

Harry Schiffman

Henderson, NV

Hello, My name is Harry Schiffman and I am an electrician at UNLV and President of AFSCME Local 4041.

Local 4041 represents Nevada state employees, as well as employees for the City of West Wendover and Storey County.

For the last few months as Nevada has been fighting the COVID-19 public health crisis, public service workers across the state have continued to do what we do best- serve our community.

Front-line public services workers have put their lives at risk every day to continue state services during the pandemic.

Health care workers, corrections officers, sanitation workers and other public service workers are essential to strengthening our economy and helping all Nevadans get back to normalcy. We can do neither if we lay them off or ask them to take furloughs.

When our communities need us most, public service workers are there to find solutions and provide hope.

State employees know our jobs best and we are prepared to be part of the solution to help the state navigate through tough choices. Our communities and workers cannot suffer another round of devastating cuts to public services like we did over 10 years ago.

When our state falls on hard times, state employees are always on the menu, but now, we demand a seat at the table.

Joe Roberts

Fernley, NV

Hello, my name is Joe Roberts and I am a corrections officer for the state of Nevada for the last 17 years, and president of the Big Meadows Chapter of AFSCME Local 4041.

I worked through the 2008 financial crises and have seen what cutting an agency's budget can do. We spent 5 years without a pay increase, as well as furloughs and pay cuts.

To be quite honest, I am not sure how we managed through that crisis. I struggled to pay my mortgage at the time just like so many other Nevadans. With a family to take care of, these were truly trying times. And we've never fully recovered- many of the cuts that were made to state employees or to resources to do our jobs were never restored.

In the years since the great recession, we've continued to be understaffed and have gone without equipment upgrades. In fact, many times cuts to public services meant we can go months without fixing basic equipment like light bulbs and door locks if they break.

We simply cannot take any more cuts. We are already operating on a shoestring budget and have been for many years. Cutting our budget will cause more security issues and hinder any progress made with inmate rehabilitation programs.

Nevada still has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the nation, laying off or furloughing state employees will only add to these numbers, putting our state further behind on the road to recovery.

Alonzo Thornton

Henderson, NV

Hello, my name is Alonzo Thornton and I am a psychiatric nurse at Desert Regional Center.

DRC is a residential center for severely disabled adults. My co-workers and I help some of the most vulnerable of Nevadans with some of life's basic tasks – including hygiene and eating.

DRC remained an essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of my co-workers and I remained committed to our work helping our residents.

At times, our work can be dangerous due to the intimate nature of our tasks and the unpredictability of our residents. As humans, sometimes we just have bad days and our residents are no exception.

But our residents have grown to trust us and rely on us to provide them with the care and respect they deserve. This trust is essential to the wellbeing and development of our residents.

As our state begins the road to recovery, now is not the time to inflict more harm on the most vulnerable of our communities by cutting services, or by furloughing workers or cutting jobs.

We know how to best serve our residents and demand to have a say in how our work looks moving forward amidst changing safety regulations and potential budget cuts.

James Cook

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is James Cook and I am a senior corrections officer.

State employees have been on the frontlines of this pandemic, continuing to provide services to Nevadans from all ages and all walks of life at correctional facilities, in-patient residential treatment and long-term care facilities, mental health clinics and road work.

Correctional facilities remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the state has a responsibility to care for those in its custody and there's no way to do our jobs remotely.

The state also has a responsibility to care of its employees as well.

Another layer of danger was added to our already challenging jobs as we put our health at risk when we continued to show up to work.

We've proudly served during this pandemic, and we don't deserve furloughs, pay cuts or job loss.

Stephanie Dube

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Stephanie Dube. I am a custodial worker at Desert Willow Treatment Centers, a psychiatric treatment center for youth in southern Nevada. I am also a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

Desert Willow is an in-patient facility, and it is vital for the health and well-being of the patients we serve that we stay open through this pandemic to continue their health care. As a front-line worker, I've continued to show up and do my part to ensure these young people get the treatment they need in a safe and clean environment.

Thousands of public service workers across the state like myself have continued to show up during these challenging times, putting our lives on the line, to ensure our communities have what they need to stay safe and healthy.

Custodial workers are especially essential to slowing the spread of COVID-19 by implementing additional cleaning measures at hospitals, clinics, schools and offices.

We will continue to do our part, because without us, Nevada cannot move forward. We cannot beat this pandemic or reopen and rebuild if people like myself are 'thanked' for their service and sacrifice with a pink slip. We don't deserve to be laid off or furloughed.

Daphne Deleon

Dayton, NV

Hello my name is Daphne Deleon. I am a project manager at the Department of Education, Training and Rehabilitation, where I manage a federal grant for youth vocational training programs. I also serve as president of the Washoe Chapter of AFSCME Local 40401.

In my work, I ensure that young Nevadans of all ability have the tools and opportunities needed to become successful adults. The current COVID-19 crisis has affected the ability of our program to operate as usual, but the public service workers who deliver this program have gone above and beyond to ensure minimal disruption to the services our young people have come to rely on for normalcy in their lives.

As public service workers, I am reminded daily that our work matters. That our communities are depending on us to do our jobs so they can be healthy and prosperous.

Nevada still has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the nation, laying off or furloughing state employees will only add to these numbers, putting our state further behind on the road to recovery.

This pandemic has shown that public services are important to the health and wellbeing of Nevadans, and I urge you to consider the impact on our state's recovery before making cuts to services or the workers who provide them.

Cameron Hopkins

Reno, NV

Hello, my name is Cameron Hopkins, I am a mental health counselor and a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

As a mental health counselor, I help parents create structures to improve their home lives and take care of their children. I provide training for parents who have recently reunified with their children to create a safe and stable home for their families.

Even with a global pandemic, families are still depending on us to help them through rebuilding their home lives.

Tens of thousands of state employees have continued to work on alternatives schedules, including working from home and utilizing tele-communication, to continue social services.

Many state workers already work with a bare-bones budget, further cuts will make it even harder for us to take care of the most vulnerable Nevadans.

Cutting state services, and the workers like me who continued to support our communities through these challenging times, puts Nevada families and kids at risk.

We know what it takes to help Nevada's families move forward, and we demand to have our voices heard as our departments make decisions on cuts to services and to its workforce.

Fred Fonseca

North Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Fred Fonseca, I am a corrections officer and member of AFSCME Local 4041.

Tens of thousands of state employees have continued to provide public services as our lives were collectively upended with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employees at DETR have worked overtime, including 12-hour shifts, to ensure Nevadans received the economic support needed during these challenging times.

Corrections officers and staff have worked overtime due to chronic understaffing and workers being on leave due to contracting COVID-19.

Thousands of state employees have continued to show up to work because when Nevadans need us most, we show up.

We've proudly served our communities during this pandemic, and we don't deserve furloughs, pay cuts or job loss.

We know our jobs best and are ready to be part of the solution to our state's current financial challenges.

Stephanie Parker

Carson City, NV

Hello, my name is Stephanie Parker, I am a member of AFSCME Local 4041 and a grants and project analyst, where I oversee federal grants for local emergency responses.

In this current state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our communities look to public services to keep some normalcy to their lives.

Many state employees, I included, took to makeshift home offices to ensure that we can continue our work, so our communities have what they need to fight this pandemic.

State employees found ways to adjust how we provide services because we can't fight this pandemic or reopen the economy without strong public services and public service workers to deliver critical services.

With cuts to the state budget, services like road maintenance, child welfare, public safety and health care could be put in jeopardy. Ensuring these services means roads get fixed, our most vulnerable community members have access to health care and when we call 911, the ambulance shows.

Instead of cutting services or workers, we should look at closing tax loopholes and special giveaways.

Nevada still has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the nation, laying off or furloughing state employees will only add to these numbers, putting our state further behind on the road to recovery.

Any changes to our working conditions or lives must include input from state employees. We are on the front lines of supporting our communities through recovery, and I am confident that our expertise and experience allows us to be part formidable partners in any solutions to the state's current fiscal emergency.

Detelin V Georgiev

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Detelin Georgiev, I am a correctional officer and member of AFSCME Local 4041.

Correctional officers and staff continued to report for duty during the COVID-19 to keep our communities safe. During these challenging times, we put our health on the line to continue daily operations of state prisons.

We've proudly served during this pandemic, and we don't deserve furloughs, pay cuts or job loss.

Our department is already severely understaffed, any cuts to staff hours or pay will put workers and inmate safety at risk.

Instead of only considering cuts, we urge you to strongly consider closing loopholes in revenue, because regular Nevadans shouldn't be the only ones paying their fair share of taxes.

State employees are ready to be part of the conversation to find solutions to our state's fiscal emergency.

Michael Martinez

North Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Michael Martinez, I am a corrections officer and member of AFSCME Local 4041.

Since the Great Recession, state employees have had to provide more services with less resources.

This is especially true for corrections officers and staff.

Understaffing and limited resources have made it harder for us to do our jobs. Creative solutions don't keep us safe, they are a slap in the face to the fact that quite often we must do our jobs without the most basic of equipment or supplies.

Because, like first responders, nurses and doctors, our work is just as important. As Corrections officers and staff, we care for those under the custody of the state.

As Nevada rebuilds through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, cuts to public services and the workers who provide them is not the answer.

There are other changes we can start with to address the staffing shortages we face, such as putting us back on 12-hour shifts, which may reduce the need for furloughs and overtime.

We know our jobs best and we are ready to be part of the solution as our state faces a new budget crisis.

Gio Vega

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Gio Vega, I am a Developmental Support Technician at DRC and a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

DRC was deemed an essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic, and rightly so – it is a residential center for those with intellectual disabilities.

I proudly continued to report to work because I am passionate about the work I do to ensure these Nevadans have a clean and safe environment to thrive.

The residents at DRC depend on us for some of life's most basic tasks. Tasks that able-bodied people sometimes take for granted.

Cuts to these services, or to workers like me who provide this level of care, will have a devastating effect on some of the most vulnerable Nevadans.

Before our agency makes any changes to our work, state employees deserve to have a say in these changes. We know our residents and our work better than anyone else, and we have a special insight to what changes can be made to have minimum disruption to those in our care.

Angela Longman

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Angela Longman. I am a Developmental Support Technician at DRC and a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

I join thousands of Nevada state employees who continued to show up at work during the COVID-19 pandemic. We did so because many Nevadans depend on public services for their health and wellbeing.

At DRC, our residents are some of the most vulnerable of our community. They deserve the same dignity and respect as any Nevadan, and my co-workers and I are proud to provide our residents live comfortable lives.

State employees deserve dignity and respect on the job as well.

As our state faces an economic emergency due to COVID-19, it is important that we have a say in any decisions about changes to our work and lives.

My co-workers and I have chosen to organize as AFSCME Local 4041, and it is the state's duty to respect our choice and allow us our right to use our collective voice to have a say when changes are made that affect our work and our lives.

Denice Gatbonton

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Denice Gatbonton, I am Developmental Support Technician at DRC and a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I joined tens of thousands of Nevada state employees in ensuring that public services continued. In my job, I help Nevadans with severe intellectual and behavioral disabilities learn the basic tasks to live a comfortable life.

As our state begins this road to recovery, now is not the time to inflict more harm on our communities by cutting services, or by laying off or furloughing workers.

This pandemic has shown that public services are important to the health and wellbeing of Nevadans.

Cuts to public services means the health and safety of our residents are at risk. It also means that the wellbeing of our state employees like me is at risk.

Before any changes are made to our working conditions, state employees deserve to have a say in any decisions that affect our ability to care for our community and our ability to care for our own families.

Gary Sallee

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Gary Sallee. I am a safety trainer for NDOT and a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

In my work, safety is always top priority. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I worked with NDOT leaders across the state to implement new procedures to ensure that our employees could safely continue providing the essential road and public facility maintenance that our communities rely on.

As the public health emergency turns into a fiscal emergency, it is important that our state continue to prioritize the health and safety of both state workers and the public.

Making cuts to public services, including highway and public facility maintenance, puts our communities at risk.

The roads won't clear themselves. Hazardous spills won't magically go away. Public facilities won't maintain themselves.

It takes skilled and dedicated public services workers to make these things happen so our communities are safe.

Before any changes to our working conditions can be made, state employees need to have a say in these changes. We know our jobs better than anyone else and know where we can make a difference in the fiscal emergency the state faces.

Shamond Price

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, my name is Shamond Price, I am a Highway Equipment Mechanic and a member of AFSCME Local 4041.

As a mechanic, my work is very specialized and technical. I bring a wealth of skill and knowledge to my work, all to the benefit of our community.

Public service is important to me because I know I am making a difference in my community, and that is something I am proud of.

Like thousands of Nevada state employees, I continued to work during the COVID-19 pandemic because no even a pandemic stops traffic or the services needed to maintain our roads.

As our state begins the road to recovery, now is not the time to inflict more harm on our communities by cutting services, or by laying off workers.

Nevada still has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the nation, laying off or furloughing state employees will only add to these numbers, putting our state further behind on the road to recovery.

I join with thousands of Nevada state employees in demanding that we have a seat at the table where decisions are made about our working conditions and lives.

Olivia Henson

Las Vegas, NV

Hello, My name is Olivia Henson, I am an Family Support Specialist and member of AFSCME Local 4041.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I transitioned into tele-working so that my fellow Nevadans could continue to receive the social and financial support they needed to weather these challenging times.

As our state reached record numbers of unemployed workers, I was able to play a small part in providing hope to my community.

From my makeshift home office, I took many calls from Nevadans who were grateful for the chance of some stability as our world was upended.

Many of my fellow state employees at the Division of Welfare and Support Services or at the Unemployment Insurance Office of DETR are unable to give remarks today because these workers continue to help Nevadans find support and relief.

As our state begins this road to recovery, now is not the time to inflict more harm on our communities by cutting services, or by laying off or furloughing the very workers who have provided our communities with hope.

This pandemic has shown that public services are important to the health and wellbeing of Nevadans.

When our state falls on hard times, state employees are always the first to be asked to make sacrifices. We are on the front lines of our state's economic recovery, and we demand to have a say in any changes to our working conditions and lives.