



April 14, 2014

Dear AFT Officer:

In the last few years, when the AFT encountered threats to our very existence, you made sure we had the resources to play offense *and* defense. We have fought the good fight in community after community, and while we have taken some lumps, we have had some important victories as well—and we have grown stronger and more resilient.

But the climate is still dangerous. If anything, the threat is even greater now because our opponents are doubling down. And, as a result of a recent Supreme Court decision, they can spend unlimited funds in their fights against government and public services, public education, higher education, retirement security, living wages, quality healthcare, voting rights and workers' rights.

Our opponents now realize we are not going away, but it seems like they will do anything to hurt our members, many of whom are reeling from attacks on pensions and bargaining rights. We face continued assaults through privatization, profiteering and deprofessionalization in the schools, universities, hospitals and institutions that serve the American public.

As our members and our locals continue to struggle with ongoing austerity and cuts to state and local budgets, the AFT is committed to using its resources judiciously. So, with a discipline honed over the last six years, we will continue to take a stringent approach to our own budget.

But redeploying resources can only go so far, especially when faced with the unlimited funds our adversaries command. Therefore, we have carefully crafted a dues increase to support all of the work our union does and to restore funds that have been stretched thin in recent years, including the Militancy/Defense Fund and the Solidarity Fund.

The dues increase is intended to support organizing efforts, mobilize political power and enable us to incubate new approaches and solutions to helping those we serve, their families and our communities. It will sustain our communications capacity, now expanded to operate in this digital age. And it will bolster the research and strategic initiatives that provide the evidence that anchors our work. Meanwhile, we will continue to offer Innovation Fund grants to support solution-driven work by our affiliates and members, even as we step back from contributions by the Gates Foundation.

Through our expanded capacity for member and community mobilization, the AFT is out in full force, providing support for short-term emergencies and building long-term organizing campaigns. We were there for the Chicago strike as well as countless other contract battles, including in St. Paul, Minn., and Lawrence, Mass. We supported striking RNs in Youngstown, Ohio, and locked out healthcare workers in New London, Conn.—and we are now working to keep SUNY Downstate Medical Center open in Brooklyn, N.Y. We are organizing around legislative fights in New Mexico, Louisiana and other states across the country. And we are on the ground in places like Philadelphia and Detroit, where schools are being closed and policymakers are denying our children the public education they deserve.

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AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Healthcare

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