

# THE Leader

  
American Federation of  
School Administrators  
AFSA, AFL-CIO

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

## School Principals Call for Action on School Safety

AFSA joins the rest of the nation in mourning the 17 lives lost in the horrific shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

In the wake of this tragedy, the debate over gun control, mental health policy and school safety in our country has intensified once again.

As the people who run our nation's schools, principals and other school administrators need to have their voices heard and be part of the discussions on solutions for student safety. To that end, AFSA recently urged the Trump administration to establish a national task force on school safety to develop best practices and offer real solutions to schools.

"We cannot afford to wait for Congress or state legislatures to pass legislation in this area," wrote Ernest Logan, executive vice president of the American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), in a letter to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. "Let's have a frank conversation with America's parents, educators and students about ways to keep our kids safe."

"Our members know all too well the horror of senseless gun violence in our schools, particularly as we lost one of

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### The Future of Public Schools in Puerto Rico is at Stake

Still suffering from the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico faces another hurdle—getting its students back into quality, safe public schools.

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### Leaders Strategize on Strengthening Unions

AFSA members joined their brothers and sisters in labor at the AFL-CIO's Great Lakes and Northeast District strategy sessions in January and February. The sessions covered the new AFL-CIO regional structure, the 2018 political landscape, mapping union locals, worksite communications, union density and more.

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### Legislative Update—AFSA Steps Forward on School Safety as Administration and Congress Step Back

In the wake of the terrible school shooting in Parkland, Florida, AFSA Executive Vice President Ernest Logan pushed for quick and decisive action to stem the rising tide of school gun violence.

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*Washington, D.C., Feb. 19, 2018: High school students from across the D.C. area protest gun control laws and gun reform in front of the White House.*



# Take Control of Your Voice

By Diann Woodard



AFSA President Diann Woodard

*Janus v. AFSCME*. You may have heard about this case before the U.S. Supreme Court. It was designed by the rich and powerful to undermine public employee unions by creating national “right to work” in the public sector.

As school principals and administrators, the outcome of this case could be a blow to our voice and power. It is one of the biggest challenges to our union in history, and could be the final blow to all working families’ hopes for a voice at work and in the community.

Some locals are worried and panicked for what’s to come. This may seem like the end of labor unions, but we cannot let fear keep us from working to change our fate. We have fought too hard and too long for everything to be taken away.

I don’t fear *Janus*; I embrace it as a way for all of us to join hands and find new ways to operate moving forward. It is time for every member to ask the question, “What can I do to make our union more powerful?”

You see, our union is only as strong as our members, and for too long many of us have taken for granted what our union has accomplished in improving our lives and providing a comfortable living.

Unions have always given workers a voice for better working conditions, higher wages and workers’ rights. All of the benefits workers enjoy every day are because unions have fought for them: minimum wage, sick leave,

weekends, eight-hour workdays, overtime pay, child labor laws, paid vacation, maternity leave, holiday pay and so many other benefits. Yet, the same people who don’t see the value of investing in unions are enjoying these benefits.

Fortunately, our nation has recently witnessed and been reminded of the value of labor unions. Working people have demonstrated the powerful impact of organizing and fighting back. It’s so inspiring to see so many of our brothers and sisters participate in rallies across the country making their voices heard. Specifically, we saw the teachers in West Virginia, who made history in the state for the longest ongoing strike leading to a victory in wage and education funding increases.

Although *Janus* threatens to bring unions down by trying to influence members to quit and avoid fees, we know our union will prevail. Our members are informed and aware that we will not sit back and be silenced. As school leaders, we know how to lead and take action. Keep educating your communities on current legislation. Motivate your local and show your members the benefits of being a part of your community. Let them know they are important and valued.

**“It is time for every member to ask the question, ‘What can I do to make our union more powerful?’”**

Encourage them to speak up, whether it’s participating in rallies or attending a town hall.

We also encourage you to join us at the AFSA 15th Triennial Constitutional Convention this July to learn more strategies on how to successfully engage and be active in your local. Gain skills on effectively communicating and organizing within your community. Stay updated with the latest political insights to inform your local. This is your opportunity to make a difference and shape the future of your organization. For more information on the convention, visit [AFSAadmin.org/2018convention](https://AFSAadmin.org/2018convention).

We can’t succeed without each other. We have each other’s backs. AFSA will continue to fight for our education and labor communities. We are stronger together, and we will not let this case decide our fate. ■

# THE Leader

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## The Future of Public Schools in Puerto Rico is at Stake

Still suffering from the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico faces another hurdle—getting its students back into quality, safe public schools.

Gov. Ricardo Rosselló announced a plan in February to drastically overhaul the island's public education system by creating a system of charter schools and private school vouchers, adopting school choice policies. Rosselló also introduced a fiscal plan that would eliminate 305 out of 1,100 total public schools.

"By diverting much-needed resources away from public schools, Governor Rosselló's plan will set the island of Puerto Rico backward," said Domingo Madera, president of Educadores Puertorriqueños en Acción Inc. (EPA), AFSA Local 105. "Private school vouchers do not ensure equal access to education and do not serve the students most in need of educational opportunities. This will only be exacerbated in Puerto Rico, where an investment in public schools is so desperately needed."

Local 105 members have concerns about the plan. "Although our

members, by their nature as school leaders, will step up and give everything they can to ensure their students receive a high-quality education, this plan will make that mission more difficult," Madera noted. "AFSA and Local 105 condemn this plan in the strongest possible terms."

Rosselló's proposal echoes one implemented in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; now, all but five schools in that city are chartered.

"Our nation's public schools are open to all students, are the cornerstone of our democracy and the pillars of our communities," said AFSA Executive Vice President Ernest Logan. "Following the grave destruction caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the children and communities in Puerto Rico need stability and a return to normalcy. Private schools and charters may benefit a select few, but this is too often the exception rather than the rule." ■





# Planning Ahead Key to Coping With School Crises

In the aftermath of a school crisis, such as the recent Florida school shooting, school communities are left with a deep impact. Is your staff prepared to deal with safety procedures and the emotional needs of students following a tragedy?

**It is vital that schools plan ahead to be prepared to deal with a range of possibilities involving the death of a student, teacher or other staff member. Plans should include:**

- Procedures for informing staff, students and their parents/guardians;
- Guidelines about what information is appropriate to share, both generally and in specific situations (for instance, what should be said in cases of suicide, violent death, death after a long illness);
- Procedures for providing appropriate supportive services for students and staff—this often includes establishing partnerships with community professionals before an event occurs;
- Guidelines for both students and staff about interacting with media; and
- Policies about funeral attendance, memorialization and commemoration.

There are four important goals for supporting students at this time:

**1. *Normalize common experiences.***

Grief is personal and every individual will experience it differently. However, people who are grieving have similar types of needs. These include being acknowledged, understood and supported. Help students understand the range of feelings common after a death. Share ways people often express these feelings. Discuss how the feelings are likely to change in the days, weeks and months to come.

**2. *Help students express and cope with their feelings.*** Invite questions and comments. Provide a safe, nonjudgmental setting for these conversations. Classrooms and small groups offer students a chance to see how others are responding. They can share coping strategies and provide mutual support.

**3. *Help students find additional resources.*** Many students will have a fairly straightforward reaction to the death and cope well with the grieving process. Others may have more complicated reactions. This might include students who were close to the deceased or the family, who had conflicts with the deceased, or who identify in some way with the person who died. It might also include students facing other challenges, such as a

seriously ill family member, a recent death in the family, or pre-existing emotional challenges. Talking with a counselor who has experience in bereavement can be helpful. This is especially important for any student experiencing a worsening of anxiety symptoms, depression or thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

**4. *Help younger students understand concepts about death.*** Younger students may have more trouble understanding certain concepts about death, such as that all living things eventually die, or the fact that the person who died is no longer feeling fear or pain.

All schools should have a school crisis team in place that develops the response plan and reviews it regularly. While these events are inevitably challenging, having an effective plan in place allows schools to respond quickly in a thoughtful and productive manner. While it will not take away the pain people feel about the death, it will offer the greatest likelihood of offering the support students and staff most need.

*Find out more about the specific steps schools can take at the website for the Coalition to Support Grieving Students ([www.grievingstudents.org](http://www.grievingstudents.org)). AFSA is a member of the coalition. ■*

# Ending Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The AFL-CIO in February hosted a session to review effective strategies to combat sexual harassment in the workplace. AFSA was among the unions participating in “Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: There is Power in My Union.”

In his opening remarks, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka acknowledged that sexual harassment is a major problem, even within labor. “Labor is still the greatest force for social change in America—we are a part of the solution.... No worker, no matter how high up or low they are, should be treated like a piece of property,” he said. “Together, we can create an America where every single person can work free from sexual harassment.”

“This is a watershed moment,” federation Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler said. “I cannot think of a better group than the leaders in this room.... Fighting for dignity and respect on the job is what we do. Harassment is more likely to be addressed in a unionized workplace.”

The session also featured a distinguished panel sharing their organizations’ perspective and efforts to improve workplace environments. Panelists included SAG-AFTRA President Gabrielle Carteris; National Women’s Law Center President and CEO Fatima Goss Graves; NoVo Foundation President Pamela Shifman; National Domestic Workers Alliance State Policy Director Rocío Ávila; and UNITE HERE Local 1 President Karen Kent.

Carteris said many of her union’s members were unaware of their rights.

“This is an incredible moment in time, and we must get out of the talk and into the do. This is about all of us stepping forward.”

This moment in time felt different than others in our nation’s history, said Goss Graves, who noted that all of the people coming together and sharing their stories is leading toward a powerful cultural shift. She said that shift must bring policy and leadership changes, as well as real solutions. Goss Graves highlighted the NWLC’s \$20 million legal defense fund for sexual harassment cases, and pointed out that her organization has heard from more than 1,000 women and men—many of them union members.

In her remarks, Shifman emphasized that fair and equitable workplaces, along with a greater number of women and women of color in leadership, are necessary to bring an end to sexual harassment in the workplace. She called for a movement that builds “upon the bravery of those who have spoken out.”

However, there are those who cannot afford to be courageous. “Many workers do not have the benefit of labor protections,” Ávila said, noting that “not every worker has the ability to come forward” for fear of retaliation. She also discussed the immigration and economic threats facing low-wage workers, urging leaders to work with

allies to create a policy agenda specific to low-wage domestic workers.

Kent gave an overview of the sexual harassment that many of Chicago’s hospitality workers face; in recent surveys, 49 percent of hotel workers reported experiencing sexual harassment. UNITE HERE scored a major victory in October 2017 when the Chicago City Council passed the “Hands Off, Pants On” ordinance. The measure requires hotel employers to provide a panic button to any hotel worker who works alone in rooms, to develop, maintain and comply with a written anti-sexual harassment policy, and prohibits employers from retaliating against a hotel worker for reporting sexual harassment or assault by a guest.

After the panel, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) discussed the issue as it unfolds across all workplaces, including in the military and even the halls of Congress.

“One in four women have experienced harassment in the workplace,” she said, calling on labor to take a leading role in working to end such experiences. “The fundamental debate is whether we value women. When we protect the predator, then we do not value women.”

Gillibrand has introduced S. 2203, the Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Harassment Act of 2017, which would amend Title 9 of the United States Code (Arbitration) to void pre-dispute arbitration agreements for victims of sexual harassment or discrimination based on sex, and also require a judge, rather than an arbitrator, decide whether the arbitration agreement is enforceable. ■

## SCHOOL PRINCIPALS CALL FOR ACTION ON SCHOOL SAFETY

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our own in Newtown, Connecticut,” Logan continued. “Unlike after Newtown, though, our heartbreak is leavened by hope, because Parkland’s students are speaking up for change and people are listening.”

Logan stressed that to enhance school safety, principals must have a seat at the table, rather than be handed a number of tasks to implement. “Not only do principals and school leaders have the responsibility for creating a safe and secure learning environment for students, they have long experience grappling with building safety issues,” he wrote. “Indeed, many of our local affiliates have worked closely with their respective school districts and have already developed commonsense solutions to ensure the safety of their schools. This is the kind of coordination that must be done, and that we will bring to this discussion.

“I appreciate your deep concern about this issue and want to express to you my gratitude for your demand that Congress hold hearings on this issue, and for your active participation in the listening session on school safety with the president,” Logan wrote. “It is clear that you care deeply about finding real solutions to gun violence in our schools, and we could not agree more. Let us come together to work for real solutions to this terrible, terrible problem. I stand ready and willing to assist in any way.”

President Trump and the National Rifle Association have proposed some student safety solutions, yet those ideas have raised concern.

The National Rifle Association’s School Shield program highlighted by NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre at the Conservative Political Action Conference in February would provide

schools with resources to train armed educators.

While there are some aspects of the School Shield program worth a closer examination, including information on threats, vulnerabilities and risk assessments, arming educators is the wrong solution.

AFSA opposes the arming of school personnel or school volunteers at school sites, having passed a resolution at the 14th Triennial Convention in 2015 stating, “educators and school volunteers should not be used to enforce security and police activities.”

“While we all understand the need to make schools secure and safe, putting guns in the hands of principals, teachers and other school professionals while on duty will not accomplish that goal. In fact, it may make students feel less comfortable and emotionally unsafe,” said Logan in a statement in response to the NRA’s School Shield program.

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*“While we all understand the need to make schools secure and safe, putting guns in the hands of principals, teachers and other school professionals while on duty will not accomplish that goal. In fact, it may make students feel less comfortable and emotionally unsafe.”*

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“We must put aside partisan politics and discuss reasonable solutions. We support the 2nd Amendment. We have members that are gun owners and gun enthusiasts. But guns like an AR-15, a weapon of war, goes beyond our basic rights. Even the Supreme Court has established that as fact,” said Logan. ■

### ***Take Control of Your Union—Submit Your Resolution!***

The AFSA 15th Triennial Constitutional Convention will be held July 26–29, 2018, at the National Harbor complex, just minutes from Washington, D.C. At the convention, delegates will discuss and vote on several policy resolutions—one of the most important actions taken at the convention. That is why it is critical we hear from YOU, as the adopted resolutions will help shape the direction of our union for the next several years.

To submit a resolution, please send it to [resolutions@AFSAAdmin.org](mailto:resolutions@AFSAAdmin.org).  
The deadline to submit resolutions is April 30, 2018.

View resolutions from past conventions at  
[www.afsaadmin.org/category/actioncenter/policy-resolutions/](http://www.afsaadmin.org/category/actioncenter/policy-resolutions/).

For more information, please visit [www.AFSAAdmin.org/2018convention](http://www.AFSAAdmin.org/2018convention).

# Leaders Strategize on Strengthening Unions

AFSA members joined their brothers and sisters in labor at the AFL-CIO's Great Lakes and Northeast District strategy sessions in January and February. The sessions covered the new AFL-CIO regional structure, the 2018 political landscape, mapping union locals, worksite communications, union density and more. Here's how two AFSA members described their experiences:

**"I decided to take a step toward learning more about what our national labor organization is doing and attended the Great Lakes District strategy session. One of the most memorable sessions was 'Tools to Engage Members and Communities,' led by the Union Veterans Council. It focused on the development of one-page policy documents and talking points to educate, engage and mobilize members.**

**"Other sessions helped me understand ways to combat the likely outcome of the *Janus* decision pending in the Supreme Court, which would change the landscape for public-sector unions. I also learned how to talk to my members about the real benefits of union membership, and some new and better ways of discussing issues and candidates.**

**"I am glad I took advantage of the opportunity to attend this important meeting of the minds within the labor movement. I left both armed with new strategies and tactics for bringing our members together to impact our world, and with a sense of affirmation for some of the strategies we are already employing."**

—Troy LaRaviere, president of Chicago Principals & Administrators Association (CPAA), AFSA Local 2 (commenting on the Great Lakes District strategy session in Detroit)

**"As with all AFL-CIO events, the strategy session was a motivating experience, where I had the opportunity to collaborate with our brothers and sisters from unions all over the district. These events are always special, because we get to see how much we all have in common, including some of our challenges when it comes to getting more members involved with union business. With the *Janus* case looming, it has become evident that we must join forces and promote all that we do for our membership.**

**"The information that I received at the meeting motivated me to take action with my local to help preserve our union. As vice president, I am involved in many of our union activities, but I now understand the importance of communicating these activities with the members so they can understand all that we do, and how it is now more important than ever to stay together in solidarity.**

**"One of the sessions that I attended gave me several strategies to involve more of our members, including taking the time to get to know our members on a personal basis and tapping into their strengths to offer them opportunities to engage in union activities."**

—Victor Cristofaro, vice president of Hartford Principals' and Supervisors' Association (HPSA), AFSA Local 22 (commenting on the Northeast District strategy session in Silver Spring, Maryland)

# AFSA Gives Back During MLK Conference

Hundreds of activists and community leaders attended the 2018 AFL-CIO Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference in Houston in mid-January, including three AFSA members from Hartford, Connecticut. The three-day annual event strengthens the relationship of the labor and civil rights movement and encourages attendees to make Dr. King's dream a reality. This year's theme, "Reclaiming the Dream: Strategize, Organize, Mobilize!," focused on empowering working communities and getting families to enjoy the benefits of labor.

Attendees participated in community town halls and workshops, and heard presentations from various speakers to learn how to better advocate for racial and economic equity, and gain strategies to organize and mobilize in their communities.

AFSA members also spent a day volunteering at Buckner International, an organization that offers assistance to single mothers and senior citizens. Volunteers organized a trailer filled with donated bags of clothing, shoes, toys and assorted household items.

"I was impressed with all the unions (government employees, steelworkers, nurses, janitors, public workers and aviation workers, etc.) represented at the conference," said Sandra Inga, AFSA general vice president and president of the Hartford Principals' and Supervisors' Association (HPSA), AFSA Local 22. ■



(L to R): Miriam Yeung and Nicole Jones, members of Hartford Principals' and Supervisors' Association (HPSA), AFSA Local 22, volunteering at Buckner International.

An advertisement for Osmo for Schools. It features a young girl in a pink swimsuit and goggles, swimming underwater. She is holding a large, colorful fish-shaped object. The background is blue with various colorful fish and bubbles. The Osmo logo is at the top, and the text "FOR SCHOOLS" is below it. At the bottom, it says "Learning right now!" and "Find out more at OsmoForSchools.com". There is also a small image of a tablet device.

# Retiree Benefit Workshops Available for Locals

In an effort to educate more retirees about their benefits, AFSA President Diann Woodard launched the AFSA Retiree Outreach Service Program for locals in 2016.

The goal of the program is to develop a coordinated support system to assist retired AFSA members in accessing health and related services in their area. The program provides ongoing training and workshops, and federal, state and local support services for AFSA retiree members.

AFSA retiree Felice Hannah serves as the union's retiree outreach liaison. Hannah has served for the past 19 years as a volunteer Medicare consultant. She provides assistance in navigating the health care system, counsels individuals regarding their health coverage, assists beneficiaries with disabilities in applying for transportation and enrolling in programs to lower their prescription drug costs, facilitates estate planning, Medicare and Social Security outreach workshops, assists beneficiaries in securing Medicaid/Medicare home health services and services in other related areas.

Since the implementation of the AFSA Retiree Outreach Program, Hannah has developed a coordinated support

system by AFSA locals in Chicago, Connecticut, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. The next workshop is scheduled for the City Association of Supervisors and Administrators (CASA), AFSA Local 20 on June 13 in Newark, New Jersey.

"Sincere thanks to the local presidents and the retiree local presidents for their warm reception and follow up with their members in providing ongoing support services through their outreach contacts," Hannah said.

Look for her workshop at the AFSA 15th Triennial Convention in July.

Contact Program Director Florida Woods or Nick Spina of Operations/Government Affairs at (202) 986-4209 for more information and to arrange a presentation on the program at your local. ■

*Members of Educadores Puertorriqueños en Acción Inc. (EPA), AFSA Local 105, attend the retiree outreach program session in Puerto Rico.*



# AFSA Steps Forward on School Safety as Administration and Congress Step Back

In the wake of the terrible school shooting in Parkland, Florida, AFSA Executive Vice President Ernest Logan pushed for quick and decisive action to stem the rising tide of school gun violence.

In response to President Trump's proposal to arm teachers and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' defense of this notion in her now-infamous interview on "60 Minutes," Logan wrote in the AFSA blog: "Concerning her remark that arming educators could be a viable local option to combating mass shootings, we could not disagree more. Putting guns in the hands of educators will not accomplish that goal. In fact, it may make the entire school community feel less safe.

"We will reiterate what we have already said: Educators are not law enforcement officers; educators are not SWAT team members; the role of an educator is to teach our children," Logan said. He also called for the secretary to establish a National School Safety Task Force that includes AFSA members with experience on school safety.

On the day of another school shooting incident in southern Maryland, DeVos testified before a House Appropriations subcommittee about the president's proposed FY19 budget; she once again found herself defending the administration's school safety proposals. Congressional Democrats grilled her on a host of gun safety issues, including universal background checks, raising the age limit for purchasing guns and arming teachers. To most questions, she gave indirect answers. At one point, Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) asked her how the department could find money to make teachers sharpshooters, but not enough to train them by funding Title II-A.

DeVos also struggled to respond to an interrogation led by Reps. Barbara Lee

(D-Calif.) and Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) around the department's interest in rescinding Obama-era guidance on school discipline, which aimed to curb disproportionate discipline and penalties accorded students of color. Lee asked the secretary to comment on the racial disparity regarding disciplinary actions, and how she thinks arming teachers would affect this. Later, when DeVos defended the proposed \$1 million cut to the department's Office of Civil Rights by saying there have been more civil rights investigations with less money, Lee was incredulous. Clark's questioning delved into the secretary's Commission on School Safety, to be composed of DeVos and the secretaries of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and the Justice Department. Clark assailed the task force, asking DeVos: "Just four cabinet secretaries? No experts? No Democrats? Is that it?"

When the topic turned to increasing mental health support in schools, even DeVos agreed with Democrats that this was important. Indeed, in her opening statement she called for more mental health counseling. However, DeVos could not justify to Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) why the proposed FY19 budget zeroed out the Title IV-A block grant, which is a source of school mental health service funding, saying ultimately in response to another question on Title IV-A funding from Clark: "Our current scenario (meaning recent shootings) suggests we should revisit this and support Congress readdressing this."

Logan weighed in strongly on the issue again after the hearing. Taking to the AFSA blog, he said: "Secretary

DeVos' performance at today's House Appropriations subcommittee hearing on the Department of Education's FY19 budget provided me little comfort that the administration is taking school safety seriously. The proposed FY19 budget for the department is itself not a serious document as it calls for eliminating the only program—the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program—that supports school mental health services."

Logan continued: "I believe that it is time not only for a real conversation, but also for real action on school gun violence. We need to have the actual experts on school safety involved in making recommendations and sharing best practices, not a bunch of federal bureaucrats who are new to and unversed in the subject. We also need real dollars put behind hiring mental health professionals at schools to help identify and treat troubled youth who are dangers to themselves and others. A real budget that invests in this priority—not the joke budget that House appropriators debated this morning—is a must. Finally, we need bipartisan courage to address a root cause of school shootings—easy access to guns. If Florida's governor, who received a 100 percent rating from the NRA, can sign into law a bill that makes significant changes to state gun laws, then certainly our nation's president can do the same."

## Congress Saves Teacher and Principal Professional Development Funding

In a big win for AFSA, House and Senate negotiators reached a deal on FY18 appropriations in late March that

would increase overall federal education spending by nearly \$2.7 billion and would preserve level funding (\$2.055 billion) for Title II-A, which supports professional development for all educators and allows states to spend up to 3 percent of their funding specifically on principals. This funding success is of particular note, as both President Trump and the House of Representatives had sought to eliminate all funding for this program. With this victory, many states now can move ahead with plans to provide directed professional learning activities for principals, like the state of Missouri, which already is running a Principal Leadership Academy for all of its principals. AFSA worked closely with a group that included the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals to protect Title II-A.

Another big winner in this spending deal was the Title IV-A Student Support and

Academic Enrichment grant program, which provides funding for health and safety programs, well-rounded academic programs and educational technology. Under the terms of this spending deal, Title IV-A would see its allocation for next year jump by \$700 million to \$1.1 billion. Congress justified this increase based on the need to invest in mental health services. Last year, the program was funded only at \$400 million, which represented about 25 percent of its authorized level. On a related note, the agreement also would authorize the STOP School Violence Act, which includes \$75 million in Department of Justice grants to states and local and tribal governments for school safety and coordination with law enforcement.

In terms of President Trump's stated priorities, the bill proves something of a mixed bag. While it contains no new funding for the president's proposed voucher program, it increases charter school funding by \$58 million. Another

presidential priority, STEM and computer science education, received some love as the final deal provided the Education, Innovation and Research Grant program with a \$20 million increase and report language that says that \$50 million of the program's \$120 million is supposed to go for "innovative STEM projects, including computer science education." Further, the report language promises that all of these program's funds will go toward STEM and computer science in 2019. If that occurs, the president will move much closer to his stated intention to reserve \$200 million annually in this area.

Even as Congress completes its work on FY18 appropriations, it already has begun the legislative process for FY19 funding. The president's budget again calls for overall cuts to the education budget and the elimination of Title II-A and Title IV-A. AFSA already has begun the push to protect these and other important investments. ■

## Letter From a Member

I am a lifelong professional educator—first as a classroom teacher, then as a school counselor, finally as a school administrator. My job was to educate children.

I also was in the military where I was trained, for eight weeks, to fire weapons capable of killing people.

The two occupations are separate and should be. Therefore, I oppose the calls to arm educators. I would not want my children or grandchildren to be in a classroom with an armed educator who had minimal firearms training. Army qualifications with weapons take 6–8 weeks, and shooting at paper targets is different from shooting at people.

The tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, has caused knee-jerk reactions from the president on down to Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, who said, "They are coming for your guns."

I am a diehard believer in the 2nd Amendment and support it.

—Franklin Schargel  
retiree member of Council of Supervisors & Administrators (CSA), AFSA Local 1;  
owner of <http://www.schargel.com/>



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## AFSA 15TH TRIENNIAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

### Exploring the Changing Landscape of Public Education

## Make Your Plans Now!

July 26–29, 2018

National Harbor

Minutes from Downtown Washington, D.C.

- Learn innovative educational strategies
- Fight for social justice for all students
- Get insights on political and legislative activism
- Overcome challenges facing the labor movement
- Understand retiree opportunities and resources

The convention and professional development sessions are open to all AFSA members as nonvoting guests.

Delegate selection will be coordinated by each local in accordance with the AFSA Constitution. Delegates will adopt policy resolutions and positions on key education and societal issues, debate amendments to the AFSA Constitution, and elect officers and general vice presidents to help govern the future of AFSA.

Shape your future....Get active in your union....  
Make a difference in your community.

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