



*Diverse. Dedicated. Determined.*  
*Proudly Representing You Since 1946*

**AFT Local 943, IFT, AFL-CIO**

**Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers**

15521 South 70th Court, Orland Park, Illinois 60462  
 (708) 633-0943 Fax (708) 633-0944

**2022-2023 Union Membership Guide** [www.aft943.org](http://www.aft943.org)

The Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, AFT-Local 943, unites 3,127 teachers, paraprofessionals, school-related personnel (PSRP), and employees in Southwest Suburban Cook County, Illinois as well as 361 retirees, into a federated union comprised of dedicated members who articulate the needs, desires, and legitimate rights of our educational community. In order to help accomplish this, we hold regular meetings at our Union office (See “Meeting Dates” below). At AFT Local 943, no person shall be denied membership, nor shall this organization ever discriminate against individual members or applicants for membership on the basis of race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, disability, social, political, or economic status, or national origin.



**This year you will be receiving detailed information regarding the following Local 943 business related items:**

- Local 943’s constitution was last amending in 2007 and is long overdue for some updating. Proposed amendments will be presented to the Senate and then to Local 943 members for ratification.
- Election details regarding Local 943’s officers will be shared with you later this year. Keep an eye out for an “Official Notice” which will outline the nomination and election procedures. The six (6) officers of the executive board include the following positions:

- President**
- Secretary**
- Treasurer**

- Vice President or Communications and Public Relations**
- Vice President for Educational and Professional Issues**
- Vice President for Political Activities**

**What is the Local 943 Senate?**

The senate is the governing body of the local. They give input and cast votes on the latest, most relevant information on matters such as legislative issues, union policies, professional concerns, negotiations, recertification, scholarship winners, etc.

*\*All Local 943 members are welcome to attend, but only appointed or elected senators will be eligible to vote and in-person meeting are based on the health regulations and commendations of IDHP and CDC.*

**What is the Universal Team?**

Council presidents are invited to join members of the Local 943 Executive Board and IFT Constituency Council to give input into planning the agenda of our senate meetings. This small group forum is designed to allow open discussion in a non-formal setting.

**Senate Meeting Dates**  
*4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (in-person)*

<p><b>September 13, 2022</b></p> <p><b>October 11, 2022</b></p> <p><b>December 13, 2022</b></p>	<p><b>February 14, 2023</b></p> <p><b>April 11, 2023</b></p> <p><b>May 9, 2023</b></p>
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*All designated Union Senators and Member Guests are invited to attend\*. A light meal and refreshments are served.*

**Senate Meetings will be held at AFT Local 943 Meeting Hall**  
**15521 South 70<sup>th</sup> Court**  
**Orland Park, IL 60462**  
**(708) 633-0943 FAX (708) 633-0943**

**Universal & Executive Board Meeting Dates**  
*4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Universal (remotely)*  
*5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - Executive Board (remotely)*

<p><b>August 30, 2022</b></p> <p><b>September 27, 2022</b></p> <p><b>November 29, 2022</b></p>	<p><b>January 31, 2023</b></p> <p><b>March 21, 2023</b></p> <p><b>April 25, 2023</b></p>
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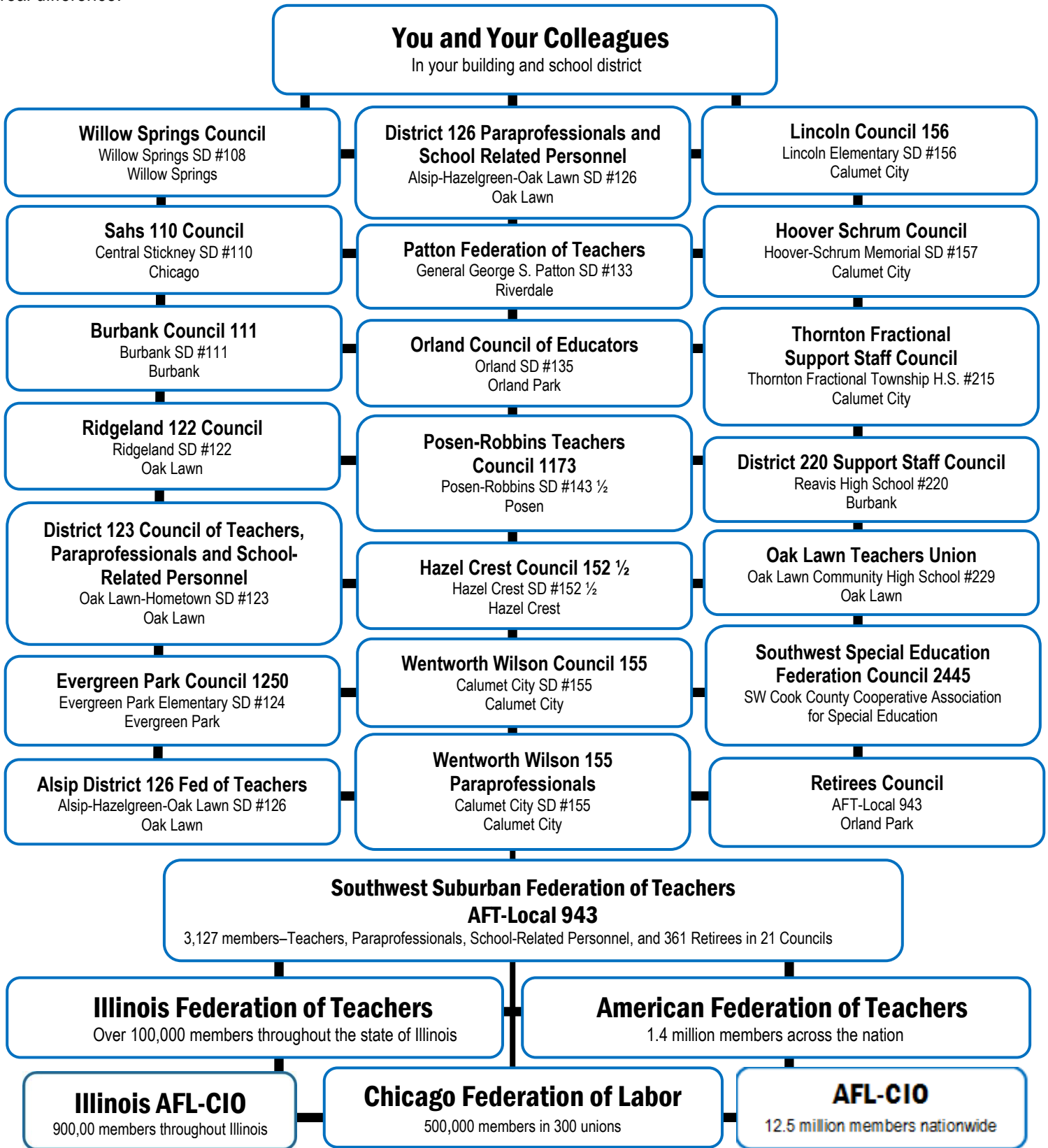
*All Council Presidents and IFT Constituency Council Members are invited to attend Universal Meetings*

*All Local 943 Officers are invited to attend Executive Board Meeting.*

**Be sure to check your email for remote meeting links.**

# The "U" in Union is YOU!

There is no union without you. We are thankful for all of you who stand in solidarity with working people. Each AFT Local 943 member is an essential part in building a strong union, especially at your workplace. However, you also play an important part of a much larger picture. Each of us alone can only do so much, but with the power of a collective voice, we can make a real difference.



## “What Are My Weingarten Rights?”

If this discussion could, in any way, lead to my being disciplined or terminated or cause an effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

One of the functions of the union is to prevent management from intimidating employees. This is especially important in closed-door meetings when management attempts to induce employees to confess to mistakes or wrongdoing.

Employees have the right to union representation during investigatory interviews. This right was established by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975 in the case called *NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) v J. Weingarten, Inc.* The rules the Court declared are called Weingarten Rights.

Weingarten Rights are applicable during meetings employees are asked to attend which are investigative in nature. **Investigatory meetings** occur whenever management questions an employee to obtain information or whenever an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says. Investigatory meetings relate to such subjects as: absenteeism, accidents, compliance with school rules, damage to school property, drinking, drugs, falsification of records, fighting, insubordination, lateness, poor attitude, poor work performance, sabotage, work slowdowns, theft and violation of safety rules.

Not every discussion with management is an investigatory meeting. Management has the right to speak to an employee about the proper way to do a job. Even if the manager asks the employee questions, this is not investigatory because the possibility of discipline is removed. However, if the manager takes a hostile attitude because he/she doesn't like the employee's answers, then the meeting becomes investigatory and *Weingarten* applies.

### When an investigatory meeting occurs, the following rules apply:

If notified of such meeting in advance, the employee may request union representation before or during the meeting. After the request, the employer must choose from among three options:

1. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives;
2. Deny the request and end the meeting immediately; OR
3. Give the employee a choice of (a) having the interview without representation (*usually a mistake!*) OR (b) ending the interview.

If the employer denies the request for union representation and questions the employee, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee may refuse to answer.

Another point to remember is that if an employee is requested without prior notice, for example, to go to the office to talk about the employee's attendance, the employee cannot refuse to go to the office without union representation. Weingarten Rights do not arise until the meeting begins. The employee must make the request after the meeting begins. The employee can only refuse to go to the meeting if the employer makes clear in advance that union representation will be denied.

(Information in this article taken from *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards* by Robert M. Schwartz)

## “What is a Collective Bargaining Agreement?”

A collective bargaining agreement or CBA is the contract between you and your employer. It acts as a legal document that is negotiated with your employer by your union.

The best way to avoid confusion about the contents of your contract is to be informed. Since the contract guides the actions of both you and your employer, you should become very familiar with its language. Be sure to obtain a copy of your contract from your union building representative or council president.

Every contract is different, so it is important to contact your union building representative or council president, NOT your employer, if you have questions about anything in your contract.

Seek the advice and assistance of a union representative immediately if you believe a contract violation has occurred.

## “What is a Grievance?”

A grievance is a complaint by an employee, a group of employees or the union that there has been a violation or misinterpretation of a specific term of your contract agreement. Sometimes it can refer to an established policy or practice that has been applied unfairly. Note: Not all contracts allow a “past practice” grievance.

### If you believe a grievance has occurred, please do the following:

1. Check the contract to find the section that is to be grieved.
2. Check the grievance procedure in the contract and be sure to follow the timeline. Grievances need to be filed in a timely manner and can be lost if the timeline is not followed.
3. Contact your union leader (building representative or a council officer) whenever you feel a grievance might be warranted. Your council president should know about problems as they occur and will then contact your IFT field service director or the Local office.
4. Document all of the facts:  
Who is involved? (employee, supervisor, witnesses)  
When did it happen? (date and time)  
Where did it happen?  
What happened? (separate fact from opinion)  
Why is it a grievance? (contract section, past practice, board policy)  
How to remedy the grievance?  
What must be done to make the grievant Whole?
5. It is important that a grievant write down, as soon as possible, a narrative describing the situation that started the grievance.
6. Council presidents should contact AFT-Local 943 at 708-633-0943 to keep the office informed of the suspected grievance.

### Don't be insubordinate!

The act of refusing or deliberately failing to carry out a legal assignment could lead to a charge of insubordination. When in doubt, carry out the work under protest and follow up the assignment with a grievance.

### Obey first and grieve later.

Please remember that being insubordinate can lead to loss of job.



*Diverse, Dedicated, and Determined*

# Online Resources for Members

## Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers

AFT-Local 943

[www.aft943.org](http://www.aft943.org)

Website for your local union, Local 943. Stay up-to-date by visiting often.

## Illinois Federation of Teachers

[www.ift-aft.org](http://www.ift-aft.org)

IFT's website, where you can find news, professional development opportunities, and more.

## American Federation of Teachers

[www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

Website for our national union, the American Federation of Teachers. IFT members are AFT members, too.

## Member Benefits Sites

[www.aft.org/member-benefits](http://www.aft.org/member-benefits) and  
[www.unionplus.org/](http://www.unionplus.org/)

These sites highlight the service and discount programs offered through your AFT membership.

## Illinois AFL-CIO

[www.ilaf-cio.org](http://www.ilaf-cio.org)

Website for the Illinois federation of the AFL-CIO, an affiliate of the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

## Why IFT?

[www.ift-aft.org/ourimpact](http://www.ift-aft.org/ourimpact)

This page on the IFT's website explains the importance and advantages of union membership.

## Share My Lesson

[www.sharemylesson.com](http://www.sharemylesson.com)

The AFT facilitates "Share My Lesson," a digital platform for U.S. educators to collaborate and share teaching resources and innovative ideas.

## Colorin Colorado

[www.colorincolorado.org](http://www.colorincolorado.org)

This site provides resources for teachers and parents who work with English Language Learners.

## IFT's Tackling Racism page

[www.ift-aft.org/blm](http://www.ift-aft.org/blm)

Here you can find several useful resources to help us carve the future we all deserve

## IFT's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Racial Injustice Resources

[www.ift-aft.org/oeiresources](http://www.ift-aft.org/oeiresources)

This site provides a wealth of resources for teachers, students, and communities to help critically address inclusion topics.

## Illinois Elections

<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

Online voter registration for Illinois residents as well as other election-related information.

## Illinois Performance Evaluation Advisory Council & ISBE Balanced Assessment

[www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Evaluations.aspx](http://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Evaluations.aspx) and  
[www.isbe.net/Pages/Balanced-Assessment.aspx](http://www.isbe.net/Pages/Balanced-Assessment.aspx)

The PEAC council makes recommendations to the state as it develops new performance evaluation systems for teachers that incorporate student growth measures. ISBE Balanced Assessment provides resources on student learning objectives (SLOs).

## ISBE Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS)

[www.isbe.net/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.isbe.net/Pages/Home.aspx)

This site is where teachers enter professional development hours and check to ensure that their license, endorsement, and personal contact information is current. Teachers can also renew their licenses here.

## Illinois New Teacher Collaborative

<https://intc.education.illinois.edu/>

Illinois New Teacher Collaborative online provides resources for new teaching professionals, teacher mentors, and others interested in supporting new teachers.

## State Board Websites

[www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net)

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

[www.ibhe.org](http://www.ibhe.org)

Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)

[www.iccb.org](http://www.iccb.org)

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

## Pension Websites

[www.trsil.org](http://www.trsil.org)

Illinois Teachers Retirement System (TRS)

[www.imrf.org](http://www.imrf.org)

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)

[www.surs.com](http://www.surs.com)

State Universities Retirement System of IL (SURS)

[www.srs.illinois.gov](http://www.srs.illinois.gov)

State Employees Retirement System of IL (SERS)

## Illinois Legislature

[www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov)

Illinois General Assembly: House & Senate legislator and committee information, as well as Illinois legislation and laws, can be viewed from this site.

# I'm Committed to my Union

We care. We fight. We show up. We vote.

**Charles Harper is the IFT Field Service Director for the following councils\*:**



- Alsip District #126 Teachers/Certified
- Alsip District #126 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Evergreen Park #124
- Hazel Crest #152 ½
- Lincoln #156 Teachers/Certified
- Lincoln #156 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Orland #135 Teachers/Certified
- Orland #135 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Patton/Riverdale #133
- Posen-Robbins #143 ½ Teachers
- Thornton Fractional H.S. #215 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)

**Spencer Saal is the IFT Field Service Director for the following councils\*:**

- Burbank #111
- Hoover-Schrum #157
- Oak Lawn-Hometown #123
- Oak Lawn Community High School #229
- Reavis High School #220 Support Staff
- Ridgeland #122
- Sahs (Central Stickney) #110
- SW Cook County Cooperative/Special Education
- Wentworth Wilson #155 Teachers
- Wentworth Wilson #155 Paraprofessionals (PSRP)
- Willow Springs #108

\*Council assignments may be adjusted throughout the year as needed.

## Politics in the Workplace – Issues v. Politics

We build power brick-by-brick, or in our case, conversation-by-conversation. One-on-one conversations are extremely important to union success. Here are some tips about what's permissible when discussing issues v. politics.

**When at the worksite, remember the following:**

- ❖ **If it's on the ballot – Don't discuss it at the worksite.**
  - ✓ This includes candidates and referendums
  - ✓ If you want to talk about politics/candidates, make sure you use personal cell numbers and personal email addresses. (DO NOT USE DISTRICT/EMPLOYER EMAIL.)
- ❖ **What can you discuss openly?**
  - ✓ Legislative measures that may affect your profession or work
  - ✓ The need to contact legislators and urge support or opposition of a policy and/or legislation
  - ✓ Advocating for the signature or veto of a bill
  - ✓ Voter registration – checking voter registration status (<https://ova.elections.il.gov>) and getting people registered
  - ✓ Voting in general – encouraging people to vote

**Are you registered to vote?**

Go to <https://ova.elections.il.gov> to check your registration or to register to vote.

## Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers AFT Local 943 Executive Officers



Elaine Barlos, President  
Alfreida Jamison, Treasurer  
Catrina Niven, Secretary  
Bob Goldsbury, Vice President, Communications/Public Relations  
Andrew Weber, Vice President, Political Activities, COPE  
Brian Jurinek, Vice President, Educational and Professional Issues

### Local 943 Constituency Council and Committee Members

#### IFT PreK-12 Education Constituency Council

Elaine Barlos, Chairperson  
Alfreida Jamison, Leisl Robertson-Brown,  
and Andrew Weber

#### IFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel, PSRP, Constituency Council

Sandy Quero, and Valerie Wilhoite

#### IFT Next Generation Constituency Council

Eileen Kennedy

#### IFT Retirees Constituency Council

Judy Spirakes

#### Local 943 Defense Committee

Alfreida Jamison, Chairperson  
Elaine Barlos, Sue Benigni, Tina Thauer and Elaine Bernal

### IFT Executive Board Members

Elaine Barlos and Andrew Weber

### Staff Members

Judy Spirakes, Webmaster/Member Services  
Sandy Quero, Staff Writer  
Charles Harper, IFT Field Service Director  
Spencer Saal, IFT Field Service Director  
Karen O'Dea, IFT Support Staff

## 2022-2023 Union Dues Categories\*

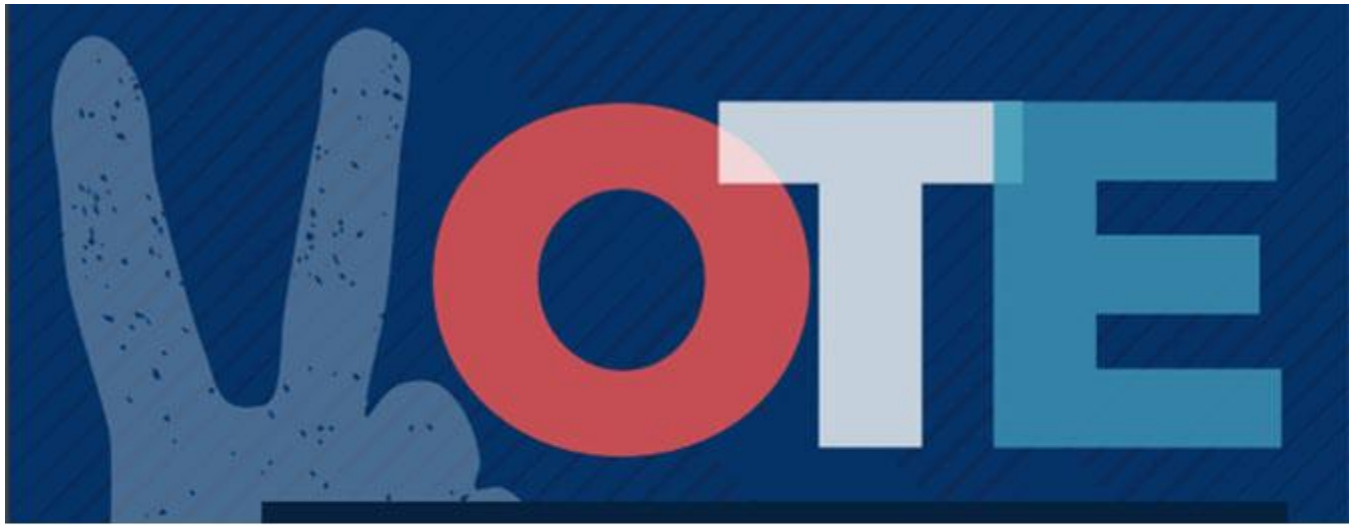
**Full Dues Rate:** for employees earning \$21,023 or salary equal to a beginning teacher's salary, whichever is greater

**Half Dues Rate:** for employees earning less than a beginning teacher, or \$21,023, whichever is greater, but more than or equal to \$17,388 per year

**Quarter Dues Rate:** for employees earning less than \$17,388 per year but more than or equal to \$10,557

**Eighth Dues Rate:** for employees earning less than \$10,557 per year

\*Dollar thresholds are established by the AFT national affiliate and are reviewed annually.



Remember to vote “YES” for the proposed amendment to the 1970 Illinois Constitution Bill of Rights regarding the Workers’ Rights Amendment The language on the ballot will be similar to the following:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>YES</b>	<b>For the proposed addition of Section 25 to Article I of the Illinois Constitution</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>NO</b>	

**Proposed Amendment to the 1970 Illinois Constitution  
Section 25 to Article I – BILL OF RIGHTS**

(a) Employees shall have the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions, and to protect their economic welfare and safety at work. No law shall be passed that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety, including any law or ordinance that prohibits the execution or application of agreements between employers and labor organizations that represent employees requiring membership in an organization as a condition of employment.

**For more detailed voter information, go to the following website:  
<https://www.ift-aft.org/voterinfo>**

**UNITED STATES GENERAL ELECTION  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022**