

SEBAC Warns Lawmakers Against Austerity

Report Outlines the Need for Reinvestment to Ensure Recovery for All, Not Just Wealthy

On March 15th SEBAC released a report authored by In The Public Interest's Shahrzad Habibi, Research and Policy Director and Yale University's Jennifer Klien, Professor of History, titled, "Austerity Versus Reinvest-

ment." This bombshell report outlines the need for strong investment into our public services and examines the economic and historical data that point a way out of the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the concurrent

economic downturn towards a better Connecticut for everyone. CSEA member and P-4 President Travis Woodward was one of the compelling speakers during this press conference and he warned about privatization and an austerity approach to spending.

You can read the full report at bit.ly/ReinvestCT



PICTURED LEFT: Travis Woodward speaks to the Press during the SEBAC Press Conference on March 15th.

Members Testify at Virtual Public Hearings

Members Wait Several Hours for Opportunity to Testify at Various Public Hearings

While the State Capitol and the Legislative Office Building remain closed to the public because of the health and safety precautions in place due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, that has not stopped General Assembly committees from holding public hearings on legislation. Public hearings are a vital part of the legislative session that allow people to communicate directly with General Assembly members about the bills before them.

However, since people cannot enter committee rooms in the LOB, this year the public hearings are being conducted via Zoom.

Even though these hearings are happening online and not in person, they're pretty similar to what we have seen in years past. Members of the public have three minutes to give their testimony, committee members ask questions, and things can drag on for hours. One hearing lasted over 24 hours! *continue onto page 7*

CSEA Welcomes Two New Staff Members to Union!

Steffi Martinez and Ryan DiCapua Bring New Perspectives and Energy to Labor Movement

CSEA is thrilled to introduce our two newest staff members - Steffi Martinez and Ryan DiCapua to the CSEA Family - their experience, expertise and commitment to the labor movement is a welcomed addition to our passionate and

motivated staff.

Steffi will serve as the new Child Care Provider Staff Representative and Organizer while Ryan will begin working as a Staff Representative primarily for the Paraeducator Council. *Continue onto page 4*

CT Retiree Tax Exemption

Read the Retiree Team Column to Learn About This Retiree Income Tax Exemption

Tax Season is upon us! Normally folks would be working towards the April 15th deadline, but we wanted to make sure our members were aware of the recent announcement from the Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service that the federal income tax filing due date for individuals for the 2020 tax year has been automatically extended from April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021.

Additionally many members living in Connecticut now have the opportunity to take advantage of a tax exemption for the second year.

Please visit the CSEA website for the full article on the CT Retiree Tax Exemption at csea-ct.com/2021/01/19/ct-state-retiree-income-tax-exemption-your-questions-answered-2/



PICTURED ABOVE: Members virtually testify at a variety of public hearings. (TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE): Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Anson Smith, William Buhler and Roland Bishop.

Upcoming McCusker Deadline!

The deadline for CSEA children and grandchildren to apply for the McCusker Scholarship is April 30th at 4:30PM. All materials must be submitted at this time.

It is also not too late to donate to the McCusker fund to allow CSEA to award as many scholarships as possible to deserving applicants. For more information,

please visit our website: bit.ly/McCusker2021 Questions about applications and donations should be directed to Val Lattarulo at vlattarulo@csea760.com

Visit our union's website at: CSEA-CT.com

Postmaster: Please forward address changes to:
CSEA, 760 CAPITOL AVE., HARTFORD, CT 06106

Don't Miss Another Email! Update Your Information

Please visit bit.ly/UpdateCSEA TODAY to update your contact information for our database!



Meetings
And News

Council 400 Election Update

Thank You to the New and Returning Leaders!

The Council 400 Chapter elections have been held successfully and we want to thank all of our members that have stepped up in their roles as officers, delegates,

alternate delegates and auditors. We cannot wait to see you in person again once we have all been able to receive our shots and CDC regulations allow it!

Turning 65? We've Got Answers!

By: Bernadette Conway & Kevin Sullivan

If you will be turning

65 soon, you are probably confused as to what will change for you and what you need to do.

We'd first like to clarify a misconception about signing up for Medicare. Now that state retirees of Medicare age have the United-Healthcare Medicare Advantage Plan as their insurance coverage, some retirees have heard they don't need to sign up for anything, they will automatically be switched to Medicare. You do need to sign up for Medicare Parts A and B, and then you will automatically be switched to the UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Plan. You do not need to sign up for the Medicare Advantage Plan.

If you are retired and turning 65, you need to sign up for Medicare Parts A and B. To sign up for Medicare Parts A and B you can go online to www.medicare.gov, visit a Social Security office, or call them on the phone to speak with a representative at 1-800-772-1213.

You can enroll in Medicare during the seven-month period that begins three months before the month you turn 65. Coverage can start as early as the month of your 65th birthday. If you don't sign up during this initial enrollment period, you will be charged higher premiums for the rest of your life – so it is critical that you sign up during that period for Medicare Parts A and B. If you do end up paying the higher amount because you didn't sign up during the seven month period, the State will not reimburse you for that additional penalty.

After you sign up you will receive your Medicare card. Because you will be on a Medicare Advantage insurance plan, you will not need to carry your Medicare card with you to give to doctors or your phar-

macy. Make a copy of it to send to the Retirement Division, then you can file it away in a safe place, with your Social Security card. Medicare Part A is no charge, but you will need to pay for Medicare Part B, and you will be reimbursed for it by the State. There are two ways to pay for your Medicare Part B. If you are already collecting your Social Security benefit, it will automatically be deducted from your monthly SS check. If you are not collecting Social Security yet, you will be billed quarterly. When you receive your notification from Social Security of how much you will be paying, you need to make a copy of that and send that, along with the copy of your Medicare card, to the Retiree Health Insurance Unit so they can reimburse you for that amount. Not just for yourself, but for your spouse as well. Send the copies to:

Retiree Health Insurance Unit
Office of the State Comptroller's
Office 165 Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106

If you are able to attach it as a document in an email, you can send the copies by email to osc.rethealth@ct.gov. That way you can verify that you sent it in. We hear from people regularly that have sent them in, but they are not getting reimbursed at all, or not the

State Retiree Threat Corner

Hear the most recent threats against your benefits & learn how you can stop them!

A recent Letter to the Editor published in the *CT Examiner* punched back against the threat we published in last month's *CSEA News*. "Red Jahncke claims that "the long-festering

enormous problem of overly generous" benefits to state employees makes a "Connecticut Comeback" impossible. Only by stopping the "gravy train" of "wildly overgenerous" benefits

by slashing public sector compensation can Connecticut's economy rebound. But Jahncke's premise is a fallacy based on falsehoods so blatant it's shocking it's difficult to understand

why it was ever published."

It's time for Council 400 to join the fight, email Dphelan@csea760.com to write a letter to the editor!

Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment will be coming in the Spring! It was delayed last year due to COVID but is on track

for June this year! If you need or want to make any changes to your dental plan, this is the time to do so!

You will receive something in the mail from the Comptroller's Department notifying you of the dates for Open Enrollment in the next couple of

months! When CSEA has exact dates they will be reported in the *CSEA News* and by email so be sure CSEA has your email!

Council 400 Hosting April Virtual Meeting with XXXXXXXXX

Members Asked and the Retiree Team Answered - Hear From Daniel Tully Once Again!

NEXT VIRTUAL

MEETING:

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21ST
AT 4PM**

SPEAKER: Daniel Tully

Last month's Member Meeting featured Daniel Tully, Elder Lawyer, who discussed the Probate Process at length. With so many follow up questions and requests to speak with him from members, we thought it was best to host Tully once

more!

Let us know what you would like to hear about at our monthly meetings and we will do our best to address those subjects! Please contact me with suggestions at bconway@csea760.com. Emails with a link to the meeting will be sent out to everyone we have emails for, but if you are not able to join online, you can call in:

Dial 1-929-205-6099 then Meeting ID: 963 3232 8607

If you are not receiving our emails and would like to be added to our list so you can receive notification of virtual meetings, send an email to info@csea760.com with your name and we will make sure you are added to our email list!

correct amount. Whether it gets lost in the mail, or at the office, if it is not received by the Retirement Division, they will not retroactively reimburse you. Having verification that you sent it confirms the amount and the timeframe, so we highly recommend sending it by email if possible or return receipt mail.

The basic amount for Part B for 2021 is \$148.50, which is what most retirees will be paying. If that is the amount you will pay, you don't need to do anything further, the state will automatically adjust your reimbursement to that rate. However, if you are notified by Social Security that you will be paying an amount different from \$148.50, higher or lower, or that you are paying for Part D, then you will also need to send a copy of the bill or statement to not only the Retirement Division, but to United Healthcare as well. They are processing the paperwork for all those paying a premium higher than the basic amount. The address to send it to is:

UnitedHealthcare Benefits Services
PO Box 740221
Atlanta, GA 30374
You can also email it as an attach-

ment to DirectBill_KYOperations@uhc.com. You can call 1-866-747-0048 to confirm they have received it.

We highly recommend checking your advice (what the Comptroller's Office refers to as your pay stub) regularly so you know the amount you are being reimbursed. Since they no longer send out monthly advices, you will need to go online to review it at the Retiree Portal at <https://retirees.ct.gov>, or you can call them to have one sent to you at 860-702-3480, which will bring you to a menu – press "6" to leave a message to request a copy of the retiree direct deposit advice.

If you turn 65 and go onto the plan, but your spouse is not yet 65, they will continue with their current insurance provider until they turn 65 and sign up for Medicare Parts A and B. Your dependents aged 26 and younger will also remain on the Anthem plan, even if you move onto the United Healthcare plan.

If you turn 65 and are still working, you absolutely need to sign up for Medicare Part A, but do not sign up for Part B until you actually retire.



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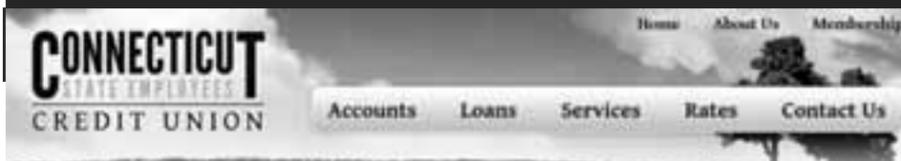
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Closed New Year's Day
Friday, January 1st

Closed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 18th

Dividend Rates - Fourth Quarter 2020

	Dividend Rate	Annual Percentage Yield
REGULAR SHARES	0.60%	0.60%
SHARE DRAFTS (Checking)	0.25%	0.25%
CLUB ACCOUNTS	0.40%	0.40%

Minimum opening balance \$25.00. The annual percentage yield is accurate as of the last dividend declaration date. Rate may change after the account is opened. Fees or other conditions may reduce the earnings on the account.

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MIDDLETOWN Connecticut Valley Hospital P.O. Box 2485 Middletown, CT 06457 (860) 347-0479	STORRS 1244 Storrs Rd. Storrs, CT 06268 (860) 429-9306	SOUTHBURY Southbury Training School P.O. Box 644 Southbury, CT 06488 (203) 267-7610
		NEWINGTON O'Neil Plaza 2434 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06111 (860) 667-7668

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Drive-Up Teller (Hartford Only): Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm; Paydays Open Until 5pm

RetireWise Seminars

Back by popular demand, the MetLife Matt's will be hosting another RetireWise Seminar specifically for CSEA members - don't miss out on this great opportunity to get your finances in order. This two part seminar will take place on

April 13th and 20th from 4:30 – 6:30, virtually. Spouses and partners are welcome! If asked for the company name, type "CSEA SEIU 2001" Please register at bit.ly/2NmsWVG (case-sensitive)

COVID Vaccine Update for Council 400

At the Council 400 February 17th monthly virtual meeting, CSEA had Anna Vita from United Healthcare and Rae-Ellen Roy from the Retirement Division answering questions from retirees. They both suggested that when members who are 65 and over go to receive their COVID vaccine they bring their Medicare card, as they might be asked for that.

This advice contradicts what CSEA Council 400 normally tells our members to do with their Medicare Card - when members were switched to United Healthcare, they were told to put their Medicare card away and that you should not submit that to doctors or pharmacies. However, when members who are 65 and over go to receive their COVID vaccine, it is okay and appropriate to give their Medicare card. This advice is solely for the COVID Vaccine, do not show Medicare cards for other services.

The COVID vaccine is no charge to our members, and no one should pay a copay. However, the facility administering the vaccine does need to bill insurance for the administering of the vaccine. That is not something our members should pay for or be billed for.

If you are a member who has already received your vaccinations,

GOOD FOR YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS! Please save that vaccination card that you receive, as you might need it in the future. If you haven't made an appointment for your COVID vaccine yet, please do so as soon as you are able! Again, if you are on the Medicare Advantage plan, you know we have told you that you don't need to bring your Medicare card to appointments any more - but you may need it for your vaccine, so bring your Medicare card with you if you can! COVID-19 vaccines are an important step in slowing the spread of the disease and are authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The State of Connecticut COVID-19 Response team has the most up to date information related to vaccination availability, eligibility, and scheduling are available on their website:

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccinations>. Note that it will take time to roll out vaccines and more information and vaccination events will be announced in the coming weeks. If you don't have access to the internet, you can call Connecticut's COVID Vaccine Appointment Assistance Line at 877-918-2224.



CSEA NEWS

The Voice of Connecticut's Public Service Employees & Retirees

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Family Child Care Provider News

Noticias para Proveedores de Cuidado Infantil

Update on New Regulations

The month of March has been a tough one for providers! Early this month, the Office of Early Childhood announced through written notice, the new regulations that will become effective on March 19th, 2021. Providers all over the state were angry and concerned that they will need to shut down their business due to the lack of flexibility in these new regulations. Some of the major

concerns with these regulations that had providers fuming, were the changes to the substitutes regulations, overnight time and overlap, and background check. Our union leaders quickly arranged an emergency meeting with Commissioner Beth Bye and Licensing Director Debra Johnson to receive some clarifications. As a result of the meeting, some concerns were made clear like the one

regarding the substitutes, where it was clarified that the substitutes change will not be in fact a change and will still be following the old regulations. Other concerns were still left to be clarified at a later date but we will continue the conversation with the OEC, lawyers and other lobbyists to ensure the best results for all providers.

Actualización sobre nuevas regulaciones

¡El mes de marzo ha sido difícil para las proveedoras! A principios de este mes, la Oficina de la Primera Infancia anunció mediante notificación por escrito las nuevas regulaciones que entrarán en vigencia el 19 de Marzo del 2021. Las proveedoras de todo el estado estaban enojadas y preocupadas de que tendrían que cerrar sus negocios debido a la falta de flexibilidad en estas nuevas regulaciones. Algunas de las principales

preocupaciones con estas regulaciones que tenían a las proveedoras furiosas fueron los cambios en las regulaciones de los substitutes, el turno de noche, y la verificación de antecedentes. Nuestros líderes sindicales organizaron rápidamente una reunión de emergencia con la Comisionada Beth Bye y la Directora de Licencias Debra Johnson para recibir algunas aclaraciones. A raíz de la reunión se dejaron claras algunas inquietudes como la de

los substitutes, donde se aclaró que el cambio de substitutes no será en realidad un cambio y seguirá cumpliendo con la antigua regulación. Aún quedan por aclarar otras inquietudes la cual se dejará para una fecha posterior, pero continuaremos la conversación con la OEC, los abogados y otros negociadores para garantizar los mejores resultados para todas las proveedoras.

Introducing Steffi Martinez

Steffi Martinez is our new Child Care Staff Representative/Organizer. She has a passion for organizing workers, economic justice and is thrilled to be part of the CSEA family! Steffi moved from the Dominican Republic to Waterbury when she was eleven years old and has been residing there ever since. Before landing this position, she had her own home-based day care and was a licensed child care provider for the last four years. Through her leadership role as a Vice President of the Childcare council, Steffi was able to connect with hundreds of workers and work on multiple organizing projects. CSEA is really going to benefit from her experience as a member and looks forward to the unique

perspective she'll bring to the staff. As she settles into this new position she's already shown great ambition and work ethic as she learns the ropes! On her spare time, Steffi enjoys spending quality time with her family, serving her local church and community, traveling and discovering new places, and singing. CSEA welcomes her experience, perspective and overall enthusiasm for the members she's already begun to work with.



Steffi Martinez es nuestra nueva Representante del Persona de Cuidado Infantil/Organizadora. ¡Le apasiona organizar a los trabajadores, la justicia económica y está encantada de ser parte de

Presentando a Steffi Martinez

la familia CSEA! Steffi se mudó de República Dominicana a Waterbury cuando tenía once años y ha estado viviendo allí desde entonces. Antes de conseguir este puesto, tenía su propia guardería (day care) en el hogar y fue proveedora de cuidado infantil con licencia durante los últimos cuatro años. A través de su papel de liderazgo como Vicepresidenta del Consejo de Cuidado Infantil, Steffi pudo conectarse con cientos de trabajadores y trabajar en múltiples proyectos de organización. CSEA realmente se beneficiará de

su experiencia como miembro y espera la perspectiva única que brindará al personal. A medida que se instala en este nuevo puesto, ya ha demostrado una gran ambición y ética de trabajo a medida que aprende las cosas. En su tiempo libre, a Steffi le gusta pasar tiempo de calidad con su familia, servir a su iglesia y comunidad local, viajar y descubrir nuevos lugares y cantar. CSEA le da la bienvenida a su experiencia, perspectiva y entusiasmo general por los miembros con los que ya ha comenzado a trabajar.

Introducing Ryan DiCapua

Ryan DiCapua has hit the ground running as CSEA's newest Staff Representative for the Paraeducator Council. His experience working for United Here! Local 217 have aptly prepared him for his new role in CSEA, and as a former union member

himself, he understands the power behind collective bargaining and the strength of the collective voice of a union.

Ryan organized previously for five years with United Here! Local 217 where he worked with K-12 public school cafeteria workers as well as college and corporate cafeteria workers. Native to New Haven, Ryan came to work for United Here! by getting involved in the union from the member-perspective. He was an employee at Omni

Hotel in New Haven where he saw the direct results of having a union represent his colleagues and himself. At the time of his employment he was paramount in the fight to organize workers to push back against an overbearing and unjust boss and after continuing to volunteer on organizing drives he was eventually hired by United Here! Ryan believes in a strong democratic and socialistic labor movement and



PICTURED ABOVE: Ryan DiCapua is CSEA's newest Staff Representative

THANK-YOU!

- Millie Brown
- Shirley DeFlaviis
- Merrill Gay
- Rhonda Knowles
- Stacey Malitz
- Alison Miner
- Lynda Shure
- Carol Vinnick



for donating masks to child care providers

understands that it must be led by the working people of all races, genders, ethnicities and religions. He is looking forward to working with public sector workers to create strong worker-led leadership in CSEA and he's

excited for the opportunity to learn from the many experiences of CSEA's members, leaders and staff! Currently, Ryan resides in Fairfield with his husband and two year old daughter.

Member Spotlight: Katie O'Brien-Clayton, DEEP Environmental Analyst II

CSEA member and Department of Energy and Environmental Protections Environmental Analyst II, Katie O'Brien-Clayton, serves our State in important ways by sampling nutrients, chlorophyll, and dissolved oxygen concentrations to document the annual variability of the extent of low dissolved oxy-

gen (hypoxia) in the Long Island Sound and assessing the estuarine waters of the State to determine if they meet water quality standards. This ensures that if you go swimming or fishing, you can rest assured that the water is safe. The data she collects is used to evaluate whether or not the water quality, especially the

extent of hypoxia, in the Long Island Sound has improved following the implementation of the LIS Total Maximum Daily Load (LIS TMDL). The LIS TMDL set limits for wastewater treatment plant effluent limits for total nitrogen and resulted in the creation of the Nitrogen Trading Program. The assessments that she performs on the estuarine waters often result in water bodies being listed on the Impaired Waters List and the need for the development of a TMDL to remediate those impaired waters. It's important to maintain her position as the State's Long Island Sound Survey provides valuable data to the EPA LISSO.

The DEEP program has been collecting data since 1991, resulting in a 30 year time series of both NY and CT waters. This program provides a valuable service to CT, NY, and federal agen-

cies at a relatively low cost compared to renting ship time from private entities, paying a contractor, or other means to collecting this data.

PICTURED BELOW: O'Brien-Clayton journeys into the Long Island Sound for important water quality monitoring protocols.



PICTURED ABOVE: CSEA Member Katie O'Brien-Clayton escapes the winds inside the research vessel



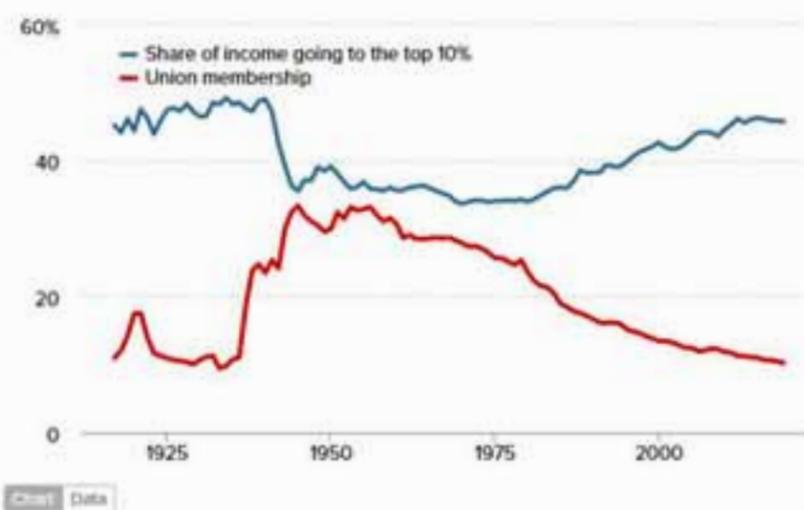
PICTURED BELOW: A recent Economic Policy Institute (EPI) report highlighted the relationship between union decline and income inequality increases and characterizes it as "not coincidental"



PICTURED TOP: Even a Duchess needs a union! Meghan Markle, previous member of SAG-AFTRA, in her interview with Oprah explained how powerful having a union was and how she missed the protection.

As union membership declines, income inequality increases

Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917-2019



Source: Reproduced from Figure A in Working People Have Been Thwarted in Their Efforts to Bargain for Better Wages by Attacks on Unions (Shierholz 2019).

Economic Policy Institute

Correctional Supervisor's Council

It's election time for CSC! The election will be held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Nominations will be accepted for all positions.

Nominations will be open from Monday, February 8, 2021 (8:00am) through Friday, April 16, 2021 (4:00pm). Nominations should be submitted via email to Jason Webster @ JPWebster@csea760.com

CSC Celebrates it's 20TH Anniversary

Learn How Collective Bargaining Impacted Your Benefits

The road to collective bargaining was not easy. First, CSEA had to change the State collective bargaining law to allow us to organize into a union. The law in the late 1990's barred anyone at the rank of lieutenant and above from forming a union. The law considered those law enforcement personnel to be managers. Once CSEA successfully lobbied the General Assembly to change the law by deleting the word "lieutenant", lieutenants in the Department of Correction (DOC) organized into a union represented by CSEA. Our organizing led the way for captains, counselor supervisors, parole managers and eventually deputy wardens to join our new union. It also led the way for

supervising judicial marshals, and lieutenants and captains in State Police to form their own union with CSEA. Lieutenants and captains in State Police had to go to the Connecticut State Supreme Court and back to secure their collective bargaining rights. When captains and counselor supervisors in DOC tried to organize and join the lieutenants in CSC, the then Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner ran the first anti-union campaign in Connecticut state service. Prior to the captains and counselors supervisor organizing with us, State government remained neutral on whether or not workers should join a union.

Contract Negotiations

Before- Until our last contract, every one of our contracts had to be decided by binding interest arbitration. Even recently, the inclusion of the deputy wardens had to go to interest arbitration. While the issues from pay to work schedules to transfer rights had to be decided by a neutral arbitrator, at its core, these issues were about respect and dignity. **After** lengthy negotiations and interest arbitration for our most important first contract, the Rowland Administration and DOC administration led a full court press to have the General Assembly's Appropriations Committee reject our contract and arbitration award. They argued against our wage increases, work schedules and transfer and shift assignment rights. For over an hour, they painted a horrific picture of our first contract. *continue onto page 6*

continued from Page 5 After the administration went, it was our turn. Member after member gave compelling testimony that our first contract was about respect and dignity for the work we performed as the frontline supervisors in our prisons and jails. In the end, both Republicans and Democrats on the Committee voted for our first contract and we had won. Let's look at several important contract provisions and what existed before and after collective bargaining.

Wages

Before – For most of the time, the State passed on wage increases that were negotiated for unionized state employees to non-unionized employees. Under the Rowland administration, this began to change and non-unionized employees were getting wage freezes while unionized employees were getting raises.

After – CSC had negotiated and arbitrated cumulatively larger wage increases over that period of time than any other bargaining unit in state service since 2001.

Overtime

Before – Lieutenants and captains could only accrue compensatory time off and had great difficulty scheduling the time off and could not be compensated for the time upon retirement. Parole managers would not receive compensatory time off if they were called at home by parole officers to provide supervision and direction.

After – Lieutenants and captains receive overtime pay. There is a system for voluntary overtime

before mandatory drafting. Parole managers receive compensatory time for calls received while not at work.

Transfer Rights and Shift Assignments

Before – Management had the unilateral right to transfer members from one facility to another and from one shift to another without regard to seniority.

After – Members have the right to put their names on facility lists including shift assignments. Management must use the list based upon seniority for filling vacant positions. Management can no longer manipulate these lists to allow junior members to work days shifts while senior have to work the off shifts.

Schedules

Before – Management had the unilateral right to change work schedules. During the first negotiations, management changed the work schedule, so that lieutenants would only have a weekend off every nine months. CSEA won a labor board case on this unilateral change during contract negotiations.

After – Union won its preferred work schedule. The schedule is part of the contract and cannot be unilaterally changed by management.

Workshop and Conference Fund

Before – None

After – A \$10,000 workshop and conference fund for members.

Tuition Reimbursement

Before – None

After – A \$20,000 fund that reimburses employees up to 75% of the UConn rate for tuition and fees.

Grievance Procedure and Discipline

Before – Members had to file their own grievance before management's employee review board. Members could only grieve discipline or violations of Connecticut statutes.

After – Members have the Union representing them in a grievance procedure ending with arbitration before a neutral arbitrator. Discipline cannot be imposed until after a Step 3 hearing decision.

Military Leave

Before – Members were allowed two weeks of annual field training and up to seven days of ordered training.

After – Members are now allowed two weeks of annual field training and no limit on the number of days for ordered weekend drills. Members are no longer required to use their own time for ordered training.

Sick Leave Bank

Before – No sick leave bank

After – Sick leave bank for those employees with long term illness or injury if they run out of their own sick leave.

Acting Shift Commander Pay

Before – None

After – \$26.40 per shift for each shift a lieutenant is the acting shift commander

Educational Stipends

Before – None

After – Stipends for obtaining an Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's degree

Supervisory Stipends

Before – None

After – \$650 per year supervisory stipend

Health and Wellness

Before – None

After – A \$10,000 annual fund for the promotion of health and wellness of members and an annual wellness day for members to attend training on health issues. To date, trainings have been held on sleep, mental health, nutrition and substance abuse. The programs initiated by CSC have received national recognition and are being replicated in other states.

Leadership

There were many leaders in our fight for respect and dignity in DOC. Cathy Osten was the first elected president, followed by Chuck Lemelin, then Julius Preston and now Millie Brown. Bob Rinker, retired Executive Director of CSEA, had been our chief negotiator for all our contracts. He even came out of retirement to serve as Chief Negotiator for our most recent contract (2016 to 2021). Bob Krzys, CSEA's legal counsel, now retired, presented our issues in numerous interest arbitrations including the most important one, our first contract. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who came before us and paved the way to a better work life.

SUPERVISING JUDICIAL MARSHALS CELEBRATE ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

By: Bob Rinker As we enter into contract negotiations for our next contract, it is an appropriate time to reflect where we started from and where we are at today. It has been 20 years since the Supervising Judicial Marshals Council (lieutenants) had the right to negotiate union contracts. When we started down this road, only a few lieutenants were willing to put their careers on the line to form the union. CSEA, our parent union, was there with us from the beginning and still is with us today. In our union election to form our union, the Judicial branch objected to us voting at our workplaces. We had to find voting locations around the state to conduct our vote. This was the first time State employees did not have the opportunity to vote at their workplace. Our members traveled to these voting locations and overwhelmingly voted to be represented by CSEA. We have come a long way from the Sheriff system to what we have today. The following is a sample of

what was achieved.

Pensions

Before – None

Now – A hazardous duty pension plan (20 years and out) with three years of service time as a sheriff allowed to be purchased and counts as service in calculating your hazardous duty retirement.

Health Insurance

Before – None

Now – One of the best health insurance plans in the nation.

Retiree Health Insurance

Before – None

Now – One of the best health insurance plans in the nation.

Sick Leave

Before – None, if you were out sick you didn't get paid.

Now – 1 ¼ days of sick leave accrual per month.

Vacations

Before – None, if you went on vacation you didn't get paid.

Now – 15 vacation days per year to 20 years of service, then 20 days per year after 20 years, and 3 personal leave days per calendar year.

Longevity Pay

Before – None

Now – Longevity pay based upon your salary and your length of service.

Transfer Rights

Before – None

Now – Restriction on transfers out of district, right to use seniority for courthouse assignments.

Discipline

Before – You could be disciplined or fired without any recourse.

Now – Discipline only for just cause, union representation, and a right to a hearing before a neutral arbitrator.

Holidays

Before – None

Now – 12 paid holiday per year.

Work Schedule

Before – At the sole discretion of the High Sheriff your work schedule could be changed with no notice.

Now – Contractual work schedule and the right to choose a working lunch.

Pay

Before – Either \$100 or \$135 per day, but only for those days actually worked.

Now – Check your latest bi-weekly pay stub gross amount and divide by 10 for your current daily rate.

Our struggle for good wages and benefits didn't happen that long ago. It was the process of forming a union, having members willing to step up as leaders, and a great contract that has brought us to these better days.

Legislative Update: Public Hearings

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So far in this session, via Zoom and through written testimony, CSEA members have testified on over 40 different pieces of legislation. From the proposed state budget to an expansion of paid sick days to improving the indoor air quality in schools, and a whole lot more, members have been advocating for good policy and fighting back against attacks on the work we do, the rights we have, and the wages we earn. We know how important these hearings are and we know that if we are not speaking to elected officials, our opponents will be.

Here are a just a few examples of members getting involved in the public hearing process:

For years, the members of CSEA's Paraeducator Council have been working to pass legislation that will improve their work and career opportunities. During this session, they are working to pass House Bill 6557: AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING, specifically Sections 17 and 18. Sections 17 and 18 of HB 6557 will begin to develop a statewide, uniform system for paraeducator qualifications, career development, pay rates, and retirement and health care benefits. Although paraeducators perform some of the most crucial duties in our public schools, we are consistently underpaid, undertrained, and underappreciated. Sections 17 and 18 will begin to improve the work experience and career development of paraeducators while ensuring that Connecticut public school students receive the best educational services possible.

Section 17 changes the name of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council to the School Paraeducator Advisory Council. Paraeducator is a more accurate reflection of our roles in the classroom and respects our role in the learning process.

Section 18 directs the Council to spend the next several months compiling a series of legislative recommendations for the 2022 legislative session. These recommendations will start the process of designing program-specific minimum employment standards for paraeducators, professional development and education opportunities that support the standards, a paraeducator career ladder, an articulated pathway for teacher preparation and certification, and teacher professional development on how to maximize the use of paraeducators in the classroom. This proposal seeks to develop a statewide, uniform system for paraeducator qualifica-

tions, career development, pay rates, and retirement and health care benefits. This proposal will improve the work experience and career development of paraeducators while ensuring that Connecticut public school students receive the best educational services possible.

Paraeducator Council President Cynthia Ross-Zweig testified via Zoom at the hearing and told committee members about the critical work done by paras in classrooms throughout our state every day. Para members Linda Pasquariello, Malissa Harber, Jennifer Corbeil, and Linda Chave also submitted written testimony in support of the bill. Together, these members offered powerful testimony to the members of the Education Committee that will help ensure this bill is, not only, passed out of committee, but makes it to the governor's desk to be signed into law.

Members of CSEA's P4 Council have spent years fighting against the wasteful, dangerous, and costly outsourcing of public services. We know that when it comes to private consultants, public employees can do it better, faster, and for less. That's why they are working to stop Senate Bill 920: AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS. SB 920 is a deeply flawed proposal that, if not fixed, will open the floodgates of wasteful spending and contract corruption. While public-private partnerships are seen as a way to deliver on public projects by partnering with the private sector, time and again the P3 process has been shown to be wasteful and ripe for abuse.

SB 920 would eliminate the cap on P3s (for the past ten years the state has had the ability to enter into five P3s, but has not done a single one) while opening up all operations of state government to potential public-private partnerships. The bill removes the 50 year limit for P3s which would mean that taxpayers could be on the hook for a failed project for decades and decades. The most concerning part of SB 920 is the elimination of the requirement that public-private partnerships adhere to the provisions of section 4e-16 of Chapter 62 of the Connecticut State Statutes. Section 4e-16 is at the heart of Connecticut's clean contracting laws. That section of statute has a number of critical provisions including a requirement that an agency seeking to enter into a public-private partnership must first conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed partnership. The critical and common-sense taxpayer protections in 4e-16 would no longer apply if SB

920 became law in its current form.

Our state already owns a deeply flawed record when it comes to contracting. CSEA members who work for the state regularly witness immense waste through unwise contracting. We know from DOT cost-effectiveness evaluations that yearly savings from 46% to 63% could be achieved if more inspection and engineering work was done in-house by state employees. That would have meant over \$320,000,000 in savings between FY2016 and FY2018. And, in 2018, the State Contracting Standards Board concluded that the vast majority of contracts never undergo any form of competitive bidding and that approximately \$260 million per year could be saved simply by requiring the commonsense approach of competitive bidding.

P4 President Travis Woodward has been leading the battle against bad public-private partnerships and told Transportation Committee members about some of the problems with P3s as well as his firsthand experience as a Connecticut DOT engineer. Travis was joined in testifying against the bill at the hearing by CSEA Executive Director David Glidden, as well as allies from other organizations. One of those allies was Shar Habibi, the Research and Policy Director for In the Public Interest and a national expert on public-private partnerships. In the Public Interest is a national nonprofit research and policy organization that studies public goods and services. Her testimony had a major impact on committee members and is a great example of working with allies to advance our message and agenda.

The past year has brought not just a health crisis and massive disruption to all of our lives, but it has also drawn a spotlight to the continuing income inequality throughout the country, and especially in Connecticut. That is why CSEA is part of the Recovery for All coalition of labor, community, and faith groups from throughout Connecticut. All the groups and individuals in Recovery for All are working to pass a fair and equitable budget that funds vital public services, protects working people, and asks our state's wealthiest residents to pay their fair share in taxes.

On March 15, the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee held a public hearing on two bills being championed by the Coalition - Senate Bill 821: AN ACT CONCERNING THE REFORMATION OF CERTAIN TAXES AND TAX EQUITY and House Bill 6187: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESTRUCTURING OF CERTAIN

TAXES AND TAX EQUITY. These are narrowly focused proposals that will restore fairness to the tax code, fund essential services, and jumpstart economic recovery. While people who need to work for a living have struggled to keep themselves and their families safe and healthy during the pandemic, Connecticut's billionaires have added an additional \$3.6 billion to their wealth.

These bills contain a number of critical provisions that will provide needed aid to working people. Including keeping our economy moving by sending direct assistance to individuals who've lost their jobs during the pandemic with a one-time direct stimulus payment of \$500 and providing relief to property owners for taxes levied on residences and motor vehicles by doubling the property tax credit to \$400. SB 821 and HB 6187 will also impose a surtax of 5% on capital gains, dividends, and taxable interest for individuals with income in excess of \$500,000 a year (\$800,000 for joint filers). This would generate approximately \$850 million annually. The bills would also make Connecticut's personal income tax rates fairer by raising the rate on individual income in excess of \$500,000/year (\$800,000 for joint filers/heads of household) to 8.82%, and on income in excess of \$1 million/year (\$1.2 million for joint filers/heads of household) to 12.696%. This would generate approximately \$1.75 billion-\$2 billion annually.

Members William Buhler, Anson Smith, Ellen Russell Beatty, and Tom Connolly joined CSEA President Steve Anderson and Executive Director David Glidden in testifying in support of these bills. CSEA members know that a fair budget and a fair tax system do not happen by accident or overnight. Too little of the debate and discussion around the budget and taxes is centered on the needs and lives of working people. The testimony these members provided to the committee, along with the testimony from all other allies and supporters, gave committee members a chance to hear about the experiences of everyday residents, not just millionaires and billionaires.

As important as public hearings are, they are just one step in the overall process. Ahead of us will be committee votes, bill referrals, floor debates, chamber votes, and the Governor's approval or rejection of all the different bills that make it to his desk. When CSEA members get involved, we have the ability to pass good laws, stop bad ones, and do what is right for our families, communities, and state.

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