

Celebrating a Milestone:

First Cohort of Child Care Providers Graduate with CDA Credentials

In a momentous achievement for Connecticut's home-based child care sector, the first cohort of family child care providers has graduated with their Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials, marking a key milestone in the state's efforts to strengthen the child care workforce. This graduation is a critical step towards securing National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation and advancing the quality of early childhood education across home-based providers in Connecticut.

The graduates, who have spent months completing coursework and accumulating hands-on training hours, were

celebrated at a special ceremony that recognized their hard work, dedication, and commitment to improving the lives of children and families across the state. For these providers, the CDA credential is more than just a piece of paper—it's a testament to their professionalism, their role as early childhood educators, and their ongoing commitment to lifelong learning.

The Registered Apprenticeship Program, which is the first of its kind in Connecticut, was created through the tireless advocacy of CSEA and the SEIU Education and Support Fund. The program offers a unique pathway for family child care providers to earn while they learn,

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This year, Council 760 continued their tradition of generously donating to the Analeh Toy Drive. Council 760 President Andre Sonnenberg (right), presenting the check to the program lead Ana Alfaro (left) at our union hall ahead of the holidays.

CSEA Members Join 350 Activists at Town Hall with Speaker Ritter

On December 3rd, 350 people packed the Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford to advocate for reforms that would enhance the state's fiscal policies, enabling increased investment in public services. The event, titled "Paving the Roadblocks," focused on revisiting the fiscal constraints established in 2017, which include spending limits and caps on bonding. These measures, while initially aimed at promoting financial stability, are obstacles to adequately funding essential community services.

Despite a significant budget surplus of \$3.3 billion—the second largest in state history—many communities continue to experience unmet needs due to budget cuts and understaffing. Speaker of the House Matt Ritter (D-Hartford) and Rep. Josh Elliott (D-Hamden), participated in the discussion, expressing openness to reassessing Connecticut's fiscal policies. They outlined potential priorities for the 2025 legislative session, indicating a collaborative effort to



Over 350 activists from across Connecticut came together to demand that our elected officials "Clear the Roadblocks"

Recruitment & Retention Challenges Continue Across State Service

Robust Benefits are Key to Solving

Agencies across our state continue to face chronic understaffing, exacerbated by ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. From healthcare and higher education to transportation and public safety, vital services that residents rely on are stretched thin, with workers burdened with the impacts of double and triple workloads. The result is a crisis that threatens Connecticut's quality of life.

One of the most significant factors contributing to the crisis is the erosion of competitive benefits. Connecticut's public sector workforce has long been a cornerstone of delivering high-quality, essential services to residents. A robust pension and healthcare plan has historically served as a critical tool in attracting and retaining skilled professionals to careers in public service—careers that

are often demanding, high-stress, and essential to the well-being of our communities. Oftentimes workers forgo higher-paying jobs in the private sector for the promise of these benefits to secure their futures.

When retirement and healthcare benefits do not keep pace with the cost of living, the ability to recruit and retain the next generation of professionals is directly undermined. And without a clear commitment to protecting and strengthening these benefits, the state workforce risks falling deeper into a cycle

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Meetings And News

The January Delegates Meeting will be held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday January 16th at 10am at the CSEA Union Hall and via Zoom

Chapter 401 (Hartford area) Thursday, February 6th - 1pm
The February 6 meeting will include a discussion and vote on proposed changes in Chapter By-laws based on recommendations from Council 400. The proposed changes will be sent out by email in January or available at the meeting.

CSEA Union Hall & Zoom
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Zoom Mtg ID: 83617277918
Patrice Peterson: 860 416-0306

Chapter 402 (Danbury area) Wed., January 8th - 10am
United Methodist Church
5 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT
Linda Albanese: 860 354-6965

Chapter 403 (Norwich area) Tuesday, Jan 14th - 11:30am
Rose City Senior Center
8 Mahan Drive, Norwich
Carol Burgess: 860 303-7267

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area) Tues, January 14th - 10am
Guest Speaker from Aetna
Trinity Orthodox Church
937 Chase Pkwy, Waterbury
Tina Franco: (203) 721-4382

Chapter 405 (New Haven) Thurs., January 9th - 10:30am
Guest speaker: Subby Puglisi on Scams that Affect Seniors
Hamden Government Center Building, 3rd Floor
2750 Dixwell Ave., Hamden
Sue Pierson (203) 376-7207

Chapter 406 (Middletown) Tues. January 14th - 12:30pm
Guest Speaker: Cigna Dental Representative, Angie Nelson
American Legion Post 75
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr.
Middletown, CT
Wayne Duffy (203) 379-7687

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area) Wednesday, January 15th 1pm
Guest Speaker: Cigna Dental Representative, Angie Nelson
St. Josephs of Stratford

National Catholic Church
1300 Stratford Rd., Stratford
Liz Anderson (203) 676-0659

Chapter 408 (Willimantic) Wed., January 8th, 12:30pm
Guest Speaker: Cigna Dental Representative, Angie Nelson
Mansfield Senior Center
303 Maple Rd., Storrs
Doug Racicot (860) 234-2537

Chapter 409 (Retired State University Professors) Friday, January 17 - 10am
CSEA Union Hall & Zoom
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Zoom ID: 868 8922 7158
Dave Walsh (860) 684-4773

Chapter 410 (Windsor area) Monday, January 13th 1pm
Suffield Senior Center
145 Bridge Street, Suffield
Amelia Smith 860 687-1848

Chapter 411 (Rocky Hill area) Thursday, March 20 1pm
Guest Speakers: Aetna Rep & Cigna Dental Representative, Angie Nelson
CSEA Union Hall
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
And online via Zoom.com
Meeting ID: 848 1334 1668
Passcode: 507358
Subby Puglisi 860 529-8336

Chapter 412 (Putnam area) Tues., December 21 - 1:30pm
Guest Speaker: CSEA Council 400 President, Mike O'Brien
New Putnam Town Hall
200 School Street, Putnam
Don Gladding (860) 933-9998

Chapter 414 (Torrington area) Monday, January 20 at 10am
Five Point Extension Bldg
852 University Drive
Torrington
Kathryn Doan 860 324-2717

Chapter 415 (Manchester) Mon., January 27 - 1pm
Guest Speaker from Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Elks Lodge in Manchester
30 Bissell Street
Stu Clark: (860) 205-0657

Chapter 416 (New London) Tuesday, Jan. 14th at 12pm
Speaker: Buzzy Memorial
Waterford Public Library
49 Rope Ferry Road
John at 860-857-4244

Chapter 417 (Plainville area) Wed., January 8th - 1pm
Plainville Public Library
56 East Main St., Plainville
Mark Kirschner
(860) 882-2717

Chapter 418 (Community College Retirees) Tuesday, February 18th
Lobby Day at the Capitol
210 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Colleen Richard
(860) 202-4128

Out of State Meetings with Speakers from Aetna, Cigna, and Kevin Sullivan the CSEA Retiree Organizer!

Chapter 421 - Daytona, FL Thursday, Feb 13th 11:30am
Crane's Roost Restaurant
1850 Crane Lakes Blvd,
Port Orange, FL 32128
\$15.00 per member, spouse/significant other
Make checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 421"
Send checks to:
Ronald Eddy, Treasurer,
1433 Areca Palm Drive,
Port Orange, FL 32128, Checks should be received by February 7, 2025. Please indicate choice for your meal(s) on your check from following options: Chicken Caesar Salad, Cobb Salad, Roost Burger, Charleston Chicken Sandwich, Cheese Steak Sandwich, BLT Wrap, or, indicate vegetarian.
Side of your choice included, dessert and non-alcoholic drinks also included. Vegetarians can choose selection off main menu
day of meeting.
Questions: Call John Veray, Sec'y, (386) 871-0573

Chapter 422 - Ocala, FL Tuesday, February 18th
Check-in 11:30am
Social: 12 & lunch: 12:30pm
Francesco's Ristorante
16770 US-441
Summerfield, Florida
Please indicate menu choice:
Chicken Parmesan with pasta, Sirloin Tips w/ mashed potato, White Fish piccata with pasta, Eggplant Rollatini (vegan).
All meals include salad, bread, coffee/tea, soda and dessert
Door prizes and 50/50 raffle!

ASL Translation Available
Members: \$19 Guests: \$24
Make checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 422"
Send checks to:
Hilda Spotts
513 Fairways Circle - Unit A
Ocala, FL 34472,
Checks should be received by January 30, 2025
Questions?
Frank Berlinski: 860 604-7688
or Hilda: (352) 843-7988

Chapter 423 - Boca Raton, FL Monday, February 10th 12pm
Renzo's Cafe & Pizzeria
6900 N Federal Hwy, Boca Raton
Cost: \$25 per person
Make checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 423"
Send checks to:
Philip Karas
278 Las Palmas St
West Palm Beach, FL 33411
Ron Herzig: (954) 868-8941

Chapter 424 - Sarasota, FL Thursday, February 6th - 9am
Carlisle Inn & Conference Center (Behind Der Dutchman)
3727 Bahia Vista St, Sarasota
Continental Breakfast
\$20 per person
RSVP by January 31, 2025
Checks to: CSEA Chapter 424
Sent to: Robert Mackiewicz
414 Pelican Moorings
Venice, FL 34285
Phone (941) 497-2370

Chapter 425 - Clearwater, FL Date: Tuesday, February 4th
Perkins Restaurant 10:30am 3:00pm
2626 Gulf to Bay Blvd, Clearwater
Southwest Avocado Salad;
Steak Tips and Bell Peppers;
Teriyaki Glazed Chicken Skillet and Grilled Fish & Shrimp includes a beverage and choice of dessert
Cost: \$18.00 per person.
Make Checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 425"
Mail to: Richard LeVine
1020 South Tennessee Ave
Lakeland, FL 33803
Richard: (813) 732-2219

Chapter 426 - Ft. Myers, FL Friday, February 7th 12pm
KJ's Steakhouse
10950 S Cleveland Ave,
Fort Myers, Florida
Debra Gould 203 605-6690

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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

Caremark: 1-800-318-2572

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

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

UnitedHealthcare: 1-888-803-9217

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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Auto Loans Are a Breeze.*

Find all the essential information about the products and services we have to offer. You can even print a loan application online! Best of all, it's accessible from your personal computer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
www.CSECreditUnion.com

**Closed New Years Day, January 1st
Closed MLK Jr. Day, January 20th**

Dividend Rates - Fourth Quarter 2024

	Dividend Rate	Annual Percentage Yield
REGULAR SHARES	2.75%	2.79%
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.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Alfano, Louis, Service/Maintenance Member | Mitchell, David, Healthcare |
| Alterman, Hersz (Howard), Spousal Member | Monti, Fatima, Judicial |
| Anderson, Bert, Protective Services | Morrell, John, Service/Maintenance |
| Bakulski, Gail, Social And Human Services | Muggeo, Barbara, State Police |
| Bastarache, Samuel, Corrections | Olenick, Marion, Healthcare |
| Beckwith, Constance, Confidential | Pace, Henry, Admin And Residual |
| Cervero, Ronald, Service/Maintenance | Paktinat, Patricia, St Vocation Federation Teacher |
| Chmielewski, Theresa, Judicial | Pannone, Joanne, American Fed Of School |
| Conover, Peter, Admin And Residual | Passaretti, Louis, Admin And Residual |
| Daniels, John, Service/Maintenance | Patton, William, Exempt/Elected/Appointed |
| Davis, Jesse, Comm College Faculty | Pinney, David, Corrections |
| Delisa, Francis, Engineer, Scien, Tech | Pulley, Constance, St Vocation Federation Teacher |
| Dobos, Matthew, Health Professional | Rell, M. Jodi, Exempt/Elected/Appointed |
| Duvall, Virginia, State Police | Sarmento, Barbara, Social And Human Services |
| Edgerton, Eleanor, Administrative Clerical | Silvestri, Vera, Healthcare |
| Fisher, Abraham, Administrative Clerical | Staples, Richard, Service/Maintenance |
| Flynn, Anna Joan, St Vocation Federation Teacher | Velez, Pedro, Social And Human Services |
| Halpin, Myron, Health Professional | Wilson, Terry, Service/Maintenance |
| Hardesty, Robert, Social And Human Services | |
| Heide, Eugene, Managerial | |
| Iannucci, Marie, Administrative Clerical | |
| Joanis, Ernest, Service/Maintenance | |
| Lawlor, Karen, Uhc Univ Hlth Professionals | |
| Lombardi, Rocco, Service/Maintenance | |
| Looney, Donald, Managerial | |
| Manning, Cornelius, Corrections | |
| Marotta, Alphonse, Engineer, Scien, Tech | |
| Martin, Geoffrey, State University Faculty | |
| Massa, David, Service/Maintenance | |
| Mcauley, Celia, Admin And Residual | |
| Mccue, Joan, Healthcare | |

CSEA NEWS

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

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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:
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Celebrating a Milestone: First Cohort of Child Care Providers Graduate with CDA Credentials

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receiving both on-the-job training and classroom education designed to boost their skills and credentials.

As the child care crisis continues to affect families across the country, initiatives like the Connecticut Registered Apprenticeship Program are critical for addressing both the supply and quality of care available to families. According to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, there are currently over 1,800 home-based child care centers in the state, but the demand for quality care far exceeds the supply. By investing in the education and professional development of family child care providers, the program not only helps fill critical vacancies but also ensures that providers are better equipped to meet the evolving needs of children and families.

En un logro monumental para el sector de cuidado infantil en el hogar de Connecticut, el primer grupo de proveedores de cuidado infantil familiar se ha graduado con sus credenciales de Asociado en Desarrollo Infantil (CDA, por sus siglas en inglés), marcando un hito clave en los

esfuerzos del estado por fortalecer la fuerza laboral de cuidado infantil. Esta graduación representa un paso fundamental hacia la acreditación de la Asociación Nacional para el Cuidado Infantil Familiar (NAFCC) y el avance en la calidad de la educación infantil en proveedores de cuidado basados en el hogar en Connecticut.

Los graduados, quienes pasaron meses completando cursos y acumulando horas de formación práctica, fueron celebrados en una ceremonia especial que reconoció su arduo trabajo, dedicación y compromiso con mejorar las vidas de los niños y familias en todo el estado. Para estos proveedores, la credencial CDA es mucho más que un certificado: es un testimonio de su profesionalismo, su papel como educadores de la primera infancia y su compromiso continuo con el aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida.

El Programa de Aprendizaje Registrado, el primero de su tipo en Connecticut, fue creado gracias a la incansable labor de defensa de CSEA y el Fondo de Educación y Apoyo de SEIU. Este programa ofrece una vía única para que los proveedores de

cuidado infantil familiar aprendan mientras trabajan, recibiendo tanto capacitación en el trabajo como educación en el aula diseñada para mejorar sus habilidades y credenciales.

A medida que la crisis del cuidado infantil sigue afectando a las familias en todo el país, iniciativas como el Programa de Aprendizaje Registrado de Connecticut son fundamentales para abordar tanto la disponibilidad como la calidad del cuidado que las familias necesitan. Según la Oficina de la Primera Infancia de Connecticut, actualmente hay más de 1,800 centros de cuidado in-

fantil en el hogar en el estado, pero la demanda de cuidado de calidad supera con creces la oferta. Al invertir en la educación y el desarrollo profesional de los proveedores de cuidado infantil familiar, el programa no solo ayuda a cubrir vacantes críticas, sino que también asegura que los proveedores estén mejor preparados para satisfacer las necesidades cambiantes de los niños y sus familias.



Last month, the first cohort of family child care providers graduated with their Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials with the support of CSEA and the SEIU Education and Support Fund.

Council 400 January Meetings (continued)

Chapter 427: Vero Beach, FL
Tuesday, February 11th
Social: 11-12pm, lunch: 12pm
Meeting to follow at 12:30pm
Elks Lodge No. 1520
608 S 5th St
Fort Pierce, FL 34950-8336
Lunch Buffet with Roast Pork, Baked White Fish Primavera, Au gratin potatoes, salad, rolls
ASL Translation Available
Cost is \$25 per person
Make checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 427"
Send checks to:
Deborah Manganaro
10111 Greatwoods Pond Dr
Fort Pierce, FL 34945
Checks should be received by February 1, 2025
Questions?
Call Deb (203) 910-2049

Chapter 431: Carolinas Chapter
Thursday, February 20th
Golden Corral,
868 Oak Forest Lane
Myrtle Beach, SC
Buffet Luncheon - \$10/ person
RSVP by sending check to:
Virginia Nolan
3204 S Memorial Ave
Nags Head, NC 27959
RSVP soon - space is limited!
Questions? Call John Yopp
(203) 507-1022

Chapter 441: Cape Cod, MA
Wednesday, May 21 at 10am
South Yarmouth Public Library
312 Old Main Street
South Yarmouth, MA
Richard Peterson
(203) 507-1189

FISCAL ROADBLOCKS EXPLAINED

Fiscal policies that are irresponsibly and unnecessarily stringent and have created far-reaching consequences.

OVERVIEW

Despite years of historic surpluses, our state has continued to make budget cuts to critical programs and services that lift up our communities, small businesses and economy.

BUST THE MYTHS

The volatility cap was not set based on research, it was arbitrarily chosen in 2017 and is unconnected to the amount of, or the rates of, taxes Connecticut's wealthiest residents actually pay.

KNOW THE FACTS

Residents are missing out on critical services due to these nonsensical policies. Paired with the fact that CT ranks in the bottom 1/2 of states in terms of tax fairness due to our over reliance on regressive taxes like property and sales taxes, working class families are disproportionately burdened.

GET CT BACK ON THE ROAD

Our state finances are not working for working families. But through fiscally-responsible investments, our state can actually decrease reliance on public services for future generations.

Hartford Courant

Officials hail state's financial rise

Study: 40% in state are struggling financially

Learn more at: bit.ly/RoadblocksToProgress

Recently, the front page of the Hartford Courant perfectly illustrates the disconnect between state elected officials and the sentiments at the kitchen tables of working families.

Recruitment & Retention Challenges Continue Across State Service

Robust Benefits are Key to Solving

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of attrition, where it becomes increasingly difficult to fill critical positions and retain experienced staff.

Connecticut cannot afford to lose the talent, institutional knowledge and commitment of its public sector workforce. To rebuild and maintain the high-quality services that residents deserve, we must ensure that careers in public service remain viable and attractive. This means investing in pension and healthcare plans that provide long-term security for workers and their families. These benefits are not just compensation—they are a promise that elected officials value and respect the contributions of their workforce.

The current State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) master retirement and health contract expires in June of 2027, but it is in everyone's interest to make progress towards a new agreement well in advance of the current expiration date. This avoids senior employees nearing retirement having to make decisions with their future entitlements uncertain. And it gives us an opportunity to address the inadequacies in current benefits offered to newer employees. Given the importance of these benefits to the state's ability to offer accessible public services that our communities rely on, we have begun informal discussions with the Lamont Administration. The goal is to identify ways that we can work together to address these concerns and create win-win changes that improve the state's ability to recruit and retain skilled and dedicated workers.

We must ensure that Connecticut's public

institutions are equipped to meet the needs of our communities for generations to come. It starts with protecting and enhancing the benefits that make public service a career worth pursuing.

CSEA SEIU LOCAL 2001

2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



CSEA Local 2001
SEIU
Stronger Together
Service Employees International Union, CIO, UIC

GET IN CONTACT

Danny Medress
Political Director

DMedress@csea760.com
CSEA-CT.com

THE NEXT BIENNIAL STATE BUDGET

CSEA members will work to pass an equitable budget that funds the services they provide and pay and benefits they have earned. A budget that makes significant changes to the so-called "fiscal roadblocks" and cuts taxes for working people while raising taxes for billionaires and investing in critical needs such as education, housing, childcare, healthcare, and infrastructure. CSEA will work with allies across the state, including in the Connecticut for All Coalition, SEBAC, and the Municipal and Board of Education Union Coalition to ensure that the next state budget is not just balanced, but fair for all working people.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS FOR STATE MEMBERS

CSEA members will work to pass any collective bargaining agreements, arbitration awards, and memoranda of understanding that are put before the General Assembly for approval.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR PARAEDUCATORS

Continuing on the progress of the past several legislative sessions, CSEA paraeducators will work to pass legislation that raises pay, improves healthcare, and gives all paraeducators access to a secure retirement.

FUNDING FOR CARE 4 KIDS PROGRAM & IMPROVEMENTS FOR PROVIDERS

The members of CSEA's Childcare Council will work to protect and increase funding for the Care 4 Kids program. This important program helps thousands of working people, but its funding levels must increase to improve pay and healthcare for providers.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION IMPROVEMENTS FOR MUNICIPAL & BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKERS

To address the recruitment and retention problems facing public employers like municipalities and school districts, CSEA members working in municipalities and boards of education will advocate for increased funding to raise wages and expand health and retirement benefits.

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 provides collective bargaining rights for seasonal workers employed by the State 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 needed 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 consolidation and privatization proposals.

SUPPORT FOR THE TENANTS UNION JUST CAUSE PROPOSAL

CSEA will work with our allies in the Connecticut Tenants Union to pass a strong universal just cause bill which expands existing protections to prohibit no-fault, lapse of time evictions to all renters (except those in small, owner-occupied buildings), so tenants in good standing can remain in their homes.

Go Green!

Sign up to have the CSEA News be sent digitally rather than a hardcopy in the mail.

Scan me



CSEA Members Join Town Hall with Speaker Ritter

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delivered powerful remarks to Speaker Ritter and Representative Elliot about the need to invest in our child care ecosystem. Read her full remarks:

I'm here today because the challenges we face in our childcare system don't just affect providers like me—they impact families, children, and the future of our entire state.

Even before the pandemic, we were struggling with a child care crisis—an unaffordable and inaccessible care system that was failing to recruit and keep the

dedicated staff we needed due, in part, to low pay and a lack of benefits. Childcare providers are some of the most underpaid and undervalued workers in our economy despite the enormous importance of our work. We allow parents to work, businesses to function, and our economy to grow. Yet we don't have healthcare and many of us barely earn enough to provide for our own families.

Fiscal roadblocks have drastically reduced investments across the board. Personally, I have seen this impact up close—both in my own life and in the lives of the

parents I serve, who are barely getting by while being told that our state economy is “doing great.” As a provider, one of the main challenges is the limited access to professional development trainings in the Spanish language, creating a barrier for us to secure advanced certifications. This situation excludes us from opportunities and generates insecurity in our performance, when our language and culture should be seen as strengths and inclusion.

If we don't change course, this lack of investment will create a ripple effect. Childcare providers will

face greater challenges in meeting the needs of the families we serve. Parents, in turn, will have an even more difficult time finding affordable, high-quality care. And let's not forget who suffers the most—our children, who lose out on opportunities to thrive in quality learning spaces.

We must prioritize investment in childcare and education—at every level—so that childcare providers like me can do the work we love while ensuring that every child in our community has the opportunity to thrive.



(From left to right): Bette Marafino, Dave Glidden, Iris Velazquez, Travis Woodward, Tom Connolly, Win Heimer



Iris Velazquez (middle left) sits next to Speaker Matt Ritter and Rep. Josh Elliot (middle right) to deliver her remarks on the panel

Danbury Paraeducator Vicky Ceylan Responds to Harmful Column

With the legislative session just around the corner, it's critical that union members take the time to make their voices heard in our local and statewide press outlets. Vicky Ceylan, a Danbury tutor, was incensed when she read a recent piece in the *CT Insider* from Chris Powell, who asserted that educational success is “almost entirely a matter of parenting.” Vicky submitted a powerful response to this wrong-headed narrative:

As a parent, I am outraged by Chris Powell's recent opinion piece, “CT's fiscal guardrails have big gaps and don't achieve much” and his assertion that educational success is “almost entirely a matter of parenting.” This is an intentionally harmful, tired and ignorant narrative that not only ignores the experiences of families like mine, but also shifts the responsibility of our public education system away from the elected officials that have systemically defunded and understaffed our public schools from the resources and staff the students so desperately need.

One of my children has cerebral palsy, when he was a baby I was told he would never walk, talk or amount to anything. But against all odds he has been able to graduate from Danbury High School and UConn and is now working towards his Doctorate in Audiology. This would not have been possible without the staff and resources at Danbury Public Schools.

My son's success story isn't just because I'm a great mom - as much as I'd like to claim that to be the case. His academic success is also a direct result of the dedicated paraeducators in the Danbury Public School system and resources he received from the age of 3-18. He would have never have come this far without the help of his paraeducators.

His experience is what inspired me to quit my corporate job and become a paraeducator in our school system, so that I could play a role in the success of other students who have been told they'll never succeed. But unfortunately, I am seeing a system that is continually divesting more and more from our students, shrinking their future opportunities. What my child needed during his time as a K-12 public school student

- and what the students I serve today need - are resources and skilled staff that allow them to thrive in their classrooms, regardless of the obstacles they are facing. Powell's insistence on blaming parents is a convenient evasion of the real issue: a chronic disinvestment in our public schools that leaves students, parents, and educators struggling to fill the gaps.

The students I serve don't need better parenting. They need a speech therapist who isn't juggling three times the recommended caseload. They need a teacher who has the time to adapt lessons to their needs. They need a paraeducator who has the resources to make adjustments in the classroom to make the student more comfortable. These are systemic issues that no amount of “good parenting” can solve.

Research overwhelmingly shows that educational success correlates with access to resources and qualified staff—not with vague notions of parenting quality. Schools that are adequately funded and staffed are better equipped to meet the needs of all students, especially those who require additional support. Ignoring this reality in favor of parent-blaming does a disservice to our children and our communities.

If Connecticut continues to prioritize bond holders and credit ratings over the programs and services our state residents need - like public education - then we'll continue to foster a system that is failing our students, creating an unprepared workforce for future generations. Because of the fiscal roadblocks our state is failing to invest in our schools, diverting billions of dollars away in a

misguided attempt to aggressively pay down the pension debt. You can't and shouldn't pay off billions of debt in a few years that took over 7 decades to accrue - especially not while our residents suffer the consequences.

State officials are so far removed from the everyday Connecticut resident that they are turning a blind eye to the struggles working families are facing and touting reports of “good fiscal health.” I measure fiscal health differently though, I measure it by the opportunities granted to people like my son.

My child—and every child—deserves a chance to succeed. That chance won't come from finger-pointing or excuses. It will come from leaders who are willing to invest in the future of Connecticut's children. Until then, the blame for declining student success rests squarely on the shoulders of those who continue to starve our schools of the funding they need.

Alphonse “Al” Salvatore Marotta, a dedicated public servant and tireless advocate for workers, passed away at the age of 90. Al served as President of the CSEA from 1975 to 1981 and remained an active retiree member of Chapter 401.

His remarkable political career included roles as Deputy Mayor, State Representative, and Hartford City Council member, where he championed fair policies and community programs. A true leader and family man, Al leaves behind a lasting legacy of service, compassion, and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others.



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
ALPHONSE “AL” SALVATORE MAROTTA

NOVEMBER 27, 1934 –
DECEMBER 17, 2024

2025 Medicare Part B Reimbursement Update

By: Kevin Sullivan, Retiree Organizer

We want to keep you informed about important developments regarding your Part B (and Part D, if applicable) reimbursements for the year 2025. The standard amount for Medicare Part B for the upcoming year will be \$185.00.

Standard Part B Premium

If you are paying the standard, basic amount for Part B, no action is required. Your Part B reimbursement will be automatically included in your pension check, as it has been in the past.

Higher Part B Premium (or Part D Premium)

If you pay more than the basic rate for Part B or are enrolled in Part D, you will need to submit the relevant information, as in previous years. The administration of Part B submissions will continue to be handled by the Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan, our retiree health-care carrier.

As a State retiree, you should never sign up for Medicare Part D on your own. If the State of Connecticut places you on Medicare Part D, the cost will be reimbursed to you. Submitting your documentation for reimbursement is essential to ensure that you receive these funds.

If you are being charged more than \$185.00 for Medicare (including IRMAA, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount), you must submit a copy of your Medicare Premium Notice by February 28, 2025, to the following address:

Email, Fax, or Mail a copy of your Medicare Premium Notice to:

Email: STCTMailbox@aetna.com

Fax: 1 (855) 481-3124

Mail:

Aetna, Inc.

PO Box 7083

London, KY 40742

Make sure to write your state employee ID number above your name. If submitting for your spouse, write your name and state employee ID number above your spouse's name. Important: Do not send via Certified Mail - Certified Mail will be rejected! If you send by email or fax, you have confirmation of when you sent it, but if you send by mail and would like to confirm that it was received by Aetna, you can call 1-855-648-0391.

Rest assured, you will receive additional notifications through various channels, including CSEA News, emails from our team, and traditional mail from the Comptroller's Office.

Medicare Open-Enrollment Period Clarification

The Medicare open-enrollment period can be overwhelming due to an influx of mailers, phone calls, and television advertisements. However, we want to clarify the following for State retirees:

As a State retiree, you are not required to take any action during the Medicare enrollment period.

This enrollment period applies to non-State retirees who need to make changes to their Medicare plans. You can safely disregard

calls, emails, mailings, and television commercials related to Medicare enrollment. Only communications bearing the State of Connecticut Comptroller's Office address or insignia should be considered.

We also want to address notifications from Aetna that mention the option to "opt out" of your current plan. We strongly advise against opting out of your State retiree health insurance plan. This information is included to meet federal Medicare requirements, but it would be extremely difficult for State retirees to secure a better plan elsewhere. Therefore, we recommend that you do not opt out of the plan.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the CSEA Council 400 Retiree Team. We are here to assist you!



Victory for Retirees: Social Security Fairness Act Passes!

In a landmark moment, the Senate has voted to pass the Social Security Fairness Act, eliminating the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) that have unfairly reduced benefits for millions of retirees. This victory ensures that public service workers and their families will no longer be penalized for their years of hard work.

For years, retirees and advocates have fought tirelessly for

this change, emphasizing the inequities that the WEP and GPO created for educators, police officers, firefighters, and other public employees. The passage of this bill is not just a legislative achievement but a testament to the power of collective advocacy and the unwavering commitment of union members across the country.

Among those who played a pivotal role in advocating for the Social Security Fairness Act was

Bette Marafino, a respected leader from Council 400. Bette was interviewed by CNBC in the days leading up to the Senate vote, where she highlighted the devastating impact the WEP and GPO have had on retirees—particularly those living on fixed incomes. "These provisions have unjustly penalized public servants who dedicated their careers to serving their communities," Marafino said in the interview. "Passing this bill will bring long-overdue relief to retirees and ensure they receive the benefits they earned."

Marafino's voice was just one of many in Council 400 and unions nationwide who advocated for fairness and equity. For months, our members sent letters, made phone calls, and met with lawmakers to demand action. This victory demonstrates the critical role unions play in securing legislative wins that protect the dignity and well-being of working families.

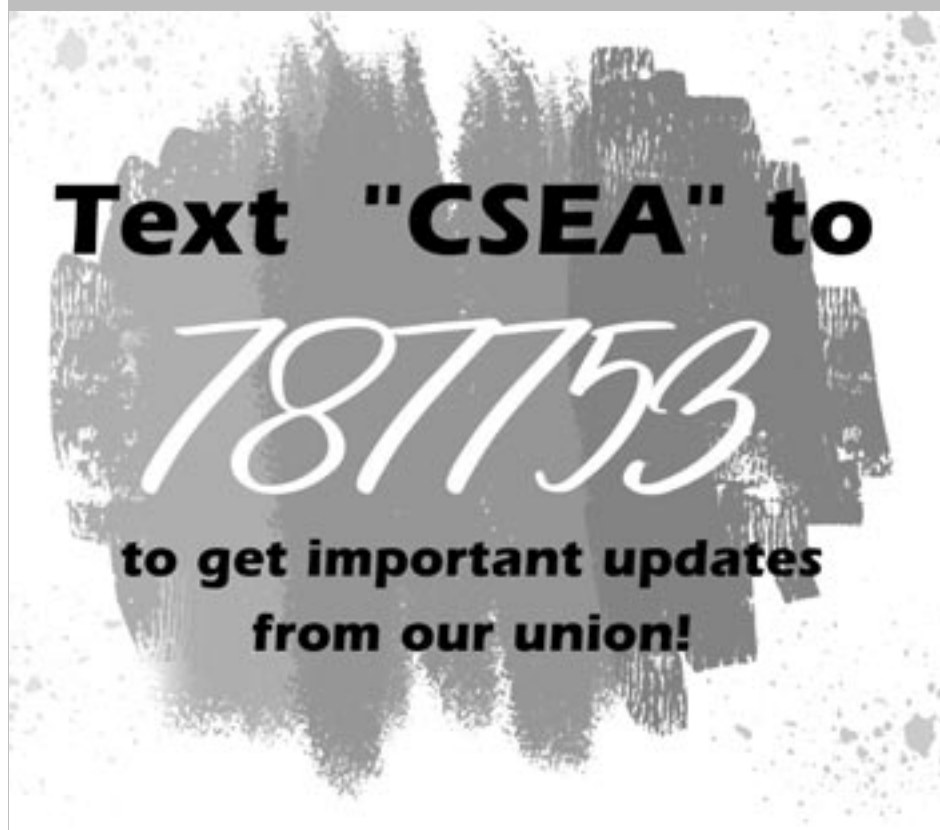
The passage of the Social Security Fairness Act means that retirees who were previously penalized can now look forward to receiving their full Social Security benefits. For many, this will

mean the difference between financial hardship and stability.

As we celebrate this historic achievement, we must also remain vigilant. While the passage of the Social Security Fairness Act is a significant victory, it reminds us of the work still needed to protect and expand retirement security for all workers. Our focus must now shift to ensuring the passage of the Social Security 2100 Act. This critical legislation would not only fully fund Social Security for generations to come but also prevent potential benefit cuts that could jeopardize the stability retirees deserve.

Council 400 will continue to lead the charge, advocating for policies that strengthen Social Security and protect the rights of retirees. We encourage all members to stay engaged, as our collective efforts are essential in securing these vital protections.

We thank every member who participated in this fight and applaud Bette Marafino for her leadership and advocacy. This victory belongs to all of us who believe in fairness, justice, and the power of collective action. Together, we are making a difference for today's retirees and future generations.



State Workers Attacked!

Breaking News

Wages & Benefits At Risk!

OPPONENTS ATTACK STATE WAGES & BENEFITS

"If Lamont is serious about pension progress, he will freeze state employee wages in the budget for the next biennium."

The Red Line

COMMON SENSE & BETTER IDEAS

Opposite Day in Hartford

BY RED LAJINCKE ON DEC. 5, 2024

Hartford Courant
 Commentary | Opinion: Connecticut's fiscal guardrails are...

OPINION - COMMENTARY

Opinion: Connecticut's fiscal guardrails are a solution, not a scapegoat

"Actually, if any adjustments are made, they should freeze pay and reduce benefits which far exceed those of other states' workers and private workers in Connecticut. The reductions should apply to all employees."

The Hartford Portfolio

Unions Push to Gut Fiscal Guardrails, Demand Billions in More Spending

"If lawmakers are serious about protecting CT's financial future, they must resist pressure from the unions and prioritize fiscal discipline over careless spending."

Harding wants to freeze state employee wages for at least two years

State Senate Republican Leader says it is becoming more difficult to balance the budget

Scott Benjamin, Community Contributor

"I think remaining consistent on a non-increase salary for at least the next 2 years is financially prudent. I think it would go a long way toward finding efficiencies in our fixed costs."

"Compensation of unionized state workers in Connecticut is dramatically overgenerous. This is unfair and unsustainable. It is time for a wage freeze such as former Governor Democrat Dannel Malloy imposed."

Examiner

Time for a State Employee Wage Freeze

—Red LaJincke, 12/4/2024

Hartford Courant

Opinion: Active CT state employees and their generous benefits

"It border on lunacy to suggest that a state paying 2nd highest wages, offering by far most generous health care benefits and 11th most generous pension benefits has difficulty hiring due to insufficient compensation."

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