

# The State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition

## State Workers "Jobs for All Working Families" Proposals

Members of SEBAC's unions have always supported being part of the solution to Connecticut's fiscal crisis. In 2009 we provided nearly a billion dollars in savings to state taxpayers, by far the most significant contribution of any group toward solving the state's budget deficit. But we warned at the time that the deficit would only continue to grow if elected officials tried to cut their way out of the economic crisis, instead of focusing on rebuilding the economy and providing jobs.

Unfortunately, with Governor M. Jodi Rell and some of our state's most short-sighted politicians, our warning fell on deaf ears. Instead of focusing on jobs, these politicians have focused on cuts. As a result, Connecticut has lost another 50,000 private sector jobs, and the state budget again faces a growing shortfall.

Government must be a key part of the solution to the economic crisis. Leaders of SEBAC unions plan to join other forward looking leaders in focusing on solutions that help build an economy that provides good, stable, jobs for Connecticut's working families.

### Long-Term Proposals:

1. **Create Jobs that Build Connecticut** – use new federal funds to rebuild the state's transportation infrastructure, use gateway tolls to generate resources, and commit to improving Connecticut's mass transit;
2. **Expand Higher Education Options** – provide free tuition for the unemployed and their families at Connecticut's Community Colleges and affordable tuition for all Connecticut residents to all state colleges and universities;
3. **Implement a Jobs Corps** – use the energy and talents of unemployed workers to help rebuild our economy while helping them find new permanent jobs;
4. **Support People Seeking Work** – continue day care for the unemployed who are seeking jobs;
5. **Model State's Placement and Training** – use the joint SEBAC and State committee as a model for joint labor/management job placement programs in the private sector;
6. **Strengthen Apprenticeship programs** – provide essential job training and ensure livable wages;
7. **Establish Health Care "Pooling"** – pass legislation to save dollars for municipalities, small businesses as well as individuals currently without healthcare and provide special healthcare subsidies for startup businesses that create new jobs, and extend the pharmacy discounts negotiated for active and retired state workers to all groups, municipalities, small and large companies;
8. **Lower Electrical Rates** – establish an energy purchasing entity to offer electricity at the lowest possible rates;
9. **Keep Seniors Home and Healthy** – maintain the state's Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program and support home health assistance services;
10. **Institute Fair Taxes** – adopt a fairer tax structure based on the "Revenue Options" being proposed by the Better Choices for Connecticut coalition will:
  - Provide the revenue stream needed to prevent cuts in public services just when they are needed the most, and
  - Allow the state to create jobs and strengthen our future by rebuilding our infrastructure and providing a first class education to our children.

## Immediate Proposals:

1. **Solicit Innovations from Frontline Workers** – reinstitute the Innovations Review Panel former Governor Rowland illegally eliminated in 2003 that eliminates bureaucratic obstacles and provides a permanent ongoing process to engage frontline workers and creates a forum to present their ideas for improving services and preventing waste;
2. **Identify Efficiencies** – implement a comprehensive telecommuting and at-home work assignments to save the state money from reduced fuel consumption and improved use of workers' time on the job;
3. **Reduce Duplicative Bureaucracy** – shift focus from management to direct scarce resources on direct services provided by the front-line workforce;
4. **Provide Non-Traditional Employment Opportunities** – reinvigorate job sharing and other flexible work programs such as voluntary schedule reductions;
5. **Implement Flexible Healthcare Spending Accounts** – allow State workers the same ability as private sector workers to set aside wages on a pre-tax basis to fund out-of-pocket medical expenses, which would also provide a tax savings to the State as the employer;
6. **Generate Retiree Savings** – offer delayed retirement incentives to provide savings to the pension fund as well as retiree health insurance costs;
7. **Develop an Education Incentive Program** – provide education reimbursement and leaves of absence for education to save money while increasing worker's professional knowledge and skills; and
8. **Implement State Contracting Standards Board** – get Board members to work performing a cost-benefit analysis and determining a results-based accountability measurement for good and services provided by contractors to state agencies.

The State of Connecticut will not solve its fiscal crisis unless it helps solve Connecticut's job crisis. And cutting public services just when they are needed the most only *costs more jobs*.

Instead we need real, long-term solutions that put people back to work, and help build a stable foundation for our future. We share these ideas - as we have shared ideas in the past – not just with Governor Rell and her Administration, but also with our state's legislative leaders, and now with the gubernatorial candidates who seek to succeed Governor Rell. SEBAC leadership remains committed to work with elected leaders and candidates to be part of a comprehensive solution that will help lead to a stronger better Connecticut for all of us.

Franklin D. Roosevelt found a way to bring together working families in the private and the public sectors to provide jobs in the deepest economic crisis our country has ever faced. It's time for that kind of courage and commitment from those who want to lead us out of today's economic crisis.

The State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) serves to unite approximately 45,000 Connecticut State Employees to address issues of common concern. To learn more about the coalition's campaign for a fair budget and a livable state with great public services visit [www.InThisTogetherCT.org](http://www.InThisTogetherCT.org).