



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
7 April 2021

Contact: Nate Pickett
Phone: 785-422-5118
Email: npickett@aftks.org

ICYMI: Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes Introduces Hazard Pay Program for Frontline Workers

Frontline Service Pay Act Uses Authority and Funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to Help Workers and Businesses Through Final Stages of the Pandemic

Topeka, KS - In an op-ed today published in the [Kansas City Star](#), Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes (D-21) outlined why she introduced the Frontline Service Pay Act, which will provide swift, direct relief for workers on the frontlines of the pandemic who make less than \$25 per hour at no cost to Kansas taxpayers. Sen. Sykes called on Republican Leadership and Governor Laura Kelly to work together to include the plan in upcoming budget negotiations.

Said **AFT Kansas President Sarah LaFrenz**, "As Topeka debates providing support for businesses struggling because of the pandemic, Kansas legislators must also act to support the essential workers who have kept our state running on bargain basement wages. The American Rescue Plan Act finally provides Topeka the necessary authority and resources to get it done.

"AFT Kansas fully endorses Sen. Sykes' Frontline Service Pay Program, and our tens of thousands of members will be working hard over the coming weeks to persuade their legislators to pass this important legislation before the session concludes."

The American Rescue Plan passed on March 11 earmarks federal funds that states can use to provide "premium pay" to essential workers. These frontline essential workers have kept Kansas running for over a year in challenging conditions. Many of the jobs on the frontlines of the pandemic are among the most low-paying in normal times. Attracting new workers to these jobs is difficult, and some experts have warned of potential shortages. The Frontline Service Pay Act will help employers recognize the hard work of their employees, improve workplace morale, and retain valued employees at no cost to employers.

Our gratitude for these workers is simply not enough: we need to recognize the risks workers are assuming in their paychecks. With the American Rescue Plan, we have resources to do just that by enacting the Frontline Service Pay Act with zero cost to Kansans. AFT Kansas urges our state legislators to use some of these federal funds to provide temporary hazard pay for the disproportionate risks our frontline essential workers have assumed on behalf of all Kansans.

Kansas Association of Public Employees/AFT-Kansas

1300 SW Topeka Blvd. • Topeka, KS 66612 • 785-325-0262 • Fax 785-235-3920 • Toll Free 1-800-232-5273
ks.aft.org



About AFT-Kansas

The American Federation of Teachers - Kansas is the largest public employee union in the state of Kansas. The union strives to build, strengthen, and provide service to the members of its 14 locals as well as the communities and people they serve. AFT-Kansas believes in public service, social and economic justice, and the democratic process and works with integrity to improve delivery of public services, promote safe working conditions, encourage professional development, advocate for fair wages and benefits, and work to support and improve the community. Originally founded as the Kansas Association of Public Employees (KAPE) in 1962, AFT-Kansas is celebrating nearly 50 years of advocacy, support, and resources for Kansas workers. Visit ks.aft.org for more information.

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