

2024 Legislative Agenda

By: Daniel I. Medress, Political Education Director

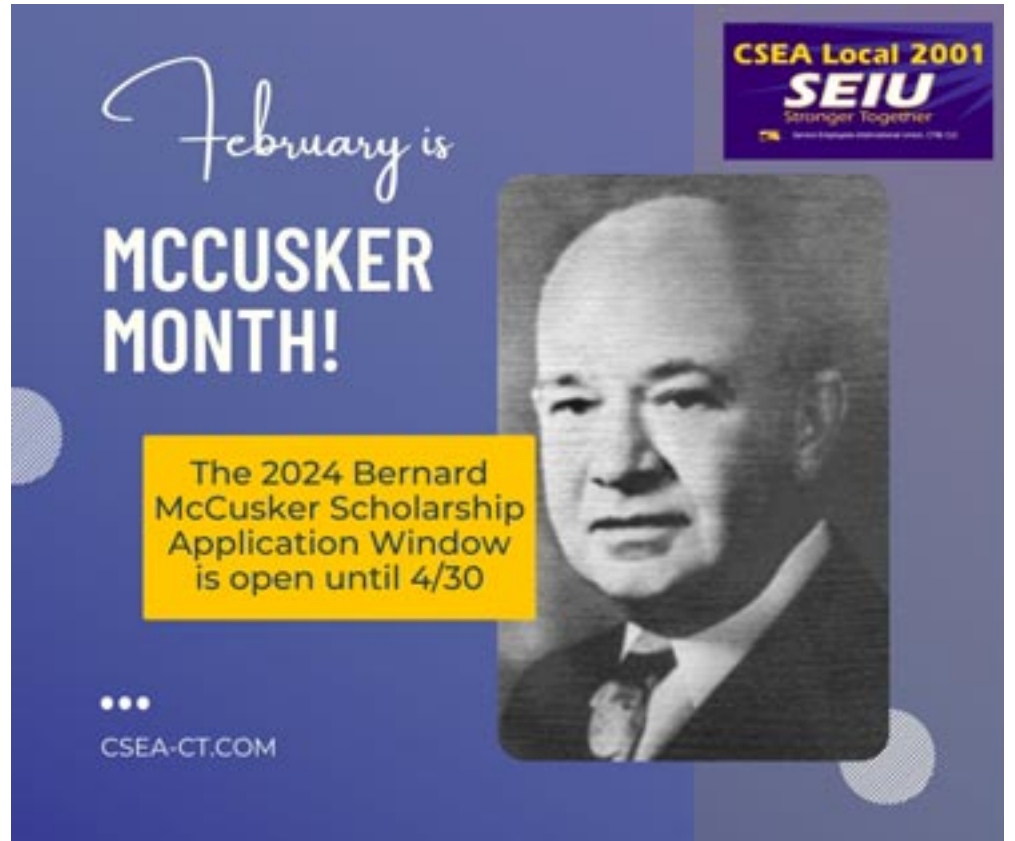
As the cold of the New England winter sets in, that can only mean one thing: the Connecticut General Assembly is getting ready to convene for another legislative session. On February 7, Representatives and Senators serving constituents from all of the Nutmeg state's 169 municipalities will meet in the State Capitol to begin their legislative work. The yearly legislative session is also an opportunity for CSEA members to work together and with allies to advance an agenda that honors and values public service and the workers who make it possible.

The Connecticut state constitution calls for the General Assembly to meet from February until May in even-numbered years. This contrasts with the January to June session in odd-numbered years, when the state budget is completed. However, this so-called "short session" is still a critical period of time in which readjustments to the state budget can be made and important pieces of legislation can be passed. As CSEA members know from experience,

every legislative session is also an opportunity for the enemies of labor unions to push anti-worker policies that seek to curtail our rights, reduce our paychecks, privatize our jobs, and eliminate our benefits.

Thankfully, the Connecticut General Assembly makes it easy for the voices of working people to be heard as part of the legislative process. The direct involvement of CSEA members as legislation is crafted has resulted in real progress for working people over the years. From protecting and expanding collective bargaining rights to pushing for funding for vital services to passing legislation implementing paid sick days, the list of wins that CSEA members have helped make possible is a long one.

Energized by those past victories and optimistic about the possibilities of the future, CSEA's Executive Council has approved the following legislative agenda for the 2024 session of the Connecticut



General Assembly (this agenda was recommended by CSEA's Legislative Action Committee, which is composed of representatives from all of CSEA's councils, and is based upon input from members from throughout the local):

2024 Legislative Agenda
Connecticut for All Legislative Proposals.

CSEA was one of the founding

organizations of Recovery For All; a coalition of more than 60 community, faith, labor, and nonprofit advocacy organizations representing hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life across Connecticut working together for a fair and equitable budget and other legislative priorities that advance the needs of working people. The coalition has adopted a new *continue onto page 4*

Important Notice: Disregard Non-State Aetna Mailings

state retirees about receiving a letter from Aetna marked "Important Plan Information" on the envelope and "Action Requested" within the letter.

This letter suggests potential eligibility for programs that could offer financial savings, urging a call to discuss possible benefits. It also men-

We've been informed by numerous

tions a potential saving of up to \$164.90 per month.

It's important to note that this communication is not from the State of Connecticut and doesn't pertain to your State of Connecticut retiree plan. Typically, enrolling in other plans can affect your state health insurance negatively. However, if you have already contacted the number provided, rest assured it won't impact your benefits.

This letter is specifically aimed at individuals who qualify for Medicaid and who do not already receive Part B reimbursement, which you, as a State of Connecticut retiree, already do.

Please disregard this mailing; no action is required on your part.

CT Ranks in the Bottom Half of States in Tax Fairness

Regressive Tax Policies Continue to Push CT Towards More Inequities

Connecticut's tax system has come under scrutiny in the 7th periodic "Who Pays" analysis of states' tax burdens by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP). Despite the recent tax cuts targeted at the working class, the report reveals that Connecticut still ranks behind 29 other states and the District of Columbia in terms of tax fairness. The analysis highlights key areas of concern and offers insights into the impact on income inequality.

1. Connecticut's Regressive Tax System: According to the ITEP report, Connecticut's tax system is the 21st most regressive, *continue onto Page 8*

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CSEA, 760 CAPITOL AVE., HARTFORD, CT 06106

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MEETING DATES

The February Delegates Meeting will be held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, February 15th at 10am at the CSEA Union Hall and via Zoom

Chapter 401 (Hartford area)
Thursday, March 7th - 1pm
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Zoom Meeting ID: 833 1491 7718
Patrice Peterson - (860) 416-0306

Chapter 402 (Danbury area)
Wednesday, February 14th - 10am
United Methodist Church
5 Clapboard Ridge Rd. Danbury
Linda Albanese - (860) 354-6965

Chapter 403 (Norwich area)
Tuesday, February 13th - 1:30pm
Guest: Cigna Representative
Rose City Senior Center
8 Mahan Drive., Norwich
Carol Burgess - (860) 859-3641

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area)
Tuesday, February 13th - 10am
Guest: Silver Sneakers
Trinity Orthodox Church
937 Chase Parkway, Waterbury
Tina Franco (203) 721-4382

Chapter 405 (New Haven area)
Thursday, February 8th - 10:30am
CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR FEBRUARY MEETING ONLY!
Location: Agency on Aging Building
117 Washington Ave.
North Haven, CT.
Speaker: Comptroller Sean Scanlon
Sue Pierson (203) 376-7207

Chapter 406 (Middletown area)
Tuesday, February 13th - 1pm
Guest Speaker: Bette Marafino
CT Alliance for Retired Americans
American Legion Post 75
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr.
Middletown, CT
Joe Formica - (860) 347-4532

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area)
Wednesday, February 21st - 1pm
Guest: AAA Representative
St. Josephs of Stratford Church
1300 Stratford Road
Stratford, CT (on Rt. 113)
Joan Matzonkai - (203) 751-0300

Chapter 408 (Willimantic area)
Wednesday, February 14 - 1pm
Social time is 12:30pm
Guest Speaker: Jennifer Disette,
Hartford HealthCare
Center for Healthy Aging
Mansfield Senior Center
303 Maple Road. Mansfield
Doug Racicot - (860) 234-2537

Chapter 409
(Retired University Professors)
Friday, February 16th - 10am
CSEA Union Hall & via Zoom
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Zoom Meeting ID: 868 8922 7158
Dave Walsh - (860) 684-4773

Chapter 410 (Windsor area)
Monday, February 12th - 1pm
Guest Speaker: Mark Pillsbury
Ivy Physical Therapy
Suffield Senior Center
145 Bridge St., Suffield
Amelia Smith - (860) 687-1848

Chapter 411 (Rocky Hill area)
Thursday, March 21st - 12:30pm
Guest Speakers: Aetna & Cigna
Representatives
Online & at CSEA Union Hall
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Zoom Meeting ID: 876 7278 2961
Sebastian Puglisi (860) 529-8336

Chapter 412 (Putnam area)
Tuesday, February 20th - 1:30pm
The New Putnam Town Hall
200 School St., Putnam
Don Gladding - (860) 933-9998

Chapter 414 (Torrington area)
Monday, February 19th - 10am
Cooperative Service Ext. Bldg
843 University Dr, Torrington
Karen Pineman - (860) 354-6727

Chapter 415 (Manchester area)
Monday, February 26th - 1pm
Guest Speaker: CSEA Retiree
Organizer, Kevin Sullivan
Manchester Elks Lodge
30 Bissell St., Manchester, CT
Stuart Clark - (860) 205-0657 (c)
(860) 454-4818 (h)

Chapter 416 (New London area)
Tuesday, February 13th - 12pm Social Time & 1pm Meeting
Guest Speaker: Head Funeral Director, Chris Gee
Waterford Public Library
49 Rope Ferry Road
John Knaff - (860) 857-4244

Chapter 417 (Plainville area)
Wednesday, February 21st - 1pm
Plainville Public Library
56 East Main St., Plainville
Mark Kirschner - (860) 882-2717

Chapter 418
(Community College Retirees)
Tuesday, February 20th - 10am
Guest Speaker: Colleen Masse
Elder Law Attorney
4C's Union Hall
907 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford
Bill Searle - (860) 745-3692

February Out of State Meetings will be Annual Meetings and Social Events with Kevin Sullivan (CSEA Retiree Organizer), Aetna and Cigna Representatives speaking and answering questions.

Chapter 423
(Highland Beach, Florida)
Monday, February 12th - 12pm
Renzo's Cafe,
6900 N Federal Highway
Boca Raton, FL
Lunch: Order off the Menu
Questions? Call Ron Herzig
(561) 994-6428

Chapter 427 (Vero Beach, Florida)
Tuesday, February 13th - 11am
Fort Pierce Elks Lodge 1520
608 S 5th St., Fort Pierce, FL
34950
Lunch includes Buffet, choices-
Chicken, Pot Roast, Potatoes au
Gratin, Salad, Rolls, Soft drinks
Cost is \$25.00/ member and
guest
Make Checks Payable to:
"CSEA Chapter 427" and mail
to:
Deborah Manganaro,
10111 Greatwoods Pond Dr.
Ft. Pierce, Fl. 34945
Questions? Call Martha Jurek
(860) 558-8172

Chapter 431
(North and South Carolina)
Tuesday, February 20th - 11am
Golden Corral
868 Oak Forest Lane
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
Cost: FREE for members!
Questions? Call John Yopp
(203) 507-1022

Chapter 441 (Cape Cod, MA)
Meeting Date: TBD
Questions? Call Sherrill Stott
(774) 237-0220

**Check out
Page 6 for more
Council 400 News
and Quarterly
Virtual Meeting
Information!**

Important numbers to have on hand:

Retirement Division Payroll: 860-702-3528

Aetna Customer Service: 1-855-648-0391

Retirement Division Life Insurance: 860-702-3537

Caremark: 1-800-318-2572

Retirement Division Health Insurance: 860-702-3533

Cigna: 1-800-244-6224

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

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

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



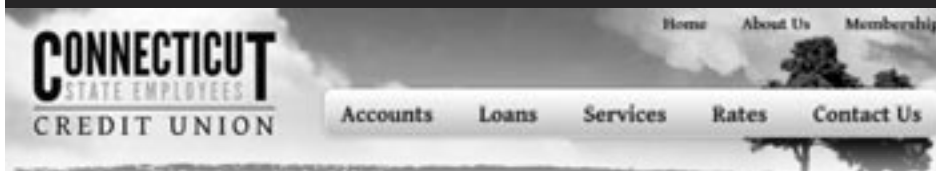
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**Closed on Lincoln's Birthday Mon. Feb. 12
Closed on Washington's Birthday Mon. Feb 19**

Dividend Rates - Fourth Quarter 2023

	Dividend Rate	Annual Percentage Yield
REGULAR SHARES	3.00%	3.05%
SHARE DRAFTS (Checking)	1.25%	1.26%
CLUB ACCOUNTS	2.00%	2.02%

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.

7 Full Service Offices To Serve You

NORWICH Uncas on Thames 401 West Thames St. Norwich, CT 06306 (860) 889-7378	HARTFORD 84 Wadsworth St. Hartford, CT 06106 (860) 522-5388 (Savings) (860) 522-7147 (Loans)	NEW HAVEN 1666 Litchfield Turnpike Woodbridge, CT 06525 (203) 397-2949
MIDDLETOWN 15 Ward Street 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

Hours: Main Office: Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Branches: Mon-Fri, 9:30am-4pm
Drive-Up Teller (Hartford & Middletown): Mon-Fri, 8:30am-4pm; Paydays Open Until 5pm

**Gone too Soon:
CSEA Members Who Have Passed On**

The Office of the State Comptroller has provided CSEA with the following members that have recently passed away. Our condolences are with their friends, family and loved ones.

- Abate, Sarah, Administrative Clerical
- Anderson, Kenneth, Service/Maintenance
- Arndt, Verna, Administrative Clerical
- Benard, Paul, Health Professional
- Bennett, Lucille, Administrative Clerical
- Blauvelt, Sandra, Administrative Clerical
- Bono, David, St Vocation Federation Teacher
- Brodlie, Jerome, State University Faculty
- Capoldo, Beverly, Social And Human Services
- Carluccio, Leeds, State University Faculty
- Chase, Diane, Admin And Residual
- Chomiak, Roman, Social And Human Services
- Coleman, James, Comm College Faculty
- Conlan, Pierce, Service/Maintenance
- Covill, Harold, Judicial
- Cronin, Barbara, Administrative Clerical
- Crowley, Louise, Admin And Residual
- Crysler, David, Protective Services
- Doeg, Kenneth, Uconn Faculty
- Duenas, Elvira, Administrative Clerical
- Grady, William, Comm College Faculty
- Grayson, Joyce, Health Nonprofessional
- Greene, Therodges, Service/Maintenance
- Haggerty, Michael, Correctional Officers
- Healy, Constance, Administrative Clerical
- Holz, Jean, Administrative Clerical
- Jones, Delome, Health Nonprofessional
- Kelly, Robert, Education
- Leviste, Feliciano, Health Professional
- Lund, Susan, Uconn Faculty
- Meade, Daniel, Engineer, Scien, Tech
- Moore, Sharon, Admin And Residual
- Moulis, Christine, Uchc Univ Hlth
- Napolitano, Vincent, Service/Maintenance
- Neal, Ronnie, Correctional Officers
- Nicolay, Catherine, Judicial
- Novitch, Beryl, Health Professional
- Putnam, Edward, Admin And Residual
- Riccio, Margaret Ann, Administrative Clerical
- Rinaldi, Marguerite, Conn Assoc Prosecutors
- Riopel, Walter, Service/Maintenance
- Sheedy, Ann, Social And Human Services
- Slason, John, Managerial
- Slater, Patricia, Health Nonprofessional
- Tyler, Robert, Service/Maintenance
- Wellek, Nonna, State University Faculty
- Wildowsky, Edna, Health Nonprofessional

CSEA NEWS

*The Voice of Connecticut's
Public Service Employees & Retirees*

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CONNECTICUT STATE EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

Local 2001, Service Employees International Union, CTW/CLC

- Travis WoodwardPresident
- Beverly LeeSecretary/Treasurer
- David GliddenExecutive Director
- Drew E. StonerCommunication Specialist
- Jason P. WebsterGraphic/ Technical Assistance

INSERTION DEADLINE: 1st of prior month.

MAILING ADDRESS: CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, 760 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106;
PHONES: (860) 951-6614, toll-free: (800) 894-9479, FAX: (860) 951-3526; INTERNET:
www.csea-ct.com.

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continued from page 1 name, Connecticut for All, and CSEA is proud to continue its support because our members know that every working person is an ally in the battle to create an economy that works for everyone.

Billionaires and wealthy corporations continue to rake in record profits while working people struggle to make ends meet. Imagine what our communities would look like if wealthy corporations and billionaires paid their fair share so we can invest in quality public schools, colleges, and universities; child care; health care, mental health and addiction services, and all the services our families deserve.

From tax increases on the ultra wealthy to tax relief for working people to investments in public services and broad economic development, the Connecticut for All coalition will fight for a fair economy that puts working people first.

SEBAC Legislative Proposals.

Joining with allied unions in the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC), CSEA will be working to advance legislative proposals that fund services and jobs, protect against attempts to privatize public work, and address the continuing problem of short staffing.

From passing legislation that prevents the release of the personal home addresses of public employees to improving the work and effectiveness of the State Contracting Standards Board to passing legislation that ends the State's exploitation of seasonal workers by properly bringing them into the union to fighting for increased funding and resources for state agencies such as the Department of Correction and the Department of Developmental Services, CSEA members will work with our allies in SEBAC to advance critical legislation and pro-worker policies. Additionally, CSEA will support our brothers and sisters in Connecticut's Higher Education system as they continue the fight against harmful consolida-

tion and privatization proposals.

Paraeducator Legislative Proposals.

Over the past several legislative sessions, paraeducators have made real progress on important issues like professional development training and healthcare costs. But so much more work needs to be done to ensure that paraeducators are treated and valued as they deserve to be. CSEA paraeducators will join with paraeducators from other unions in Connecticut to press for comprehensive legislation that will make significant improvements to wages and retirement benefits earned by paraeducators. Additionally, as the Paraeducator Healthcare Working Group that was created as a result of legislation passed during the 2023 legislative session continues its work developing proposals to improve paraeducator healthcare plans, CSEA members and allies will fight for additional funding to continue the healthcare subsidy received in 2023 by paraeducators in a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). We will also push to expand the subsidy program so that paraeducators who are not in an HDHP can benefit, as well.

Childcare Legislative Proposals.

During the last legislative session, home-based family childcare providers represented by CSEA worked hard to pass their collective bargaining agreement through both chambers of the General Assembly. In 2024, along with allies in the early education and childcare communities, they will be working to pass legislation on crucial issues such as increasing funding for early education and care programs and improving zoning protections for home-based providers.

Expansion and Improvement of the Paid Sick Days Law.

Connecticut was the first state in the nation in 2011 to require certain employers to provide service workers with accrued paid sick days. Now, more than 10 years later, and having been through the most significant global public health emergency of our lives, CSEA

and our allies in the Paid Sick Days coalition recommend legislation that strengthens current law and ensures access to paid sick days for all workers, regardless of their job title or size of their employer.

Increase Funding for Unified School District #1 (USD #1).

CSEA represents the teachers in Unified School District #1, the school system within the Department of Correction. While USD #1's stated mission "is to provide quality education programs for incarcerated individuals so that they can make a successful transition to society," it's necessary work has been underfunded for years. From issues of short staffing to a lack of money for needed classroom resources, teachers and students in USD #1 are being shortchanged. Now is the time to give the district the money it needs to provide life-altering services for some of our State's neediest students.

Increase State Aid for Municipalities and School Districts.

While Connecticut has enjoyed record budget surpluses and the State has allocated additional funding to municipalities and school districts, that money is not making it into the pockets of the hardworking people who provide town and educational services. CSEA members working for municipalities and Boards of Education will join with allies in other municipal and Board of Education unions to increase State funding to raise wages, improve benefits, and address issues of short staffing. Municipal and Board of Education workers have been asked to do more for less for too long and the General Assembly needs to take action.

◀ NOMINATIONS MEETING FOR SEIU CONVENTION ▶

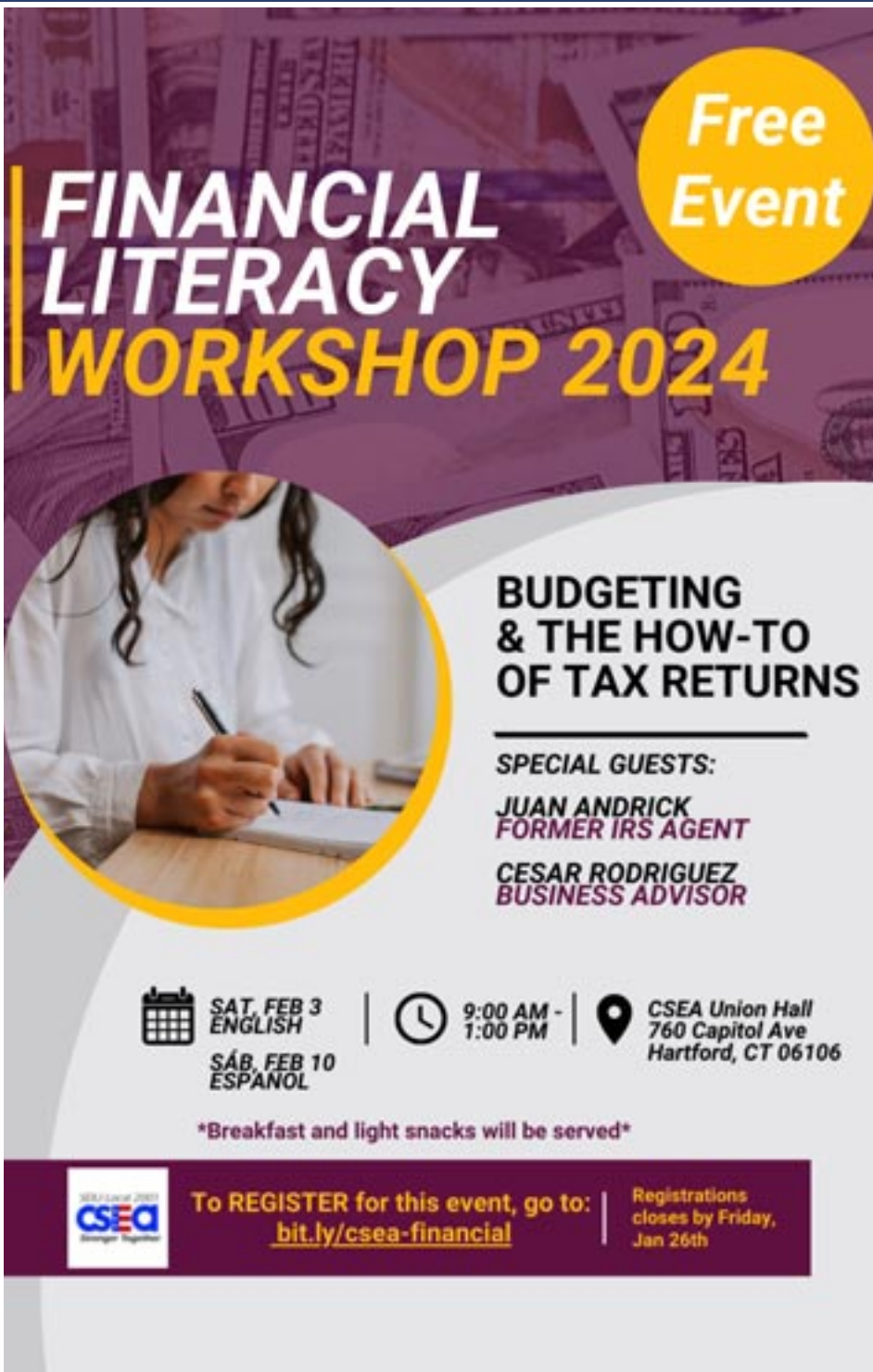
In accordance with the CSEA SEIU Local 2001 Constitution and Bylaws, CSEA has set Saturday, March 9th at 10:00AM at the CSEA Union Hall (760 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT, 06106) as the time and place to accept nominations for the delegate positions from CSEA to attend the SEIU Quadrennial Convention in Philadelphia, PA. To be nominated, you must be a member in good standing.

Delegates will attend the SEIU Convention from Sunday, May 19, 2024 to Wednesday, May 22, 2024 and are required to attend all sessions of the convention and related meetings.

For additional information, please call CSEA at 860-951-6614.


Family Child Care Provider News

Noticias para Proveedores de Cuidado Infantil



Free Event

FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOP 2024



BUDGETING & THE HOW-TO OF TAX RETURNS

SPECIAL GUESTS:
JUAN ANDRICK
 FORMER IRS AGENT
CESAR RODRIGUEZ
 BUSINESS ADVISOR

SAT, FEB 3 ENGLISH | **9:00 AM - 1:00 PM** | **CSEA Union Hall**
 760 Capitol Ave
 Hartford, CT 06106
SÁB, FEB 10 ESPAÑOL

Breakfast and light snacks will be served

To REGISTER for this event, go to:
bit.ly/csea-financial

Registrations closes by Friday, Jan 26th



Evento Gratis

EDUCACIÓN FINANCIERA TALLER 2024



PRESUPUESTO & MEJOR PRÁCTICA PARA DECLARACIONES DE IMPUESTOS

INVITADOS ESPECIALES:
JUAN ANDRICK
 AGENTE RETIRADO DEL IRS
CESAR RODRIGUEZ
 ASESOR DE NEGOCIOS

SAT, FEB 3 ENGLISH | **9:00 AM - 1:00 PM** | **CSEA Union Hall**
 760 Capitol Ave
 Hartford, CT 06106
SÁB, FEB 10 ESPAÑOL

Se servirán desayuno y refrigerios ligeros

Para REGISTRARSE, ir a:
bit.ly/csea-financial

Registros cierran el Viernes, Enero 26

Mandated Trainings Near You Survey
Encuesta de Entrenamientos Mandatorios Cerca de Usted

Are you struggling to secure the classes you need as part of your mandatory training? We want to hear from you! Survey responses are requested from Child Care members, with the sole purpose to collect data and collaborate with the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC). The results of this survey will assist OEC with the expansion of their training across CT and making it more convenient for Child Care Providers to sign up and complete their trainings. We will be collecting results until Saturday, September 30th, 2023.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input is very important to us!



¿Estás teniendo dificultades para asegurar las clases que necesitas como parte de tu formación obligatoria? ¿Queremos saber de ti! Se solicitan respuestas a la encuesta de los miembros de Cuidado Infantil, con el único propósito de recopilar datos y colaborar con la Oficina de la Primera Infancia (OEC) de CT. Los resultados de esta encuesta ayudarán a la OEC a ampliar sus cursos de capacitación en CT y a hacer que sea más conveniente para los proveedores de cuidado infantil registrarse y completar sus capacitaciones. Estaremos recopilando resultados hasta el sábado 30 de septiembre de 2023.

Gracias por completar esta encuesta. ¡Su respuesta es muy importante para nosotros!



Go Green!

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Scams Targeting Seniors

Retirees often become targets for various scams due to their potentially limited understanding of new technologies, sizable savings, or steady retirement income. Here are some common scams targeting retirees and tips on how they can protect themselves:

Phishing Scams:

Description: Scammers send emails or texts appearing to be from legitimate sources, such as banks or government agencies, asking for sensitive information.

Protection: Never click on links or download attachments from unknown sources. Always verify the authenticity of the request by contacting the organization directly through known and trusted channels.

Tech Support Scams:

Description: Scammers claim to be tech support from well-known companies and say they've found a virus or issue with the victim's computer.

Protection: Never grant remote access to your computer to unsolicited callers. Legitimate tech companies won't contact you in this manner.

Investment Schemes:

Description: Offering unrealistic returns, these scams might present as exclusive investment opportunities or pyramid schemes.

Protection: Be skeptical of investments promising high returns with little or no risk. Always research and consult with a trusted financial advisor.

Lottery or Prize Scams:

Description: Victims receive news they've won a lottery or sweepstakes they don't remember entering and are asked to pay a fee to unlock the supposed prize.

Protection: Remember, if you didn't enter a lottery or contest, you can't win it. Never pay money to receive a prize.

Grandparent Scams:

Description: Scammers call the elderly, pretending to be a grandchild in distress needing money immediately.

Protection: Always verify the caller's identity by hanging up and calling back on a known phone number. Discuss a family code word for emergencies.

Romance Scams:

Description: Scammers create fake profiles on dating sites or social media platforms to build romantic relationships with unsuspecting victims. Once a bond has been established, they will make up stories about emergencies, business troubles, or travel issues and ask for money, often repeatedly.

Protection:

Verify Identities: Be cautious with people you meet online and never met in person. Use online search tools to check the validity of their stories and pictures.

Never Send Money: No matter how compelling the story, never send money or share financial information with someone you've only met online.

Slow Down: Take time to get to know the person, ask questions, and be wary if they try to escalate the relationship too quickly. **Consult Friends and Family:** Talk to someone you trust about this new love interest. Scammers try to isolate their victims from their families.

Meet in Public: If you decide to meet, always choose a public place and inform someone you trust about your whereabouts.

If you suspect a romance scam, stop all communication immediately and report the profile to the platform where you met. It's also crucial to report the incident to the FTC or other relevant authorities. Remember, it's better to be safe and skeptical, especially when dealing with relationships initiated online.

Charity Scams:

Description: Scammers take advantage of people's generosity by posing as a fake charity,

especially after natural disasters or during holiday seasons.

Protection: Never donate via cash, gift card, or wire transfer to solicitors. Check the charity's authenticity on sites like Charity Navigator or BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

Healthcare Scams:

Description: Scammers pose as Medicare representatives to get personal information or offer fake health services to bill Medicare.

Protection: Don't give out your Medicare number to unsolicited callers. Review your Medicare statements to check for unauthorized services.

General Tips for Dealing with Scams: Stay Informed: Regularly update yourself on the latest scams.

Secure Personal Information: Shred sensitive documents and secure online accounts with strong, unique passwords.

Hang Up on Robocalls: If you answer the phone and hear a recorded sales pitch, hang up.

Seek Second Opinions: Before making any financial decisions or purchases, talk to someone you trust.

Report Scams: Report any suspicious activities to authorities like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) or your local police department.

Awareness and caution are retirees' best defenses against scams. By staying informed and skeptical of unsolicited offers or requests, retirees can better protect their hard-earned savings and personal information.



CT DOT wastes \$100M/year of tax-payer money outsourcing work that could be done in-house.

Why does Lamont continue to contract out bridge inspection?

A recent article in the *Hartford Courant* titled, "CT DOT has 5,546 bridges to inspect every two years. Why it depends on outside contractors for a lot of them," offered a slanted and one-sided story. CSEA President, Travis Woodward, has since responded to this piece to provide critical context that was missing from this article. His full response can be found below:

The recent article, "CT DOT has 5,546 bridges to inspect every two years. Why it depends on outside contractors for a lot of them," fails to account for the hundreds of millions of dollars that these outside contractors cost Connecticut taxpayers and that most of this work can be done by state workers.

To put \$100M into perspective, it would cost \$160M to fix the current higher education crisis. \$116M would give all of Connecticut's school paraeducators, who are woefully

underpaid, a living wage. In other words, saving those dollars could make a real difference for Connecticut.

Governor Lamont and DOT leadership need to step up their recruitment and retention game to ensure that Connecticut has the personnel in place to meet the transportation challenges ahead.

When you put state workers on a project, you are putting inspectors who have families who drive over these bridges - our main priority is safety. When you hire private contractors to inspect our bridges, their main priority is profit. State inspectors are still on the job following a bridge inspection, whereas contractors may serve for short durations and may not even be employed in-state after an assignment. State inspectors have a level of accountability and ownership that contractors simply can't replicate - and their institutional knowledge is critical to DOT's success. We don't have to look back too far to find

examples where consultants have not only put the safety of the hundreds of millions of people driving over our bridges at risk, but also cost Connecticut hundreds of millions of dollars.


LC Associates, for example, eventually was fired for double billing Connecticut for bridge inspections that were actually performed in Rhode Island.

And, we should not forget the consultant inspector from DKI Engineering who inspected hundreds of Connecticut bridges and was charged with falsifying a report in New York in 2016.

These costs are needless and the risks are substantial. During a time of record inflation and families stretching their paychecks, Governor Lamont must provide more responsible stewardship in this area. One step is to get spending on consultants under control and invest in recruitment and retention strategies that refill the dozens of vacant positions that have remained unfilled since 2018 when they were created.

Those vacancies were created for a reason - in-house bridge inspection makes safety and economic sense. As is, this system only lines the pockets of outside, often out-of-state, consultants while burdening all of Connecticut's taxpayers.

Does CSEA have your correct contact info on file? Update your info by scanning the QR code.



P-3B Sabbatical Application

Under Article 27 of the P3B Contract, you have an important benefit -- you can apply for a sabbatical of either one or two semesters. The applications go to your manager and to Joanna James as your Union Representative. The sabbatical must provide a benefit to the candidate and to the employer.

You become eligible for this benefit after seven years of continuous State service but you may submit an application prior to the completion of the seven years.

The application must include a written plan of study, and normally you must take twelve credits per semester or the equivalent.

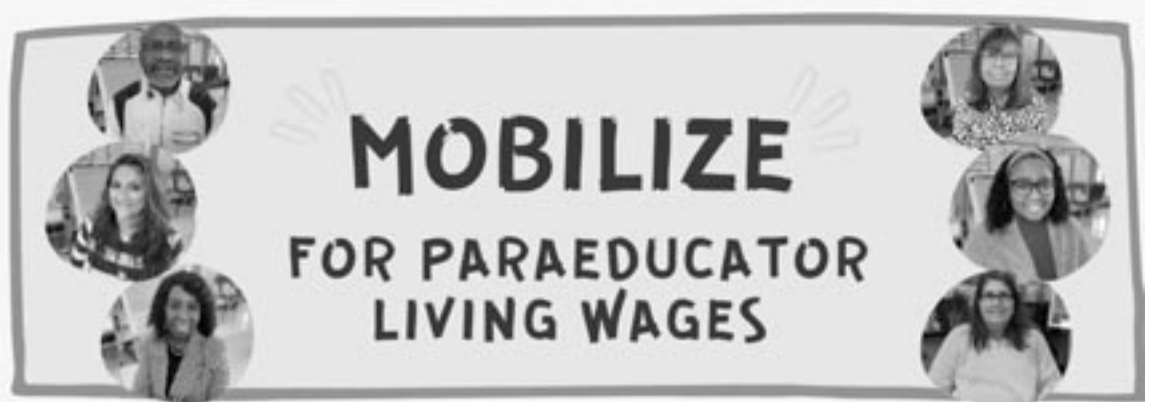
Written applications must be sent in to your designated manager (State will send out a notice soon of which manager you should send to).

When you submit your application please copy Joanna James (JJames@csea760.com) on the application email.

If you apply for and are awarded a sabbatical, here's how the compensation works: For one semester, you continue to receive your full pay. If you take two semesters, you receive seventy-five percent of your regular pay.

Please review the Sabbatical Article, Article 27, of the P3B Contract for questions. You can also contact your Union Steward with any questions about how this process works.

A reminder, the deadline to submit applications is February 29, 2024.



MOBILIZE FOR PARAEDUCATOR LIVING WAGES

In 2023 the CT Paraeducator Union Coalition succeeded in winning health care subsidies for paras to reduce out-of-pocket-health care costs. This year we are building off that momentum to achieve living wages, stronger retirement security and job standards for paraeducators.

Learn about legislation impacting paras and how you can help ensure paras everywhere get the respect and benefits they deserve.

**TUES FEB 13
5:00 PM - VIA ZOOM**

REGISTER

<https://bit.ly/ParaLivingWage>



MORE INFORMATION
Contact
DStoner@csea760.com



CT Ranks in the Bottom Half of States in Tax Fairness

Regressive Tax Policies Continue to Push CT Towards More Inequities

continue onto Page 8 indicating that the poorest households bear the greatest share of their income in taxes, while the wealthiest contribute the least.

2. Areas of Improvement: Despite the overall regressive ranking, the report acknowledges recent legislative efforts to make the tax system more progressive. Lower state income tax rates for the middle class and an increased income tax credit for the working poor are cited as positive steps.

3. Impact on Inequality: The ITEP report emphasizes that regressive tax systems exacerbate racial gaps in economic and educational opportunities, affordable housing, and healthcare. It notes that black and hispanic families nationally earn significantly less than white families, contributing to economic disparities.

4. Culprits Fostering an Unfair System: Property taxes, primarily levied at the municipal level, and sales taxes, levied at the state or local levels, are identified as chief culprits in perpetuating an unfair tax system.

5. Tax Burden Distribution: The analysis reveals that the poorest 20% of Connecticut households pay the highest effective tax rate, while the top 1% pays the lowest. Efforts to address this imbalance are urged to create a more equitable tax structure.

Legislative Response and Challenges:

It is immensely clear that Connecticut must institute major changes to address our upside down tax structure that is anti-growth in nature. Efforts to increase taxes on the wealthiest households have faced resistance, with concerns about potential economic repercussions.

As Connecticut gears up for the 2024 General Assembly session, CSEA through our coalition partners in Connecticut For All plan to introduce a

set of proposals which would push our state's tax structure towards a more progressive outlook.

1. Closing the Carried Interest Loophole: One key proposal involves imposing a surcharge of 19% on investment management services fees. This surcharge, which is also being raised through similar legislation in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York, aims to eliminate the carried interest loophole, ensuring that investment management fees are subject to a fair and reasonable tax rate.

2. Establishing New Income Tax Brackets: To address income inequality, the proposed legislation suggests creating new income tax brackets and rates for higher income levels. The new brackets are as follows:

9.55% for incomes over \$1 million (single filers) or \$2 million (joint filers)

10.25% for incomes over \$10 million (single filers) or \$20 million (joint filers)

10.65% for incomes over \$25 million (single filers) or \$50 million (joint filers)

These adjustments aim to ensure that higher-income individuals contribute proportionally more to the state's revenue, creating a more progressive tax structure.

3. Reporting Global Profits and Digital Advertising Tax:

The proposed legislation emphasizes transparency and accountability by requiring complete reporting of all profits globally. Profits would be apportioned based on each jurisdiction's share of global sales, contributing to a more accurate assessment of taxable income. Additionally, a Digital Advertising Tax of 10% on companies with income over \$10 billion from their digital advertising business is proposed, generating revenue from the booming digital econ-

omy.

4. Addressing the Tax Gap: Recognizing the importance of effective tax collection, the legislative proposals include hiring additional in-house auditors at the Department of Revenue Services. This initiative aims to close Connecticut's tax gap, ensuring that all taxes are collected and appropriate penalties and fees are assessed where necessary.

5. Capital Gains Surcharges for Education Funding:

To provide resources for quality public higher education and affordable public colleges and universities, a surcharge of 5% on net gains from the sale or exchange of capital assets is proposed. Revenues generated from this surcharge would be directed to a designated account operated and maintained by a specified entity, focusing on investing in education.

6. Child Tax Credit:

Aimed at supporting families, the proposed legislation introduces a Child Tax Credit. Eligible taxpayers can claim a credit against the state tax for each child, with options for varying credit amounts based on income levels. This initiative recognizes the financial challenges faced by families and seeks to provide targeted relief.

Connecticut's tax system, though showing signs of improvement, still grapples with issues of fairness and equity. The ITEP report serves as a call to action for policymakers to continue their efforts in creating a more progressive and equitable tax structure that benefits all residents of the state. The upcoming legislative session will be a crucial period for addressing these challenges and working towards a fairer fiscal future for Connecticut.

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