

What AFSCME Has Meant To Our Family

Recently jobs expert Laurence Shatkin Ph.D., the author of the *Best Jobs for the 21st Century*, took a survey to find the jobs in which men and women feel the most successful and satisfied. The outcome yielded interesting results. Women who participated in the survey ranked the importance of job security higher than both salary and advancement opportunities. Shatkin credits this to the fact that traditionally women have been the primary caregivers of the family and says, "If you're caring for a family, job security is a top priority." As the daughter of a single parent, AFCSME gave my mother and I just that, security. Being a part of AFCSME ensured our little family with the security of benefits like medical insurance and having a job secured our family with a steady income to support our needs.

Knowing that we are protected, I am able to receive the medical attention I need, likewise my mother is able to receive the medical attention she needs. It is a comfort, to understand that if anything happens, AFSCME has provided a way for both my mother and me to be healthy. Devoid of the support AFSCME provides, the security that our family feels would be lost, as we would no longer have a safety net to depend on. AFCSME has, through the appeal it gave to an occupation, impacted almost all aspects of our lives.

As a member of AFCSME, my mother, has been able to provide for me in many ways. My mother works as a Paralegal for the State of Hawaii. She entered into the public service sector at a time that many others wanted to be public servants also. At the time, public service jobs provided job security with a benefits package that included

affordable medical insurance and vacation and sick leave. Now, public workers are faced with reduced government funding to programs and so many are faced with having to take on additional jobs to meet their family's financial needs. AFCSME continues to fight and defend the rights of public servants like my mother who do the best job they can with the resources provided them. AFSCME has a longstanding history of providing for its members and our community at large. As a public servant, my mother is not exempt from today's national crisis of a stressed economy and increased unemployment. However, AFSCME has stepped up its battle to provide all members with the best assistance and aid they are capable of and are one of the most recognized and accomplished unions in the nation.

Without the rights that AFCSME members receive, I am sure my life would have followed a very different path. My mother's job has provided our family with not only a salary and medical benefits, but, the opportunity for her to be a part of my life. Throughout my entire educational career she has never missed a hula performance, an important swim meet or track meet because she has been fortunate to have a work schedule that is similar to my school schedule. Even when I was younger, my mother has always been my biggest cheerleader at various school programs and extracurricular activities. This would not have been possible if my mother had a different job, without AFSCME, and her work schedule. While private sector jobs would have provided a higher salary, my mother choose to work as a public servant so that her time would not be consumed by her career and that she would be able to have a balanced quality of life and more family time.

Lastly, AFCSME has provided me the ability to fulfill my goals. While playing sports, I was able to continue to maintain good grades without missing a beat. Being able to juggle the many activities I had on my plate, could not have been possible without the medical benefits our family received through AFSCME. Due to my health and strength, I run quicker, swim faster, and dance more gracefully than possible if I had not been given medical attention when needed. This is all because of the diligence of those in AFSCME who have persistently worked towards providing as many of its members as possible with healthcare benefits. Without a supportive mother, who is a member of AFSCME and pays for my education, I would not be the person that I am today. I probably would not have learned of my passion for dancing hula, swimming, reading Hawaiian literature, creating ceramic pieces or running. I probably would not be able to do many of the things I do today because I would not have received the same opportunities that I have been given.

As Francis Bacon said, "Knowledge is power". Through my mother, AFCSME has provided me with knowledge, so that I can have the power to make a difference in the world and help those around me, and I am extremely grateful for the many opportunities placed before me so far. I feel blessed that I was able to learn interesting and valuable things in the course of my educational career. I am so thankful for the support and help that I have received throughout the years, making it possible to realize my ambitions. I would like to thank the members of AFSCME for their extended help in raising me, and providing me with opportunities I might have not had otherwise, it has been a huge help in reaching my potential.