

TEACHERS' VOICE

PROFESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE UNIONISM

SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 2018



"We are all in a battle for the soul of our nation. In the face of chaos, divisiveness and incivility, I wish everyone could see our members' spirit, unity and activism. AFT members will continue to care, fight, show up and vote—for their values, their aspirations for themselves and their students, and their love for their communities and their country. Together, we can make America a better place for all."

Hope in Darkness
AFT President Randi Weingarten
AFT 2018 Convention

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Witness To Change

By Ellen Bernstein, ATF President

This summer, I witnessed a change in our union. While we always have opportunities for engagement throughout the summer months, this year was exceptional. Members filled the office, attended rallies, engaged with community organizations and dedicated countless hours working for change.

In June, each and every AFT NM- and ATF-endorsed candidate won their primary races. Union volunteers stepped up and worked for candidates who will work for us. These victories ensure that we will have strong candidates who are pro-union and pro-public education that we can support and vote for in November.

Later that month, with a moment's notice, a dozen ATF activists drove over 250 miles to Tornillo, Texas in a show of outrage and unity against unthinkable, inhumane immigration policies and child internment camps at the border.

As our negotiations team worked countless hours at the table, we witnessed a new willingness from the district's team to solve problems and ensure that the greatest amount of money went to the greatest number of people in our bargaining unit.

Although the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Janus in a case funded by billionaires and corporate CEOs who use their massive fortunes to tilt the playing field in their favor and against the freedom to form strong unions, I witnessed an AFT Convention full of energized unionists who reported more engagement, stronger numbers and re-committed members across the country.

After the Janus ruling, millions across the country clearly are "sticking with the Union." This effort by powerful corporate interests will, without doubt, backfire. Because of this case, the undeniable link between a strong middle class and strong unions is in the public consciousness. We have more people than they have money. We are witnessing the rebirth of unions—let's not forget the teacher revolts last spring in red states across the nation.

And, this November, we have the incredible opportunity to change our state for the better. We, along with the majority of like-minded New Mexicans, will elect a new Governor, a stronger House and a more committed Senate. Working hand-in-hand with a revitalized legislature, we will witness the demise of the corrupt teacher evaluation system. We will see the end of the A-F school grades. We will witness an increase in school funding, a commitment to better salaries, and the creation of pro-public education policies.

I am excited and privileged to be an active participant and a witness to positive change in our state. Our strong union will fight for a robust public education system as well as racial, social, and economic justice.

We are union. We care. We fight. We show up. We vote.

In Solidarity, *Ellen*



Our WHAT UNION DID this Summer

June

Hawthorne Info Pickets

Last Spring, the PED decided they wanted Hawthorne Elementary to "champion choice" or close its doors. In Chris Ruszkowski's coded language, this meant they wanted the students from Hawthorne to flee to charter schools, possibly resulting in the closure of their neighborhood school. PED then mandated that Hawthorne hold school "choice" nights for parents to register their students at other schools. The false rumor then circulated that Hawthorne was closing its doors. Thanks to the dedicated work of our ATF Save Hawthorne Committee, we got the word out to parents that Hawthorne is here to stay.

Throughout the summer, the committee worked on engaging local businesses around the issue by having them display "This Business Supports Hawthorne Elementary" signs in their store fronts. This was a reaffirmation that our local, neighborhood schools are hubs for our community; we don't want to see our students move elsewhere.

... "Hawthorne" continued on page 2.

ATF, GLSEN, GSA's & APS Partner for Pride Parade

Each year, we feel fortunate to collaborate with GLSEN, High School GSA's and APS for the Pride parade. Together, we brave the summer heat to march beside our students and stand in solidarity with one another to demand that our schools be safe spaces for all.

... "June" continued on page 2

July

Policies for the People

July brought with it a heat wave, a monsoon, and a wave of activism within our union. ATF leadership and member-activists drove to Santa Fe to stand with over thirty community organizations to demand that the governors who were in Santa Fe for the National Governor's Conference make policies for the people, not the 1%.

ATF President Ellen Bernstein delivered a powerful call to activism and intersectional organizing, one that demands that student learning be divorced from test scores and ensures students' socio-cultural, linguistic, and emotional needs are being met. She highlighted the importance of our interconnected struggles, as educators who fight for the rights of all of our students.

Lastly, she brought to light the importance of ESSA, state-based decisions and the critical nature of our next election. If we band together as progressive organizations with common goals, we can ensure that November's election will finally shift the direction of our state. We have the ability—and responsibility—of fighting forward together.

Standing Up to Union-Busting

Unions are under attack across the nation as well as around our state. In late July, ATF members stood in solidarity with members of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) as they protested the looming threats of privatization, suppression of employee voice in the workplace, stripping rights to representation and union busting. Together, we are union strong!

... "July" continued on page 3

August

NTO & Educators' Emporium

If you've been in APS for a while, you may still remember a time when the New Teacher Orientation did not exist. You may still remember how you felt on your first day of school, in a mostly-empty classroom or office, in a sink-or-swim environment. However, if you are a fairly new educator in the district, you may have had the opportunity to attend the New Teacher Orientation.

The New Teacher Orientation (NTO) sought to change that lonely feeling for incoming educators. For ten years, NTO has provided classroom supplies, professional development meant to help you during your first weeks on the job, and a community of educators (your union!) to help support and foster growth as you enter the profession we all hold dear to our hearts.

The NTO has grown throughout the years, thanks to our dedicated ATF members and ATF leadership. Each year, hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of school supplies are passed along from retiring educator to new teacher, thanks to the "Educators' Emporium," brainchild of President Ellen Bernstein. Each year, more and more ATF member-volunteers step up to welcome our newest colleagues. And, each year, ATF is able to help our educators start off on the right foot, with whole class sets of books, school and art supplies, helpful tips and tools for success in our classrooms and within our Support and Related positions, and a promise of solidarity from our ATF union member colleagues.

... "August" continued on page 7

June ...continued from page 1



Photos (Top - Bottom)

ATF members picket in support of Hawthorne ES
ATF member Cyndie Ives and husband (an IBEW Union member) stand in support
ATF members show their support at Hawthorne Elementary School informational picket

Hawthorne Info Pickets ...continued from page 1

Committee members also engaged our larger Labor family in informational pickets to save our school. Union members from across the city (carpenters, bakers, electrical workers, and more) came to stand in support of public education alongside our dedicated ATF members.

Notably absent from these “choice” fairs was the PED which, according to its own arbitrary rules, was supposed to co-host the events. Also, and most importantly, absent were parents seeking to transfer their children out of Hawthorne.

Despite PED’s relentless, manipulative and deceitful attacks against public schools for eight long years, the absence of parents at these “choice” fairs sent a loud and clear message to the PED: Parents choose their neighborhood school, where familiar, trusted teachers who have taught generations of families in their community will remain.



Contract Negotiations

For the first time in four years, we had the funding and flexibility from the 2018 Legislative Session needed to craft a fair raise for everyone represented by the ATF. Through a very focused and collaborative negotiations process with APS, we were pleased to announce a salary agreement May 21st—even before the conclusion of our negotiations. Negotiations on contract language continued throughout the summer.

Even though the legislature specified different increases for different employee role groups, we negotiated to surpass the percentages appropriated by the legislature. Each employee represented by the Albuquerque Teachers Federation received an increase to the new 3-Tiered Licensure salary minimums, OR at least a 3% salary increase, whichever amount is greater.

Our union stood strong for ALL our members. We successfully included counselors, nurses, social workers and therapists in the new 3-Tiered salary minimums, and we were able to fix some issues with the salary matrix for Educational Diagnosticians, Transition Specialists and School Psychologists.

Primary Sweep; Candidates Look to November

By Sara Attleson, ATF COPE Chair

We are pleased to report that every one of our union’s endorsed candidates for the state legislature won their respective races on June 5th. These current and future office holders have cleared the first step toward gaining (or re-gaining) their position in the NM House of Representatives. Along with this success, each candidate for federal and state office endorsed by AFT New Mexico won their primary election. All endorsed candidates received the support of dedicated union activists who phone banked fellow union members and canvassed districts on their behalf.

That level of support from ATF and AFT NM will continue—and even ramp up—going into the weeks after Labor Day. This period is the best time for all union members to spend even just a few hours working to elect friends of public education and labor. And, please remember that early in-person voting at the County Clerk’s Annex will begin on October 9th, with countywide early voting starting on October 20th. Everyone is encouraged to vote early to avoid possible long lines or any problems that may occur. Remember: Election Day (November 6th) is the last day to vote.

NMFL COPE Convention

The Albuquerque Teachers Federation was well-represented at the New Mexico State Federation of Labor’s COPE Convention. ATF delegates to the convention included: Catherine Jaramillo, James Macklin, Mary Mercier, Chelsea O’Connell and Sara Attleson. The delegates joined other brothers and sisters of both public and private unions from throughout New Mexico. The Convention was held on June 23, just days before the Supreme Court ruling on the *Janus* Case. This anti-union case became the unofficial theme of the convention. Presentations were made about the impact *Janus* could have on labor, collective bargaining and ultimately the future of the labor movement in this country. The response from all the delegates was a resounding YES that they were “sticking with their union,” and YES that they were committed to growing their locals.

The charge of the delegates at the bi-annual NMFL COPE Convention is to vote on endorsing candidates running at the national, state and local levels. Endorsements are based on answers from questionnaires which deal with labor issues. Candidates were invited to attend the lunch for an opportunity to informally chat with delegates about labor issues. The ATF delegation was impressed by the caliber of candidates and incumbents who attended. ATF delegates pledged that they would join our brothers and sisters in other unions to ensure these champions of labor would be elected.

The keynote speaker was Michelle Lujan Grisham, candidate for governor of NM, who brought energetic solutions to her friends in labor. She spoke out against *Janus*, Right-to-Work, the Koch Brothers and all the entities that are working hard to destroy the labor movement. Lujan Grisham offered us her ideas to keep labor strong in New Mexico. She also spoke about public education and the need to fully fund it, as well as raising teacher salaries.

Our brothers and sisters in labor are ready to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) for candidates who will support and fight for labor in solidarity.

AFT NM Convention and Summer School

The 56th Annual AFT NM Convention was held on June 21st. Twelve ATF delegates attended.

The following day, over 46 ATF members attended AFT NM Summer School with unionists from across the state, all of whom attended classes in the following areas:

- Fighting for Women’s Rights: Getting a Win for Educators
- Promoting Racial Equity for Our Students
- Managing Behaviors in the School Community
- Introduction to National Board Certification
- Understanding Poverty & Trauma
- First Aid/CPR & Use of an AED
- Serving Our LGBTIQ+ Students
- Rights of Immigrant Students
- Using First Book in Our Schools and Communities
- Student Debt Clinic
- Using Share My Lesson



ATF Leadership supports Senator Martin Heinrich and future state Representative Natalie Figueroa, Spanish Teacher at VVHS

Families Belong Together Rally

Shortly after our trip to the Port of Entry in Tornillo, Texas, many of our members re-activated at the Families Belong Together Rally in Albuquerque. Dozens of community organizations and thousands of people showed up to the rally at Civic Plaza, armed with posters denouncing family separation and Trump’s executive order that would hold families in detention centers indefinitely.

Thank you to our ATF members who showed up in force to support our students, our families and our community. We are stronger together.

July...continued from page 1

What Does the Supreme Court's Janus Case Mean to ATF?

On June 27th, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees* that public sector unions can no longer collect "fair share" fees from non-members within their collective bargaining unit. The ruling overturned the 1977 decision, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, which found that non-members should have to pay a fee to a union for the cost of collective bargaining and representation only.

Your union, the Albuquerque Teachers Federation (ATF), is entirely comprised of voluntary members and does not collect any money from non-members. This means that ATF is not immediately or directly impacted by this court decision, at least not financially. But, as we say in the Labor Movement, an injury to one is an injury to all.

Make no mistake, from the beginning this case was a coordinated direct attack by powerful special interests against the only organized force fighting for working families—the Labor Movement. As our ATF President Ellen Bernstein was quoted in the local media, "It is a sad day for all of us that believe in organized labor." She continued, "But, I believe organized people and unions are going to fight back and rise up."

It is no secret that, for decades, wealthy corporations have conspired to undermine the right of workers to organize unions and to negotiate higher pay and

better working conditions. The Janus decision is the culmination of this shameful campaign. Moreover, it is no mystery why the powerful would persist in this fight. The Labor Movement builds and protects what a just society values—equal opportunity; health care for all; fair pay; fully-funded public education.

Sadly, our nation's history shows that the wealthy special interests have

fought each and every reform: child labor prohibitions, minimum wage laws, Social Security, workers' compensation, civil rights, and affordable health care. Indeed, despite this setback, unions continue to forge a path to the middle class and will continue fighting to make our communities and public schools strong because we are stronger together than we are divided.

No doubt, the same special interests that funded the Janus campaign will now move into its next phase. Across the nation and locally, right-wing organizations will now fund a "drop your union" campaign which is likely to appear in the media—broadcast and social—in the near future.

If you are contacted by any group and encouraged to drop your membership in ATF, please contact us.

Rest assured, ATF will continue to fight on your behalf for the workplace and society that you and future generations deserve.

“There is no sugarcoating today’s opinion. The majority overthrows a decision entrenched in this Nation’s law—and in its economic life—for over 40 years. As a result, it prevents the American people, acting through their state and local officials, from making important choices about workplace governance. [The Court’s majority does so] by weaponizing the First Amendment, in a way that unleashes judges, now and in the future, to intervene in economic and regulatory policy.”

— U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan
Janus v. AFSCME dissent

The Freedom Foundation, a Washington affiliate of the State Policy Network, is currently running *Opt Out Today*, a multi-state union opt out campaign originally targeting public employees in the Pacific Northwest. *Opt Out Today* now appears to be a national campaign. Internal documents show that Freedom Foundation plans to reduce union density in Washington, Oregon, and California by 127,000 members in 12 months. The *Opt Out Today* website includes fillable union drop forms for specific collective bargaining units in the Pacific Northwest and was recently expanded to include a generic drop form for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

...“June” continued on page 4



ATF President Ellen Bernstein and ATF VP of Membership and Organizing Dwayne Norris speak out against Koch and Walton-backed Solare Charter School

Contract Negotiations Result in Gains

Negotiations on contract language concluded in July. Some highlights of the changes include:

- APS has committed to work on employee requirements and workload issues.
- SLPs can now submit for bilingual and TESOL differentials.
- Diagnosticians, School Psychologists and SLPs will receive higher payments to perform evaluations outside of the school year.
- All educators represented by ATF can now change to another role group without losing any pay!
- This also included language allowing educators who made a role group change in previous years the ability to self-report for a one-time pay adjustment.
- The work year for Diagnosticians, School Psychologists and Transition Specialists has been shortened without a reduction in pay.
- Social workers now can submit for credential differentials and reimbursements, leading to more take-home pay.
- All middle schools will now receive five differentials for department heads.
- MOUs were signed establishing task forces: 1) to research and to make recommendations on advisories; 2) on the issue of high school seniors taking a full class load, and 3) on the issue of class sizes affected by the number of work stations available.

Thank you to the amazing ATF Negotiating Team listed below. We are all grateful for the volunteer time and professional expertise they gave throughout the spring and summer.

- Loyola Cortinas, Valle Vista ES
- Pam Irving, Kit Carson ES
- Jason Krosinsky, Wilson MS
- Tanya Kuhnee, Eldorado HS
- Chelsea O’Connell, John Baker ES
- Angela Reynolds, NE Diagnostic Center
- Sean Thomas, Eldorado HS
- Jerry Thorn, ATF Staff
- Simon X. Cao, ATF Staff
- Ellen Bernstein, Chief Negotiator

ATF Stands Up to Charters and the Privatization of Public Education

It should come as no surprise to union activists that corporate billionaires are attempting to privatize our public schools. Congruent with what is happening across the nation, the Koch Brothers and the Walton Family have finally stuck their greedy little hands into the schools of New Mexico by attempting to open Solare Charter School on Albuquerque’s Southwest side of town. This summer, our union fought back alongside our community partners, the Interfaith Coalition and New Mexico Dream Team, who were all present at the Public Education Commission (PEC) meeting to testify against the charter school.

Solare is backed by Building Better Schools New Mexico, which is part of the Building Better Schools national network. This national network is funded by the Koch Brothers, the Walton Foundation and corporations like Exxon. The “Better Schools” network trains individuals to open charter schools using a template plan that can be replicated anywhere in the nation. As noted by the members of the PEC, this charter school serves no unique needs and does nothing outside of what our neighborhood public schools already do.

Although we await the PEC’s decision regarding the approval or denial of this charter school, ATF stands strong in our belief that corporate charter schools have no place in our state.

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June ...continued from page 3



Photos (L-R)

Tornillo, TX: Port of Entry

AFT President Randi Weingarten speaks at Rally

ATF members show off their signs



NONE are Free if ONE is Chained

"The border entrance at Tornillo is haunting. The area is desolate and lonely. The scene evoked in me the location of the young adult book, Farewell to Manzanar, about the internment of Japanese-Americans in a desolate and lonely location.

I remember a book about the Nazi concentration camps that was always on our shelf at home called Jamais Plus (Never Again). These two words have never left me. I have always believed that never again could inhumane behavior be allowed to happen, and that people had learned from history. It has been one of my life-time mantras. As ATF members joined El Paso AFT locals to unload supplies for the children at Tornillo, pictures from this book of children being pulled from their parent's arms at concentration camps came to the forefront of my mind. The parallels were disturbing."

— Sara Attleson · Librarian · Kennedy MS

ATF Members Caravan to the Border

Our Context

For generations, families from many countries have sought refuge in the United States. For years, families have dealt with the uncertainty of being separated at the U.S.-Mexico border. This summer, Trump issued an executive order that would hold families in internment camps indefinitely. A caravan of ATF members traveled to Tornillo, Texas to meet up with other AFT activists and the student-activist group United We Dream to protest the detentions and inhumane actions perpetrated by our government.

"When ATF asked members to go to Tornillo to protest the detention and separation of immigrant families, I knew I had to go. The people being held could have easily been my family or friends. As I walked closer to the court house in downtown El Paso, there was a buzz of excitement coming from the crowd holding signs and umbrellas making the message clear: Families Belong Together. We loaded onto buses and headed to Tornillo, where the powerful voices of people like Dolores Huerta were calling for change.

Despite the heat, I was motivated to spread the message that we would not, could not, stand idly by while such an injustice was occurring... The strength of the unions and community was so empowering that I was in tears."

— Veronica Forester · 2nd Grade Teacher · Emerson ES

The Rally

We left Albuquerque before the sun could catch up to us. After a four-and-a-half-hour road trip from the ATF office, our arrival in El Paso was met with a blast of humidity and radiant heat from the street pavement. We piled out of our caravan, arriving just on time for the AFT protest outside the courthouse where migrant children's cases are processed. (The same place, mind you, where young children are directed by our current government to show up to represent themselves in the court of law.) We grabbed the protest signs we made and set out on foot toward the rally.

Large umbrellas, hand-painted with "Keep Families Together" signs that denounced family separation, loud speakers and our union family were already at the courthouse when we arrived. It was there that elected officials, our AFT President Randi Weingarten and iconic activist Dolores Huerta stood together to denounce the inhumane policies of the Trump Administration. One after another, they called on the President to rescind his Executive Order and do everything in his power to keep families together.

Soon, we were guided toward school busses that would take us to the Tornillo Port of Entry, where children were held in tent cities on the U.S.-side of the border. Much like the Freedom Rides during the 1960's, we rode for miles, shoulder-to-shoulder in the seats where our students usually sit—seats that would be better filled with the children being held at the border. Thanks to our AFT union family who shared their food with us on the bus, we broke bread—in sharp contrast to our government, that continues to break families.

The Arrival

Our school bus ride took us past the border town's local stores and family-owned shops; it took us past neighborhood schools and friends enjoying the company of one another. Miles out, amongst rows of crops and long stretches of dirt, pavement and sweltering sun, we finally reached our destination. It was easy to see that the isolation of the child internment camp was intentional—hidden out-of-sight, even from local community members. Brand new roads were paved, a newly built, flagstone Port of Entry sign, a four-lane entry and exit road out of the country; an unnecessary amount of infrastructure for a desolate location where very few cross the border. And, for the children held at these facilities? Nothing more than glorified tents. (Your tax dollars at work.)

Together, we unloaded trucks that were filled with books, crayons, pencils and balls—all donations for the children being held at this facility. We approached the border gate with dollies and wagons of good intention, all of which were swiftly denied by Border Patrol. Disheartened with the callous rejection, we stood together in solidarity with our AFT President and leaders from many different religions and spiritualities, faiths and non-beliefs to send our good intentions to the children at the border to let them—and the world—know they are not forgotten.

Because this port of entry garnered so much national attention over the summer, a berm was built around the tents where the kids were held—presumably for their "privacy"...but, it did not go unnoticed that the children could no longer see community members gathered, calling for their release.

"The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was also involved, bringing more caring souls cross-country along with a giant truck full of new clothes and other donations. As the bus loads of us arrived, Randi Weingarten passionately spoke about the insanity that prevailed and that we would not let this happen without demanding the most basic of civil rights for these children.

A berm had been built in front of the "white tents" making them more obscure but they were still there with hundreds of scared and confused children inside...All of the donations were refused by the border guards; these children were not getting anything from the outside. It was 105 degrees outside and there was a feeling of dejection, even failure. But we so wanted to give the kids something to make them smile, to hold onto that was theirs, to somehow let them know not to give up. But no, we weren't allowed.

I was honored to be a part of this expedition and to let people know that we care, and we are not going to stop caring. We will keep the pressure up and continue to fight for the rights of these children and families. Thank you, AFT, for leading the way."

— Gerri Barnhart · Librarian · La Cueva HS

"After we arrived at the fenced and razor-wired facility, we began with the blowing of a shofar, which didn't sound loud, but rather weak and sickly. We were there to protest what was happening on our border, and to show that we will not allow these children to be forgotten. They called upon the clergy present to pray. Catholics, Protestants, Jewish rabbis, Muslims, atheists, all joined in prayer for the children, for the asylum seekers, for immigrants, and for our national policies.

Because we wanted to put our words of caring about these children into action, we brought supplies and toys and books for them; but they were refused. There is absolutely no reason that these items not be allowed. It is part of the inhumane policy toward these children, who are not criminals, because even incarcerated criminal youths are allowed to have paperback books, paper, pencils, crayons, etc. We ended up donating the items to the Annunciation House of El Paso, which has programs in place to help the refugees and asylum-seekers."

— Cynda Bellamy
Teacher of the Visually Impaired · Zia ES

THANKS ATF ACTIVISTS!

Thanks to the ATF activists who traveled to Tornillo, Texas in June.

Sara Attleson (Kennedy) · Mary Baldwin (Highland)
Gerri Barnhart (La Cueva) · Cynda Bellamy (Zia)*
Bob Coffey (Highland) · Robert Feuer (Highland)
Veronica Forrester (Armijo) · Amanda Gaiter (Gov. Bent) · Gordon Monahan (Highland)
Sonya Romero Smith (Lew Wallace)
Rachael Sonia (Garfield) · Amy Sweet (East San Jose)
Marianna Anaya (ATF Staff)

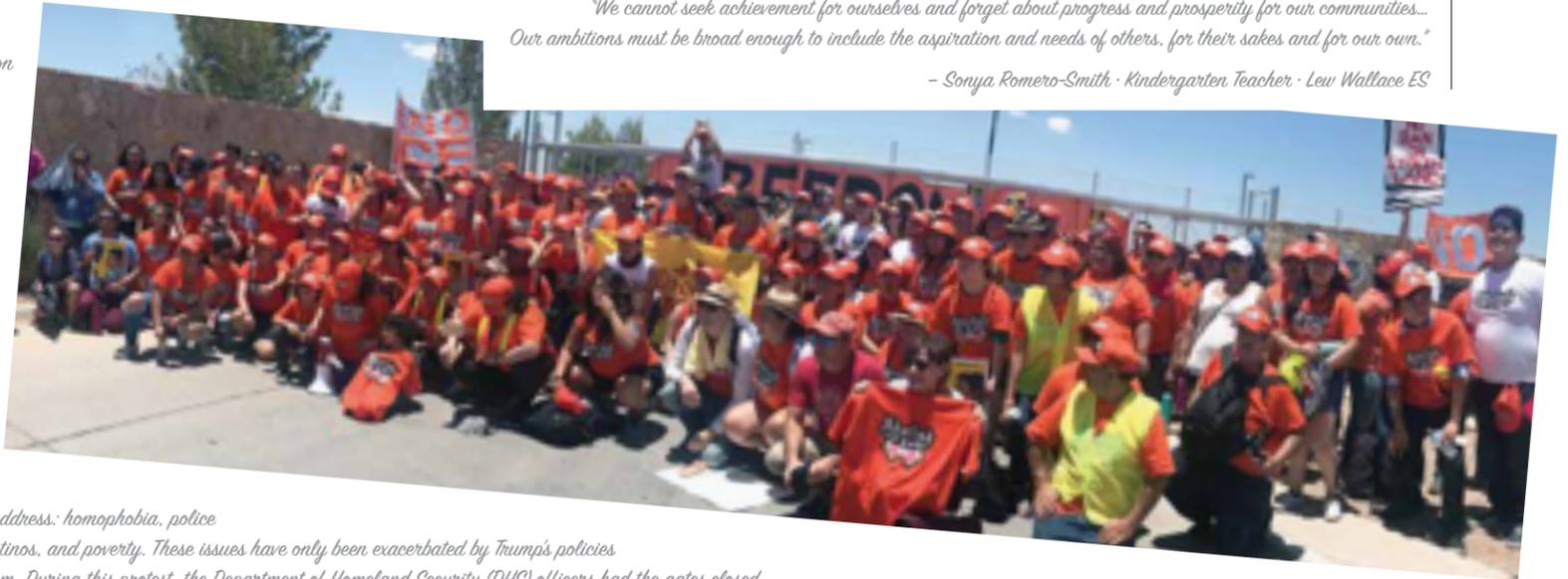
"While it was well over 105°, everybody stood together with the collective voice of Humanity. It reminded me again of my favorite Cesar Chavez quote,

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our communities... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspiration and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."

— Sonya Romero-Smith · Kindergarten Teacher · Lew Wallace ES

"As we pulled up to the detention facility on the second day of protests, I could see hundreds of energized activists from the group "United We Dream" donning their bright orange t-shirts. The temperature was over one hundred degrees, but the crowd had a youthful exuberance that ascended beyond weather conditions. The speeches and chants were secular and factually accurate, identifying a variety of human rights issues that the U.S. refuses to address: homophobia, police violence against Blacks and Latinos, and poverty. These issues have only been exacerbated by Trump's policies which promote white nationalism. During this protest, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officers had the gates closed. United We Dream was bringing it to the DHS agents and the authorities were in retreat."

— Robert Feuer · Special Education Teacher · Highland HS



Photos (Top To Bottom)

United We Dream student activists at Tornillo Port of Entry
ATF Members Bob Coffey and Gordon Monaghan unload books and supplies to deliver to children being held in detention centers at the U.S. - Mexico border



Free Our Future

The next day, we returned to the port of entry in our own vehicles—this time to support the actions of the student-activist group, United We Dream, and our local chapter, the New Mexico Dream Team. From our cars, we were able to see large orange banners that the students hung from the border facility gates: "Abolish ICE & CBP." By the time we arrived, the Border Patrol had already shut off access to the port of entry. Nobody enters, nobody leaves.

The media outlets swarmed the students who were chanting "Shut. It. Down. Shut. It. Down!" Noise-makers, whistles, bullhorns and a collective voice rang with the message that all of our struggles are interconnected met us upon arrival. Amongst many friends, familiar faces of students and organizers from Albuquerque, we joined in the chants, and soon, in song.

*I went down to the border and I
took back what they stole from me.
Took back my dignity.
Took back my humanity.
Now it's under my feet,
under my feet, under my feet
ain't gonna let no system walk all over me...*

What happened next could have easily been missed, as it happened in an instant. Just as quickly as we were shut out from the border, the same metal gates allowed one single bus to pass—carrying even more kids inside.

In the same moment that we were sickened and sad, we also knew that we were sending a message of hope to those children held at the facility: You are not alone, we're fighting for you and we're calling on our government to Free Our Future.

"I haven't always been an activist, but I've been drawn to it for as long as I can remember. As I got older, I started to understand that activism is more than a first amendment right, it is a responsibility as a citizen of the free world. Since becoming a teacher, I truly believe it is my duty to be a union activist. Taking on the role of an educator means becoming a leader within a neighborhood. ATF has allowed me to start growing into the leader I have always aspired to be."

— Amanda Gaiter · Special Ed Teacher · Governor Bent ES



"I am proud to have wheeled a handcart carrying boxes of toys, school supplies and books for the children in the camp at Tornillo, even though the guards wouldn't let us in, nor would they accept the donations for the interred children. I am proud to have stood arm-in-arm with faith leaders, young activists and my union brothers and sisters at the border gate. I am proud to have helped to close the border to all traffic, if just for an hour or two. I am proud to have represented ATF, AFT, teachers, union members, and New Mexicans in the fight against Donald Trump's cruel, heartless and brutal policies."

*Gordon Monaghan
Social Studies Teacher · Highland HS*

Photos (Top To Bottom)

Banner made by United We Dream student activists

ATF members and AFT President Randi Weingarten rally outside El Paso Courthouse

ATF member Rachael Sonia helps tie a banner onto the closed gates at the Tornillo Port of Entry

July ...continued from page 3



Welcome to all of our new teachers! (Picture taken at Sandia HS at New Teacher Orientation in August)

Union Recruitment & Training

This summer, ATF welcomed a new crop of Fed Reps and members into our union family. In the wake of the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court ruling that was supposed to devastate unions across the nation, the ATF Organizing Team and rank-and-file educators recruited over 150 brand new members to our union! The summer of Janus has truly led us to the summer of activism.

In mid-July, ATF activists and Fed Reps attended a training at our union hall. Together, we learned about the political context in which we find ourselves and different facets of our union to become involved in during the coming months.

If you're interested in becoming more involved in our union, visit atfunion.org and check the "Upcoming Events." We post information for not only PD trainings, but also political and community volunteer opportunities.



Sara Attleson receives AFT Living the Legacy Award

AFT Convention

AFT President Randi Weingarten kicked off the AFT's biennial national convention by urging members to find "hope in darkness" at a crucial juncture for American democracy and Americans' aspirations for a better life.

The convention theme rallied members to continue to care, fight, show up and vote.

Weingarten's address to more than 3,000 educators, nurses and health professionals, and public employees laid out a path for a strong union movement in the face of the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court decision and right-wing attacks—a path that depends on engaging members and involving community around issues that matter. And she sounded a dire warning for the future of American democracy in the Trump era and framed the 2018 election as a battle for decency over cruelty and a check on the Trump administration's cruel policies.

"We are a year and a half into this presidency, and we have cause for great concern. This state of affairs is not normal. I cannot be silent, and neither can you... Beyond demanding decency, we must defend democracy at this most crucial moment for American democracy since the rise of fascism and authoritarianism in the 1930s," Weingarten said.

She called for AFT members to unite with our communities in the lead-up to the November midterm elections and framed voting as the way to translate the activism we are seeing across the country into enduring change.

"These elections won't just determine whether Republicans or Democrats prevail, but whether cruelty or decency prevails. We must be a check and balance for our democracy and for a society that is safe, welcoming and sane," Weingarten said. "America's labor movement is central to defending democracy. Authoritarian governments invariably attack unions, seeking to undermine them, because unions have always been in the forefront of the fight for democracy."

"Our members feel the urgency. This year, nearly 300 of your fellow AFT members aren't just casting their ballots—they're on the ballot. Walkouts are turning into walk-ins to the voting booth."

Weingarten zeroed in on the challenges and opportunities facing labor unions in the post-Janus era, amid continued threats from a right wing and an administration determined to deny workers a shot at a better life.

"Right-wing groups and their wealthy allies want us gone, because unions are often the only organized force challenging their enormous power in politics and the economy," she said. "It's part of their trifecta strategy: suppress the vote, privatize public education and eliminate unions—the three ways working folks have any agency, any real power, in America."

"They know that working people gain strength in numbers," Weingarten continued. "And they know working people do better when they join together in unions. So the right wing is doing everything they can to stop us, so people have to fend for themselves."

Weingarten juxtaposed the feeling of apprehension during the Janus oral arguments—when the conservative justices made it clear that they wanted to "destroy unions and, with them, the aspirations and dreams of working folks," overturn 41 years of precedent, and weaponize the First Amendment—with the hope and inspiration of the teacher walkouts that launched two weeks later in West Virginia and spread across the country.

Weingarten continued, "Like so much of the recent activism, the teacher walkouts are stoking a movement for social justice, for workers' rights, for women's rights, for civil rights and children's rights, for decent healthcare and well-funded public schools, for safety—on the streets and in our schools. People acting together and accomplishing together what individuals can't do on their own."

And she noted that the Janus decision, which its wealthy funders hoped would encourage members to "drop" the union, has in fact galvanized members to join and recommit to the AFT in record numbers.

"Where our opponents have waged their bare-knuckle opt-out campaigns, the stories of drops have been few and far between. We have seen just the opposite: members recommitting and new members joining."

Concluding with a call to action to keep caring, fighting, showing up and voting, Weingarten said, "We are in a battle for the soul of our nation. It's terrifying, but we have confronted dreadful times before. I come down on the side of hope."

MALDEF/CLP Win Lawsuit

The plaintiffs, New Mexico Center for Law and Poverty and MALDEF, argued that the state has violated the basic constitutional right of New Mexico students to an adequate education. In the case *Martinez v. State of New Mexico* and *Yazzie v. State of New Mexico*, Judge Sarah Singleton confirmed that New Mexico is, in fact, violating the constitutional rights of at-risk students by failing to provide them with a sufficient education.

She ordered that the state, its governor, the legislature, and its public education department (PED) are "to establish a funding system that meets constitutional requirements by April 15 [of] next year."

It is important to note some of the things Judge Singleton concluded about Governor Martinez' education efforts. Judge Singleton's ruling:

- "[R]ejected arguments by [Governor] Susana Martinez's administration that the education system is improving...[and]... that the state was doing the best with what it had."
- Emphasized that "New Mexico children [continue to] rank at the very bottom in the country for educational achievement."
- Added that "New Mexico doesn't have enough teachers...[and]... New Mexico teachers are among the lowest paid in the country."
- Noted that the state's punitive teacher evaluation system that penalizes teachers for working in high-need schools contribute to problem in this category of schools and that the "teacher distrust of the evaluation system could lead to lower [teacher] retention rates."
- Concluded that all of "the programs being pushed by PED are not changing this [bleak] picture" and, more specifically, "offered a scathing assessment of the ways in which New Mexico has failed its children," again, taking particular aim at the state's punitive teacher evaluation system.

The July 23rd editorial in the Santa Fe New Mexican, "School Funding Decision a Win for Kids," said it best, "The ruling makes it clear the children do have a fundamental right to a decent education, agreeing with plaintiffs in the suit that the state is falling short of its state constitutional mandate to ensure an education that is 'sufficient' for all children."

The most important thing we can do for public education now is elect a governor who won't fight this ruling, but instead will embrace it as a mandate for change.

“Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world.”

— Dolores Huerta, Historic Union Leader

JOIN ATF

ALBUQUERQUE TEACHERS FEDERATION

PED Files Motions to Dismiss

This summer, in a last-chance power grab before the Martinez Administration rolls over, the PED attempted to micro-manage Los Padillas and Whittier Elementary Schools (two “MRI” schools) by making up new rules that would displace teachers at those sites. PED cited teacher evaluation ratings as reason to remove educators from their positions. According to PED’s first iteration of rules, teachers who scored below “effective” would not be re-hired during the 2018-2019 school year. (Their later correspondence arbitrarily changed the rules to read “highly effective” and even later, “highly effective over multiple years.”)

Our union fought back.

Because of the clear violation of the ATF/AFT New Mexico court-granted injunction, which prevents the evaluation system from harming teachers, ATF filed a motion to prevent the PED from using VAM scores and teachers’ summative evaluation ratings against our colleagues at Whittier and Los Padillas.

The PED responded with five motions to dismiss our larger evaluation lawsuit, one of which was based on the flawed notion that APS had “options” to redesign these schools and that APS chose the option to only re-hire teachers who fit the narrow summative evaluation category.

Our lawyer didn’t get far into his rebuttal before Judge David K. Thomson realized that APS’ only other “choice” was school closures. It was soon clear to everyone in the room that PED’s manipulation of the truth and abuse of power was intentionally deceitful—just another way to blame and shame public schools.

While we are yet to see whether Judge Thomson enjoins the MRI case with our larger evaluation lawsuit, we are certain of one thing: The merits of the teacher evaluation system lawsuit will be heard this November.

August ...continued from page 1

Back in Court Against Unfair Evaluation System

In 2015, ATF/AFT New Mexico filed a lawsuit against the PED and its punitive and flawed teacher evaluation system. State law requires, “Highly objective uniform statewide standards of evaluation.” Instead, Governor Martinez gave New Mexico teachers a system, described as random and without precision—a system, which by the PED’s own account, results in thousands of New Mexico teachers being wrongly classified each year.

As time has passed, this litigation has become a curiosity. In 2015, the Value Added Model (VAM) as it was identified, was the darling of Republican’s everywhere. But in New Mexico, Judge David K. Thomson heard the facts, the evidence, and the truth and made the difficult but courageous decision to enjoin it. In 2018, VAM has experienced an extreme drop of support. Nationwide, it has been effectively abandoned for many of the reasons set out by the Court in its injunction. As the court noted, the harm to New Mexico teachers was “being forced to operate in an evaluation system that is not highly objective and/or uniform statewide.” It was a harm to students, as the court noted, even if “no teachers had been terminated.”

On August 10th, we went back to Judge Thomson’s courtroom. We went to prove that the PED’s mandate—that the MRI schools, specifically Whittier and Los Padillas, can only be staffed with teachers rated “highly effective” and above—is a violation of the injunction he put in place.

The final trial of the VAM system is set for Judge Thomson’s courtroom in November. The verdict on this rejected system is already out—it has failed New Mexico’s families.

The PED’s evaluation system is full of data collection defects, allegations, specious math, odd irregularities, like social studies teachers being evaluated based upon how their students performed on standardized English tests.

Without Judge Thomson’s determined ruling, some 3,000 to 13,000 educators each year would have been subject to loss of licensure and termination. The ultimate failure of the system is this: the 3,000 to 13,000 teachers who are misidentified annually look to you exactly like the rest. Unbelievably, PED’s system cannot identify its own errors. There is no way to determine which teachers are incorrectly evaluated—it’s how the system was designed. In a final insult, the PED adopted regulations, which make the evaluation permanent and precluded any efforts to fix the problem. Once a teacher has received the evaluation, “The effectiveness evaluation shall not be changed.”

This is the year we will elect a governor who will change this evaluation system for good and the PED’s never ending quest to validate this mess of a system will end.

Welcome to the Re-Birth of Unionism

The summer of 2018 was not only the summer of the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court decision, but it was also a record-breaking summer for number of new members that joined our union. The supreme court decision that was supposed to devastate unions is only making us stronger!

Isn’t it time you join your union? See your school’s ATF Fed Rep or visit atfunion.org for an application.

Fed Reps Wanted

If your school does not currently have an ATF Fed Rep, please contact Marianna at marianna@atfunion.org and she will help you set up a meeting to elect one!

COPE

If You Want Power, VOTE!

By Sara Attleson, ATF COPE Chair, Kennedy MS

For too long now, education professionals have felt besieged and overwhelmed—and justifiably so. We have been subjected to declining funding, disrespect from elected officials, and bad public policies that we know are detrimental for students. Each one of us know first-hand what the last decade has been for public schools. We have seen many of our colleagues leave the profession—younger teachers left disillusioned; veteran teachers retired early—believing that there is no hope to change their plight.

Some educators have chosen to stay and fight—for their profession and their students. I am heartened by the activism they have shown over these difficult years. Your union’s Committee on Political Education (COPE), through the actions of many volunteers, has fought off attacks on public schools and made gains by helping to elect legislative allies. But, public education is still a target and, once again, we will be vigilant and take action.

In a few weeks, we will have the chance on a large scale to make real change for our schools and for our society. The November General Election is that opportunity. This is a defining moment in our nation’s history. We can turn the tide that has troubled our schools for so long. We have a chance to change the balance of power in Santa Fe and in Washington, D.C. The only way to gain that power is to VOTE!



Photos (L-R): ATF members tell Governors to step up for our communities or step down
ATF members and Dolores Huerta rally against family detentions in El Paso, TX



“We are here today to give a clear message to these governors. Our struggles are linked. Every day, we work with students and parents who are living at the intersections of institutional oppression and we are here not only to stand up for labor, collective bargaining, and public education, but also for the right to breathe clean air, exist without being profited, love who we want, earn a living wage and feel safe in our communities. We are educators and we know that the labor movement is a movement for social justice.”

— ATF President Ellen Bernstein
“Step Up or Step Down” Governor’s Rally

Dolores Huerta, an historic union leader, once said, “Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world.” The very act of voting is an opportunity to make lasting change. But, I challenge every educator to go beyond simply casting your own ballot. I ask you to convince everyone you know—family, neighbors, friends and colleagues—to vote. Finally, I ask you to spend a few hours to join your colleagues in phone-banking or canvassing on behalf of union-endorsed candidates. Together, we can take back the power to make our schools the best they can be.

August

- 23 **Career Pathway System Overview for S&RSP**
4:30 – 6:00 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$75
- 29 **Managing Behaviors in the School Community**
4:30 – 6:30 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$25

September

- 03 **Labor Day Picnic at Tiguex Park!**
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM • Free!
- 05 **Managing Behaviors in the School Community**
4:30 – 6:30 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$25
- 06 **National Board Informational Meeting**
4:30 – 6:00 PM • Free!
- 06 **Dossier Overview**
4:30 – 7:00 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$50
- 12 **Managing Behaviors in the School Community**
4:30 – 6:30 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$25
- 19 **Managing Behaviors in the School Community**
4:30 – 6:30 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$25
- 20 **Career Pathway System Overview for S&RSP**
4:30 – 6:00 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$50
- 20 **National Board Renewal Support**
4:30 – 8:30 PM • Members: \$50 / Non-Members: \$65

October

- 02 **Fed Rep Council Meeting**
4:15 PM
- 03 **Dossier Overview**
4:30 – 7:00 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$50
- 20 **Early In-Person Voting Begins**
8:00 AM - 8:00 PM • Monday - Saturday
- 17 **Managing Behaviors in the School Community**
4:30 – 6:30 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$25
- 17 **ATF General Membership Meeting**
4:30 – 6:30 PM
- 18 **Career Pathway System Overview for S&RSP**
4:30 – 6:00 PM • Members: Free / Non-Members: \$50
- 20 **Dossier Writing Workshop**
1:00 – 3:00 PM • Members: \$75 / Non-Members: \$175
- 25 **National Board Renewal Support**
4:30 – 8:30 PM • Members: \$50 / Non-Members: \$65

November

- 06 **Election Day!**
7:00 AM - 7:00 PM
- 06 **Fed Rep Council**
4:15 PM

**All events and classes will be held at the ATF Office unless otherwise noted.*

*The freedom movement,
the movement for justice
and equity, is not over.*

– Mark Levy
Former union member & teacher
Freedom Summer

HOMEWORK HELP FOR STUDENTS

Dial-A-Teacher



Monday - Thursday
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Help available in English and Spanish.



sharemylesson
POWERED BY AFT

Check out **Share My Lesson's** back-to-school collection – more than 1,000 resources for preK-12 teachers. The free collection includes lesson plans, worksheets, new ideas, classroom activities, blog articles and professional development webinars.

SHAREMYLESSON.COM



For almost a decade, the Colorín Colorado website has offered information and resources on what works for ELLs. www.colorincolorado.org – a partnership project of the AFT and Reading Rockets for educators and families of PreK-12 educators – offers the most comprehensive resources online to help educators teach ELLs and reach their families.

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