbreak is currently taking place. The current College Park outbreak has infections in 24 of 37 dorms, with over 2,000 students and staff contracting COVID-19.

The failure of each campus to bargain or come to an agreement on health and safety shows how ill equipped they are as well as their cavalier attitude toward worker protections. Members continue to speak and organize to fight back, but have also taken this battle to the legislature. Higher Ed members are working so hard to pass HB486/SB9 in order to consolidate bargaining with the University System of Maryland so that there is one standard for health and safety and everyone is protected. If you want to join the fight to make a fairer system for university workers click this link to write key legislators to pass HB486/SB9.

## DJS Members Fighting to Protect the Rules

AFSCME Local 3167 Shop Steward Michael Davis learned that DJS owed him and some coworkers a promotion - he took it to management and HE WON! Our contract entitles workers to certain protections on the job but without shop stewards these are just words on paper.

Contact the Union if you are not being paid for the job title you're supposed to have or if you have other concerns about rules not being followed at your worksite!

By raising issues at your worksite, we can help to identify violations of the contract and suggest ways to enforce the rules. When we fight, we win. AFSCME members are on the frontline fighting for the respect they deserve.

