

BOE Coalition Delivers 14K Signatures To Gov.

Cynthia Ross-Zweig Speaks On Income Protection & Safety Guidelines

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Connecticut and across the country, leaders of the Board of Education Union Coalition presented a petition signed by over 14,000 education and community members urging the state to take immediate steps to protect the health of students, staff and communities.

Speaking at a press conference held on the North Steps of the State Capitol on Dec. 10th, union leaders said they will share the petition, which was signed by teachers, paraeducators, bus drivers and monitors, counselors, custodians, cafeteria workers, parents, community members

and other education supporters, with Gov. Ned Lamont.

The petitions reinforce the urgency of their months-long campaign for safe and healthy schools. They said the surging COVID-19 infection rate demands the establishment and enforcement of consistent statewide safety protocols, along with uniform transparency in reporting and responding to cases, for schools. If that's not

possible, Connecticut must shift to full-time remote learning until after the holidays, with a promise of pay protection for our members.

The union coalition's petition campaign follows the Nov. 24 release of their report, "Safe and Successful Schools Now," which calls for a shift to all remote learning unless stronger protections are in place to keep our school communities safe.

"To simply keep the doors open without regard to science cannot possibly be in the best

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PICTURED: Paraeducator Council President, Cynthia Ross-Zweig addressing the press at the State Capitol.

Faces Behind The Frontline

Read just one harrowing story from a CSC Member, LT. Quintana

In December, the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee sent out a request for testimony from frontline workers who had contracted COVID-19 on the job.

CSEA had two members submit testimony, Department of Corrections (DOC) Captain Timothy

Newton and DOC Lieutenant Samuel Quintana, whose testimony is below.

"Hi my name is Lieutenant Quintana. I work for the Connecticut Department of Corrections. I was diagnosed with COVID-19 back in April when the nation really didn't have a plan in

place to combat this awful virus. I was infected at work, within the correctional facility and as a first responder, there was even less planning within the walls. I wanted to tell you my story, not to scare you, but with the hopes that as a nation, we can grow from our mistakes.

I spent 9 days in the hospital, 3 of which were in the ICU and while I was there I saw that even the hospitals were behind on there procedures and desperately short on staff. It took the hospital almost 72 hours for me to get a positive test result. I asked the

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Executive Council Approves 2021 Legislative Agenda

CSEA Focuses on Eight Agenda Items

The General Assembly might have abruptly ended the 2020 legislative session due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but they will be coming back for their regularly scheduled session on January 6. A lot has happened since legislators closed the Legislative Office Building and State Capitol in March, but we still find ourselves confronting a deadly and spreading virus, as well as dealing with political opponents who want to use this global tragedy as an excuse to harm public employees and retirees and destroy collective bargaining. CSEA members have always stood up when it comes to fighting to protect our jobs, our benefits, and the services we provide, and the 2021

session will be no different.

Every year, CSEA's Legislative Action Committee (LAC), which is made up of members from throughout our union, puts together a legislative agenda to focus our efforts and highlight our priorities during the General Assembly's session. After the LAC has recommended an agenda, Executive Council members review it, discuss it, and then vote on its approval. In agendas from past years, we've fought for and won things like paid sick days, FMLA rights for paraeducators, and a stronger role for the State Contracting Standards Board. Together, we've also successfully fought back against efforts to further

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Wethersfield School Bus Drivers Vote YES For CSEA

On Tuesday, November 24th the Wethersfield School Bus Drivers voted overwhelmingly to unionize with CSEA SEIU local 2001. They join over a dozen other workplaces who employ school bus drivers and monitors in Connecticut. According to long time school bus driver Christopher Justiniانو, "We all have a lot of safety concerns regarding COVID-19, not just for ourselves, but the children we transport.

Unfortunately [the bosses] did not have any good answers for us." He went on to say, that with a union in place, "we will fight for the safety of our fellow drivers and make sure we all go home to our families." Safety was just one of the reasons the van and bus drivers organized. They were also looking for respect in the workplace, annual raises and a retirement plan. Bus driver,

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

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

P-4 IT Optimization - Pg. 7

The Union Goals for the State's IT System Overhaul



Meetings
And News

NOTICE: C400 Chapter Elections

Because of the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSEA/SEIU, Local 2001 took the action of delaying the chapter and council elections from 2020 to 2021 for the safety of our members through a Special Convention this past June. Now with the pandemic continuing to make meeting in-person unsafe, we need to arrange for an alternate option to hold elections in the coming year.

Every consideration needs to be

given for all members to have access to vote and to do so safely. Because of the varying degrees of access to and mastery of technology and email, utilizing the most widely used communication for retirees, the CSEA News, makes the most sense.

Two of our Council 400 chapters were able to complete their elections before COVID made it impossible to meet again, chapters 408 and 417, so they will not need to conduct their elections again.

If you would like to nominate someone or yourself for a position of Chapter President, Vice President,

Secretary or Treasurer, Council Delegate or Alternate Delegate, or Auditor, please contact Bernadette Conway (bconway@csea760.com or 860-951-6614, ext. 112) by January 20th. In the coming months we will have more detailed information regarding the chapter elections.

In an upcoming edition of the CSEA News, the slate of recommended officers, delegates, alternate delegates and auditors will be listed in the CSEA News.

Council 400 Hosts Comptroller Kevin Lembo

Council 400 Members Learned About OSC Updates And Were Able to Ask Questions

The monthly virtual meetings have been very popular and helpful to members! Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, January 20th at 4pm for the next one!

We may not be able to meet in person, but we can certainly get important information to you and stay connected! For December, we had Comptroller Kevin Lembo speak to our members and answer any questions they had!

In the past we have also had Secretary of State Denise Merrill, Cigna Representative Linda Larson, Anna Vita from United Healthcare, Rae-Ellen Roy from the

State of CT Retiree Benefits Division, and Elder Law Attorney Daniel Tully as speakers in our last three meetings! All of our guest speakers have been informative and answered our member's questions.

NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING:
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20TH AT 4PM
SPEAKER:
STATE REP. QUENTIN PHIPPS, INCOMING HOUSE CHAIR OF THE AGING COMMITTEE

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**

Is there a special guest you would like to see at our monthly virtual meetings? Is there a specific subject you would like more information about? Contact me and let me know at bconway@csea760.com!

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!

Tips For Zoom!

It's great to be able to stay in touch during COVID times with the latest technology, but it can be confusing! Here are some tips to remember when attending meetings.

Many people have had their desktop or laptop for many years and have never had to

use the camera before, and are not even sure if there is one! You don't need a camera on your device to attend a meeting, just know that people won't be able to see you.

When you join a meeting, we have the attendees on mute so that the speakers can be

heard, so don't take it personally if you cannot unmute yourself to speak. It is much easier to hear the speakers clearly when all are muted. We will always give everyone in attendance a chance to ask questions or speak at the end of the meeting.

There are two ways to reach out with ques-

tions. The first is the "Chat Feature". You can find the chat feature by moving your mouse to the bottom of your screen under participants. Click on the participants icon and it will bring up the chat feature which is a box that you can type your questions into and read our responses. We hope to

answer all questions fully in the chat feature, but if we aren't able to, we will bring up the question to answer it at the end of the meeting. Another way to ask a question is to "raise your hand". To raise your hand to be called upon, you can click on the participants icon on the bottom of your

screen, and that will bring up a box on your right. There will be a logo stating "raise hand" - click on that, please be patient until we call upon you.

We always do our best to get to everyone, and answer all of your questions during the meeting one way or another!

Medicare Part B Reimbursement & Social Security COLA

We want to make sure that you receive your full Medicare Part B Reimbursement! Retirees on Medicare receive their Social Security Statement by the end of the year.

On your Social Security Statement it will show how much you will be paying for your Part B. The basic amount for 2021 is **\$148.50** (or \$445.50 quarterly), which is what most retirees pay. If your Social Security statement shows that is what you will be

paying, you don't need to submit anything - the State will automatically adjust your Part B Reimbursement to that amount for January 1st of 2021.

If your Social Security statement shows that you are paying an amount different from \$148.50 (higher or lower), or that you are paying an amount for Part D, then you will need to submit a copy of your Social Security statement to be reimbursed the correct amount. You

should make a copy of the front page showing the amounts you pay and write your State Employee ID number above your name (you can find your state employee ID number on your pension pay stub).

You can submit it two ways, by sending in the mail or by email. To send it by mail, send it to:

**UnitedHealthcare Benefits Services
PO Box 740221
Atlanta, GA 30374**

It is a good idea to send it certified so you have proof that you sent it and the date you sent it.

You can also send it as an attachment by email to DirectBill_KYOperations@uhc.com. Sending it by email is also proof of when you sent it.

You can also call to confirm they received it at 1-866-747-0048.

If you send it to them by February 28, 2021, it will be retroactive to January 1st of 2021. If it is received after that date, it will be adjusted after they receive it.

It is always a good idea to check 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.

Important numbers to have on hand:

Retirement Division Payroll: 860-702-3528

Retirement Division Life Insurance: 860-702-3537

Retirement Division Health Insurance: 860-702-3533

Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield: 1-800-922-2232

CSEA Retiree Organizer, Kevin Sullivan: 860-951-6614 x118

UnitedHealthcare: 1-888-803-9217

Oxford Health: 1-800-385-9055

Caremark: 1-800-318-2572

Cigna: 1-800-244-6224

HEP Care Management Solutions: 1-877-687-1448 or visit them at their portal: <https://www.connect2yourhealth.com/ParticipantPortal/Default.aspx>



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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	0.90%	0.90%
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	SOUTHURY 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

Hours: Main Office: Mon-Fri, 9^{am}-4^{pm} Branches: Mon-Fri, 9:30^{am}-4^{pm}
 Drive-Up Teller (Hartford Only): Mon-Fri, 9^{am}-4^{pm}; Paydays Open Until 5^{pm}

2020 - A Year in Review

As 2020 comes to a close, CSEA Council 400 wants to reflect back on the unprecedented challenges and the growth, accomplishments and challenges we have faced and overcome in the last 12 months.

- We added **over 400 New Members**.
- We helped get **64 CSEA-endorsed candidates** elected to state and federal offices.
- We gave out **46 scholarships to high school graduates** of union members.
- We grew the Retiree Council to include a **new Staff Representative, Kevin Sullivan**
- We met with over **200 members in Florida** and brought UnitedHealthcare and Cigna Representatives with us.
- We raised over **\$38,000 in Political Action Committee Donations**.
- We made over **4,339 political calls for our endorsed candidates**.
- We settled over **200 healthcare claims** for members.
- We traveled to **our kitchens, our living rooms, and the mailbox** with our Social Activities Committee (just kidding, but we hope next year we'll be able to travel again!)

2020 was an unprecedented year, but CSEA and unions across the country continued to fight for workers rights. It's now time to gear up for the fights ahead of us in 2021. We wish you a safe and healthy holiday season.

Your Retiree Team,
Bernadette Conway Director of Administration and Retiree Services
Kevin Sullivan Retiree Organizer

Important Notice:

UnitedHealthcare Member Copays

COVID-19 Testing - From Feb. 4, 2020 through the national public health emergency period (currently scheduled to end Jan. 20, 2021), UnitedHealthcare is waiving cost sharing for in-network and out-of-network testing-related telehealth visits.

COVID-19 Treatment - From Feb. 4, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2020, UnitedHealthcare is waiving cost sharing for in-network and out-of-network telehealth treatment visits.

Non-COVID-19 Visits - Through Sept. 30, 2020, UnitedHealthcare extended the cost share waiver for telehealth services for in- and out-of-network providers. From Oct. 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2020, UnitedHealthcare will extend the cost share waiver for in-network and covered out-of-network primary care telehealth services.



CSEA NEWS

The Voice of Connecticut's Public Service Employees & Retirees

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INSERTION DEADLINE: 1st of prior month.

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Family Child Care Provider News

Noticias para Proveedores de Cuidado Infantil

In November Rhonda Knowles (pictured right) spoke at a national workshop called "Before, During, and After COVID-19: What's Happening to Family Child Care?"

Rhonda is a Member of her Union's Professional Development Committee and served on the Contract Negotiations Team. She gave the provider's perspective on the effects of Covid-19 on family child care providers.

"Because of the pandemic, everyone's eyes are now awake to how important childcare is. We are a serious, important part of this economic system. I hope that when the pandemic is under control that we are not lost again, that people remember that 0 to 5 counts. They have to focus on that and put more funds into childcare." #savechildcare

REMINDER - February 6th - Save the Date for a Webinar on Taxes!!



En noviembre, Rhonda Knowles (en la foto a la izquierda) habló en un taller nacional llamado "Antes, durante y después de COVID-19: ¿Qué está pasando con el cuidado infantil familiar?"

Rhonda es miembro del Comité de Desarrollo Profesional de su sindicato y formó parte del Equipo de Negociaciones de Contratos. Ella dio la perspectiva del proveedor sobre los efectos de Covid-19 en los proveedores de cuidado infantil familiar.

"Debido a la pandemia, todos los ojos ahora están conscientes de lo importante que es el cuidado de los niños. Somos una parte seria e importante de este sistema económico. Espero que cuando la pandemia esté bajo control no estemos perdidos nuevamente, que la gente recuerde que 0 a 5 cuentas.

Tienen que concentrarse en eso y poner más fondos en el cuidado de los niños." #savechildcare
 RECORDATORIO - 6 de febrero - ¡Reserve la fecha para un seminario web sobre impuestos!

State Division

As the Legislative Session gets closer, our members are fine-tuning their skills and preparing for legislative battle. Travis Woodward, President of P-4 has already been at work trying to get one issue front and center this session—saving the state \$100,000,000 through in-sourcing. Reports show that by simply letting DOT employees inspect DOT administered projects, the State can save millions.

Woodward, a seasoned activist, has already submitted an op-ed to the *Connected Mirror* outlining the findings in these reports (re-printed in its entirety below).

"In response to the recent *CT Mirror* report *Transportation Infrastructure could be key to inclusive economic recovery, but investment has languished* on November 30, I would like to add to Keith Phanuef's piece with suggestions on how to improve our transportation infrastructure in a fiscally responsible way.

The article cites a decade-long lack of transportation spending, but does not address a key piece of the equation, the Department of Transportation (DOT)

wastes over \$100 million annually through outsourcing key engineering services. Recent cost analyses, that the DOT must submit annually by statute, indicate wasteful spending of between 58 to 62% when the Department outsources construction inspection and engineering design services. For Fiscal Years 2016, 2017, and 2018, the state could have saved \$325 million had this critical work been performed by state employees.

So why does the state continue to waste this much when reports and audits show it can be done more cost effectively with in-house personnel? Politics.

A political shell game takes place because some politicians love to show a reduction of state employees, in lieu of any actual savings. The number of state employees and the state budget's personnel line item receive the most scrutiny every budget cycle. But when quasi-state employees hired by private companies perform the same work, the public does not have access to the number of employees being hired. In addition, the tax dollars spent by outsourcing

fall under the operating expenses budget line item, which is hardly ever scrutinized.

Also to blame is the hiring process Connecticut uses for state employees. The Department of Transportation is not in charge of hiring engineers but instead uses a centralized hiring dinosaur called Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Even as the DOT performs strategic planning for the next five years, they have no authority or control of how many employees they can hire at the department and are subject to the whims of politicians and DAS.

One of the critical services our engineers provide is oversight and inspection of the construction of our roads and bridges. Our priorities are keeping the roads safe and contractors honest. When we do not have enough staff to perform these duties, our work is outsourced to high priced, for-profit companies, many of which are not even based in Connecticut, often taking jobs away from our residents. Having a no-bid contractor oversee a low-bid contractor is like having the fox guard the henhouse. When

these construction contracts run over their allotted contract time, these private consulting engineers are rewarded with their own contract extensions, meaning more cost to taxpayers.

With changes coming to the state employee's pension plan looming in July, 2022, you would expect the

state to be staffing up in order to retain qualified lower-costing state engineers ahead of the "silver tsunami." Instead, it is business as usual in Connecticut. The position count of DOT engineers has not changed and while some hiring of new employees has taken place, it is not nearly enough to counter the expected

retirements.

It appears the politicians in control are quite content with doubling down on their addiction to outsourcing, at the cost of the Connecticut taxpayers."

For the full DOT 2019 Savings Report, please visit: seiu2001.org/category/state-workers/P-4/



Nationally, on a typical project, public employees are a more efficient use of resources as a larger percentage of funds goes to the direct cost of services - *not profits*.

Source: Colorado Center for Policy Studies

DOT Data Shows Massive Savings From Insourcing

For the fiscal years 2016-2018, the Department of Transportation spent more than **\$547,796,236** on outside consultants. DOT's Cost Effectiveness Evaluations suggest that same work could have been done in-house for between **\$213,640,543 & \$320,241,695** had we done more work in-house, **annually**, we could have saved between

\$95,699,457 – \$144,750,924

PICTURED ABOVE: Information from the DOT 2019 Savings Report highlighting the annual waste spent by the State on DOT outsourcing.

Paraeducator Council

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interest of our children. Everyone is susceptible, students, staff and our families at home, and unless there are mandatory, consistent and transparent guidelines, we will continue to learn of more cases and deaths," said Cynthia Ross-Zweig, CSEA Paraeducator Council President.
Many of the 14,000 people who signed the petition also provided commentary from the front-lines of public education during a pandemic:

"My brother contracted COVID at an elementary school. He brought it to my

elderly mother who died from it. I am heartbroken as well as terrified." - Manchester

"The disparity and lack of clarity around COVID response in school districts right now is completely unacceptable." -Waterbury

"You need to set a state standard so ALL can be safe and still learn." -Branford

"With the timing of cold weather and windows being closed, more students being brought into our buildings, gatherings and travel of families during the holiday season, lack of social

distancing, and the rapid rise in COVID cases, this feels like a perfect storm. I am in agreement that if testing can't happen, and other appropriate protocols followed, then schools should go remote until after the holidays to at least eliminate some of the risk to staff and students right now." - Torrington

The Board of Education Union Coalition represents unionized public education employees across the state and includes members of CEA, AFT CT, CSEA, CEUI, MEUI, AFSCME, and UAW.

PICTURED BELOW: Coalition leaders unscroll 14,000 petition signatures for Safe Schools before delivering to Governor Lamont.



PICTURED ABOVE: Coalition leaders displayed petition comments and a map with red dots for each petition signature.



PICTURED ABOVE: Numerous press outlets settle in for the coalition's press event.

Correctional Supervisor's Council

continued from page 1
hospital staff why I wasn't given any medication for my worsening symptoms and they stated that due to the timing of my test, there was a delay in results and treatment. I couldn't receive my meds until the test was confirmed and in the meantime, I suffered in that room, lonely, high temp, vomiting, diarrhea and coughing. I was worried because all I hear on TV is people dying from this virus, I wasn't confident that I could be a success story of survival.



PICTURED ABOVE: Department of Corrections Lieutenant Samuel Quintana

As my COVID worsened, the positive result finally came in and my physician came into my hospital room to tell me I was finally going to be administered the medication that would help me fight the virus, but that there was still a chance I wouldn't make it. In the event that I was to pass from the virus, I wouldn't be resuscitated.

When I took the medication my body rejected it immediately. There were times I was so weak I passed out in the room. With an extremely short staff, it took a while to get help. As my condition worsened my physician made the determination that I needed to be escorted to the Intensive Care Unit. On my short trip through the hospital to the ICU unit, I glanced through the glass partitions to see patients intubated with tape closing their eyes shut. When I arrived the nurse on duty was thrilled that I could still talk, I would be the only one on the floor still able to. I grew even more nervous. But after 3 days in ICU and with the help of the overstretched hospital staff and all the love I re-

Wethersfield Bus Joins CSEA

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Theresa Garcet-Madera said, "we are fighting for equality for all, before the union - we weren't being treated fairly. We want security and benefits for those that need it".

A few of the bus drivers have worked in unionized bus yards in the past and made clear a startling difference. Vanessa Mayuri, a former union steward in the West Hartford school bus yard made the comparison to "night and day" between union and non-union workplaces. She stated, "[This company] doesn't show us any appreciation

even though we have dedicated our lives to this work. We continue to work hard and keep children safe everyday... even during a global pandemic."

The local NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) ran the election by secret mail-in ballot and counted the ballots through a remote meeting. The thirty one school bus drivers from Wethersfield will join with over 1,400 drivers and monitors all over the state who have already made the choice to organize and fight for a better way of life.



PICTURED ABOVE: Members of CSEA's newest bargaining unit- the Wethersfield Bus Yard.

Council 760

**HARTFORD SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS:
Tenative Date Set For Next Meeting
Tuesday, February 9th at 10:00AM
Details on the Virtual Meeting will follow
(Zoom Invitation)**

ceived from my family, I got better. We need personal protective equipment, we need standardized cleaning guidelines, we need workers to be tested regularly and treated when they are infected on the job. We can't wait. We must

have a plan in place. Unfortunately though, having a plan and being better prepared involves money. But we must stop being reactive and finally become proactive. It could be the difference between life and death."

continued from Page 1 privatize public services, expand the use of public private partnerships, and make unilateral changes to pension and health care benefits.

This year's agenda as approved by the Executive Council touches on the lives and careers of every member of CSEA:

2021 Legislative Agenda

A fair budget that increases revenue through taxes on Connecticut's wealthiest residents

-A budget that properly funds public services and the jobs of CSEA members, from state employees to municipal and board of education workers to home-based family child care providers;

-A budget that reverses the trend of short staffing in state agencies, as well as municipalities and boards of education;

-A budget that protects and properly funds retirement benefits earned by CSEA members;

-A budget that increases funding for vital services provided by CSEA members, like the educational programs in our state's prisons; and

-A budget that rejects privatization schemes, funds the State Contracting Standards Board, and moves personal service agreements from the operating expenses budget line to the personnel line to more accurately reflect the cost and number of outside consultants

Pass State Employee Contracts

All state employee collective bargaining agreements and binding arbitration awards must be approved

by a vote of the House of Representatives and Senate. CSEA will work to ensure the successful passage of any collective bargaining agreements or binding arbitration awards that are submitted to the General Assembly for approval; **Paraeducator compensation improvement and career development.**

Paraeducators are an essential part of the education system, but for too long they have not been treated that way. CSEA will join forces with other union locals in Connecticut that represent paras, to pass legislation that starts the process of dramatically improving the pay, benefits, training, professional development, career opportunities, and working conditions of paras;

Public option for health care

CSEA will join with allies in the General Assembly and Comptroller Kevin Lembo, along with other labor unions and community organizations to guarantee every person in Connecticut has equitable access to affordable, quality health care through a public option;

Require all DOT inspections be done by state employees

By insourcing work currently done by private contractors and consultants, Connecticut can save hundreds of millions of dollars every year. Not only will insourcing save money, but it is also a matter of public safety. Do you want to drive over a bridge built by a low bid contractor that was inspected by a no bid contractor? We should not let the fox guard the hen house;

Collective bargaining rights for probate court workers

It is remarkable that there are workers in Connecticut who do not have the right to form a union and exercise their collective bargaining rights. Unfortunately, that is the case for the people who work in Connecticut's probate courts. CSEA will work to pass legislation that gives these workers the rights they deserve;

Workers' Comp presumption for COVID-19

CSEA will work with our brothers and sisters in other SEIU locals and the Connecticut AFL-CIO to enhance and expand Governor Lamont's Executive Order that created a limited workers' comp presumption for workers who contracted COVID-19 on the job; and

Early voting and no excuse vote by mail

Allowing voters to vote early or by mail without an excuse is something Connecticut should have done long ago. CSEA will work with allies to change existing voting laws that hinder the ability of

anything we have seen before. For starters, most of it will be virtual.

The session is scheduled to run from January 6 through June 9, but don't expect to be heading to the LOB or State Capitol in Hartford anytime soon; things like committee meetings and public hearings will be conducted virtually, probably through Zoom. To make up for the lack of in person contact with legislators, we need to make sure they are hearing from us through other channels like phone calls, emails, and social media posts.

While every item on our agenda is important, we all recognize that the real battle will be about the budget. During next year's session, the main work of the General Assembly will be on Connecticut's next biennial budget. No matter where you work or even if you are retired, if you are a member of CSEA, the state budget is central to your work, your pay, and your benefits. Together, we can shape a budget and a legislative session that produces wins for our members and moves our local and our state in the right direction.

Former State Sen. Ed Gomes Involved in Serious Crash

Former state Senator Ed Gomes, 84, was in a serious collision on Boston Ave on Dec. 13th, and as of this printing, the former Senator is still in critical condition.

The CT Post touched base with Gomes' family, "He had head injuries. ... He pulled through his operation. He's not really out of the woods, yet," one of Gomes' brothers, William Aranjó, said Monday afternoon.

"We're just praying for the best," said the former state legislator's niece, Latoya Johnson-Aranjo, Monday. While she described him as a very tough man, "he's not 20 years old."

At first, Gomes was not identified as one of the drivers in the two car collision, but good friend and state Senator Marilyn

Moore posted a few hours later on Facebook asking for prayers for Gomes, "Serious car accident. He is out of surgery."

The other person in the collision, Clive Henry, a 19-year-old Bridgeport man, sustained non-life-threatening injuries, Appleby said.

Police Capt. Kevin Gilleran stated that "The impact of the cars colliding with one another caused significant damage to the vehicles and injuries to both operators," Gilleran said, adding that there were no passengers in either vehicle.

Once rescue crews were able to reach the drivers, Gomes was rushed to the Bridgeport Hospital and Genry was taken to St. Vincent's Medical Center, according to

Gilleran. Family told CT Post that they were only speaking to the doctors by phone and were unable to visit the hospital due to the restrictions related to controlling the coronavirus.

"They're just waiting another 24 hours to see what happens," Aranjó said of his brother. "He's really not responding now."

Gomes first elected to the Bridgeport City Council in 1983 where he served from 1983-1989 and again from 199-2005 when he was elected to the State Legislature as a State Representative where he continued to proudly serve Bridgeport.

In 2011, then-state Representative Ed

residents to cast votes easily, early, and safely. The 2021 session will not look like

We Miss Those Who Have Passed

Antoinette	Aniello	Martin	Boisvert
Mary	Yacono	Deborah	Selden
James	Reichenberg	Walter	Kasper
Mildred	Garvey	Fraydele	Massey
Thomas	Clifford	Marilyn	Biggins
Lawrence	Kovacik	Ronald	Ceravolo
Julie	Frost	Tory	Earhart-cook
Viola	Kwiatkowski	Doreen	Foerster
Dorothy	Czech	Phyllis	Lambert
Harvey	Luce	Francis	Hallaman
Miklos	Radics	Elsie	Smith
Loida	Rubin	Marion	Emmons
Michael	Wimmer	Irene	Mace
Arvid	Kulits	Robert	Fortuna
Robert	Frank	Richard	Francis
Lorraine	Demarest	Richard	Newbould
George	Horn	Thomas	Miller Sr
Patricia	Babowicz	Jose	Santos
Alan	Crossley	William	Cannon
Ann	Osora	Jesse	Frankl
David	Murphy	Joseph	Kleina
William	Clapp	Donald	Wetherell
Manuel	Becerra	Doris	Little
Joanne	Sevarino	Veronica	Artiaco
Lingling	Zhang	Orlando	D'aquilla
Lila	Mcfarland	Michael	Cozzolino
Marie	Sandford	Theresa	Pruchnik
Lawrence	Piroscafo	Bruce	Detata
Edward	Lahey	John	Malewicki
David	Wells	Phyllis	Roth
Mildred	Trella	Iona	Cunningham
Marilyn	Rudman	Rene	Ferland
Karin	Adams	Joan	Rolsky
Theodore	Thompson	Joseph	Lisee
Neil	Grenier	Gertrude	Beckwith
James	Donaldson	Joseph	Mesquita
Guy	Passarello	Leon	Walker
Richard	Reynolds	John	Davis
Catherine	Vigilante	Joseph	Marino
Linnie	Brown	Evelyn	Caprio
Mark	Pecorelli	Antoinette	Dupont
Daniel	Garcia	Anthony	Otero

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CSEA - The Building at 760 Capitol Avenue

By: Bob Rinker

In 2021, CSEA will be celebrating its 80th anniversary as a labor organization representing public and publicly-funded employees. CSEA's beginning was originally in 1939 as a local of AF-SCME. A split between CSEA and AFSCME occurred in 1941 led by Bernard McCusker (for whom the scholarship fund is named after). Much like CSEA, the building that now houses CSEA has a story to tell as well.

CSEA headquarters is located at 760 Capitol Avenue in Hartford. It was originally built as a police precinct for the West End of Hartford. It was built within the neighborhood surrounding Hartford High School which is the second oldest secondary school in the country. The school

was founded in 1638 by Rev. Thomas Hooker to prepare men for Puritan ministry.

The CSEA building still has reminders of the police precinct including an engraving of the symbol of Roman centurions above the main entrance to the building. Centurions were officers in charge of foot soldiers in ancient Rome. You can also see the former anchors where the blue light posts stood in front of the building indicating it was a police station. In the back of the building there is a half wall that is the remnants of the garage where officers parked their police vehicles. Back then, there were few police cars as most officers walked a beat. Inside the building and to the back, were holding cells for those that were taken into

police custody. Until recently, you would have been able to see the bars on the windows from the parking lot. The bars came down when we replaced the original windows a few years back as an energy saving measure. In the lower level of the building there was a shooting range for the officers.

Nearby is the most interesting room, a fallout shelter. What is unique about this room is that it is underneath the parking lot. For those of you that don't remember a fallout shelter, it was the place you were to go in case there was a bombing by a foreign adversary. The room has a hatchway leading into the parking lot in case the building was demolished and it provided the only means of escape.

While the original building has a brick facade, the structure of the building is poured concrete including the I-Beams that support the floors. The structural concrete walls are 12 to 18 inches wide. The building was built along the Park River, a.k.a., the Hog

River or Little River that ran through Hartford and emptied into the Connecticut River. The river was west of the original building and today it would be under the addition added to the building that contains our large meeting hall. The river was diverted just south of the building when I-84 was built through the middle of Hartford. Today, most of the river in Hartford remains underground. Because the former river ran next to the original building and through the main meeting hall, the water table is very high. As a result, the current building has three active sump pumps and wells to keep us dry.

After the City abandoned the police precinct, it was used for Russian war relief following World War II. This was before the Cold War when the Soviet Union was an ally in our fight against Nazi Germany. Also in the 1950s the Police Athletic League used the building for boxing. There was a full sized boxing ring on the second floor. The Friday fights were

broadcasted on local television and cables ran out of the second floor to the broadcast truck on Capitol Avenue. Through the years, ex-boxers have shown up at CSEA to reminisce about the old days.

When I-84 was built, the Department of Transportation (DOT) used the building as a staging area for the construction. Following the construction, DOT gave the building back to the City of Hartford. CSEA bought the building from the City. After some renovation, the CSEA offices were located there including an office for the CSE Credit Union. The CSE Credit Union was formed by CSEA in 1946. It is currently the 2nd largest credit union in Connecticut with \$2 billion in assets. The only item left over from Credit Union is a large safe in one of the offices, but it no longer holds any money.

In the late 1970's, the leadership of CSEA decided to build an addition to the west side of the original building. The addi-

tion includes a large membership meeting hall, a kitchen space, and bathrooms. On the lower level are CSEA's print shop and additional staff offices. The most recent improvement to the building was the construction of a paved parking lot. CSEA went from a paved parking lot that could hold about a dozen cars with the rest of the parking on a dirt lot underneath the on and off ramps for I-84 to a paved lot with 66 marked spaces.

Our building has been the site of many historic negotiations with the State; it has hosted retirement parties and legislative receptions; and has honored our children and grandchildren that have received a McCusker scholarship. So on our 80th anniversary, we also celebrate our nearly 60 years in a building that is part of our history and the history of the labor movement in Connecticut.

Bob Rinker is the Council 400 Eastern Area Vice President and former CSEA Executive Director.



760 Capitol Avenue, Hartford is the home of CSEA SEIU Local 2001.

Sen. Ed Gomes

continued from Page 6 Gomes shocked political leaders in the area when, at the age of 75, he underwent a triple bypass surgery and the thought of slowing down didn't even cross his mind. And while he lost his primary to state Rep. Andres Ayala, four years later when Ayala resigned his seat to become the commissioner of the department of motor vehicles, Gomes threw his hat back in the ring.

To the excitement of many though, Gomes filed to run again in 2015 as a third-party candidate, receiving 49% of the vote, it marked the

first Working Families Party candidate to win outside of the State of New York.

His time in the legislature was aptly shaped by his past as a steel worker and labor organizer. His reputation precedes him as a tough, pro-union legislator who saw no problem with breaking with Bridgeport party leaders. Throughout his tenure, CSEA and other unions were able to rely on him to help push through our policy priorities and vision. His actions spoke louder than many politicians words--he worked everyday to strengthen the working class.

Union Goals for the State's IT System Overhaul

Recently, there has been a significant amount of talk inside state agencies about a planned initiative of the Lamont administration to centralize the State's information technology (IT) operations. Most of this talk has come from IT managers across state service describing this "IT Optimization" in sunny but vague tones. The administration reached out to CSEA, through the Office of Labor Relations, requesting to meet and discuss the project. In response, the P-4 Council appointed a team of IT members and the team has met with management on a couple of occasions over the past several weeks.

The union team has approached the project with cautious optimism. There are plenty of historical examples of management using "reorganization" or "centralization" to achieve ends that are not in the interests of workers. At the same time, the state's approach to IT is in need of update in many different ways.

The union team communicated to management a number of goals that need to be a part of IT Optimization and the process of building a 21st century IT operation. These goals include, but are not limited to: reducing the state's reliance on outside contractors, providing on-going

training, creating career paths so that employees can achieve maximum potential, addressing the outdated job description and compensation system, reducing silos and isolation, improving system security, improving services and delivery, expanding the opportunity to work 40 hours, embracing telework and alternate work schedules, and addressing/reversing systemic racism, sexism, ageism, and other forms of historical exclusion.

The discussions with management began in a very collaborative, productive manner. Recently, however, management has inexplicably stalled the

process. Despite the stall in union discussions, management continues to hold meetings with various stakeholders (including leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly) purporting that the project is full steam ahead. This is an alarming path for the administration to take.

Any initiative of this nature can only succeed if it is executed as a true partnership with the people who actually do the work. Through CSEA, IT members across the state will continue to push for collaboration with an eye toward building a more effective IT operation that is better for workers.

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