

2026 Legislative Agenda

Short Session, Big Goals

By: Daniel I. Medress, Political Education Director

There are lots of interesting things about the year 2026. Of course, on July 4 it is the 250th anniversary of the adoption of

the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress (delegates did not start signing it until August 2, 1776). 2026 will also bring something very important to all CSEA members: the next session of the Connecticut General Assembly.

General Assembly sessions

in even numbered years run from the first Wednesday in February through the first Wednesday in May. This year that will be February 4 to May 6. Three months is an incredibly tight timeframe for the legislative process and that's why the upcoming February to May session is more commonly referred to as the Short Session.

But CSEA members know from experience that the Short Session is not shorthand for unimportant.

The General Assembly will have an opportunity to make changes to the biennial budget that was passed in the previous session. Legislators can allocate additional funding for services

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Jan Lawrence, President of the P4 Council, being sworn in on the Hebron Town Council.

Jan Lawrence: How the Union Prepared Him to Lead

This fall, something remarkable happened in Hebron: a longtime CSEA leader, Jan Lawrence helped flip his town's leadership for the first time in 23 years, sweeping all 14 Democratic candidates into office. For a small town of fewer than 10,000 people, this wasn't just an

election, it was a seismic shift. And at the center of it was a union member who believed his community deserved better.

Jan's transition from union leader to elected official is more than a personal achievement. It's a story about what happens when

working people step into public leadership with the same values they bring to the union: fairness, dignity, strong public services, and a commitment to building a community where everyone can thrive.

And it's a reminder that sometimes the most powerful political change doesn't come from the federal level.

As Jan sees it,

continue onto page 4

A Federal Child Care Funding Freeze Puts Working Families at Risk

Child Care Industry Relies on Accountability & Transparency

Recently, the Trump administration froze \$10 billion in federal child care funding in several states. While Connecticut is not affected at this time, this decision raises serious concerns for families, providers, and communities across the country.

Child care is essential infrastructure. When funding is threatened, parents are the first to feel it. Without reliable care, parents cannot go to work, children lose stability, and communities suffer. These funds support the systems that allow families to earn a living and children to learn and grow in safe, nurturing environments.

Child care providers and parents know the truth: child care already operates with accountability, transparency, and tight margins. Disrupting funding does not improve oversight. It creates instability for families who depend on care to work and provide for their children.

A Statement from Maria Reyes, Family Child Care Provider & Council President CSEA SEIU Local 2001:

"Every day, I care for children so parents can

show up to their jobs and provide for their families. That's how our economy works. When child care funding is put at risk, it doesn't just hurt providers, it hurts families, employers, and entire communities."

Families deserve stability, not uncertainty. Child care providers deserve respect, not political games. We will continue standing up for the care that working families rely on every day.

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

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

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Meetings And News

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

Chapter 401 (Hartford area)
Thurs, February 5th at 1pm
CSEA Union Hall & Zoom
Zoom Mtg ID: 895 3209 6902
Patrice Peterson 860 416-0306

Chapter 402 (Danbury area)
Wed., January 14th - 10am
Speaker: Bernadette Conway
CSEA Retiree Coordinator
United Methodist Church
5 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT
Linda Albanese: 860 354-6965

Chapter 403 (Norwich area)
Tues., January 13th - 1:30pm
Speaker: Aetna Representative
Rose City Senior Center
8 Mahan Drive, Norwich
Carol Burgess: 860 303-7267

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area)
Tues. January 13th - 10am
Speaker: Danny Medress
CSEA Political Director
Trinity Orthodox Church
937 Chase Pkwy, Waterbury

Chapter 405 (New Haven)
Thurs. January 8th - 10:30am
Speaker: Angie Nelson
Cigna Dental Representative
Hamden Government
Center Building, 3rd Floor
2750 Dixwell Ave., Hamden
Sue Pierson (203) 376-7207

Chapter 406 (Middletown)
Tues. January 13th 12:30pm
American Legion Post 75
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr.
Middletown, CT

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area)
Wed., January 21st - 1pm
National Catholic Church
1300 Stratford Rd., Stratford
Zoom ID: 872 4952 3823
Passcode: 000891
Liz Anderson (203) 676-0659

Chapter 408 (Windham Area)
Wednesday, Jan 14th, 1pm
Mansfield Senior Center
303 Maple Rd., Storrs
Doug Racicot (860) 234-2537

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

Chapter 410 (Windsor area)
Holiday Luncheon
Monday, January 12th
Social 12pm Lunch at 1pm
Figaros' Restaurant
92 Elm St., Enfield
Entree Choice: Eggplant
Parmesan, Chicken Francaise,
Chicken Parmesan, Stuffed
Filet of Sole, Ziti with
Meatball or Sausage. Served
with vegetables and pasta,
coffee, tea, cake and cash bar
RSVP by January 5th
Checks to CSEA Chapter 410
Mailed to: Oscar Gomez
Chapter 410 Treasurer
33 Sylvester Street
Springfield, MA 01109
Members \$18 Guests \$25
Contact: Oscar Gomez 413-
246-2829

Chapter 411 (Rocky Hill area)
Thursday, March 19th 1pm
Guest Speaker: Cigna Dental
CSEA Union Hall
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Subby Puglisi (860) 529-8336

Chapter 412 (Putnam area)
Tues., Jan., 20th - 1:30pm
Putnam Town Hall
200 School Street, Putnam
Don Gladding (860) 933-9998

Chapter 414 (Torrington area)
Monday, January 19th at 10am
Five Point Extension Bldg
852 University Dr., Torrington
Kathryn Doan 860 324-8300

Chapter 415 (Manchester)
Monday, Jan. 26th - 1pm
Speaker: Diana Dean
North Central Area
Agency on Aging
Elks Lodge in Manchester
30 Bissell Street
Stu Clark: (860) 205-0657

Chapter 416 (New London)
Tuesday, Jan 13th at 12pm
Speaker: Angie Nelson
Cigna Dental Representative
Waterford Public Library
49 Rope Ferry Rd., Waterford
John Knaff: 860-857-4244

Chapter 417 (Plainville area)
Wed., January 14th - 1pm
Speaker: Angie Nelson
Cigna Dental Representative
Plainville Public Library
56 East Main St., Plainville
President Mark Kirschner
(860) 882-2717

Chapter 418
(Community College Retirees)
Tues., February 10th - 10am
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave., Hartford
President Colleen Richard:
(860) 202-4128

RSVP today for our
upcoming Florida & Carolina
meetings with Aetna, Cigna
and CSEA Council 400
Organizer: Kevin Sullivan

Chapter 421 (Daytona Area)
Thursday, February 19th
Crane's Roost Restaurant,
1850 Crane Lakes Blvd,
Port Orange, FL 32128
Social 11:30 till 12pm
followed by lunch, business
meeting, and guest speakers
Menu: Choice of Chicken
Caesar Salad, Chicken
Parmigiana sandwich, Cobb
salad, Roost burger, Cheese
steak sandwich, or BLT wrap.
Choice of side and soft drink
can be chosen at the restaurant
Fresh-baked cookies will also
be served for dessert.
Cost: \$15.00 per person
Please make checks payable
to: "CSEA chapter 421"
note your choices on the check
Mail your check to:
Ronald Eddy, Treasurer
1433 Areca Palm Drive
Port Orange, FL 32128
(checks should be received on
or before February 13, 2026)
Questions call: Ruth Finizio,
President CSEA Chapter 421
860-680-1860
ruthfinizio@gmail.com

**Chapter
422 - 431
Meeting
Information
on Page 6**

Only get
Emails
for your
Chapter



**Don't Miss
Chapter Meeting
Announcements:
Get Email Alerts**

Local
Meeting &
Luncheon
Info

Important numbers to have on hand: Caremark: 1-800-318-2572

Cigna: 1-800-244-6224

Retirement Division Payroll: 860-702-3528

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

HEP Care Management Solutions: 1-877-

Retirement Division Life Insurance: 860-702-3537

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

687-1448 or visit them at their portal:

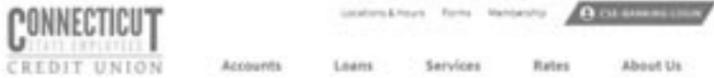
Retirement Division Health Insurance: 860-702-3533

UnitedHealthcare: 1-888-803-9217

<https://www.connect2yourhealth.com/ParticipantPortal/Default.aspx>



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Apply for our Visa Platinum Rewards Credit Card to earn points on your purchases. Call or visit any of our locations for more information.



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: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 Monday, January 19**

Dividend Rates - Third Quarter 2025 Rates

	Dividend Rate	Percentage Yield
REGULAR SHARES	2.50%	2.53%
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 06360 (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 family, friends and loved ones.
- | | |
|--|--|
| Bergsten, Victor, Health Professional | Owino, Albert, No Designated Unit |
| Bryan, Valerie, Health Professional | Palmer, Michael, Social And Human Services(P-2) |
| Burdsall, Cynthia, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) | Powell, Maurice, Service/Maintenance (Np-2) |
| Busque, Lorraine, Confidential | Richmond, Danny, Judicial |
| Camerota, Helen, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) | Rieve, Michael, Correctional Supervisor (Np-8) |
| Cannata, Hasmig, Health (Np-6) | Rocchetti, Richard, Service/Maintenance (Np-2) |
| Crawford, William, State Police (Np-1) | Rutkiewicz, Migdalia, Judicial - Non-Professional |
| Decarish, Evelyn, Admin And Residual (P-5) | Salvio, Louis, No Designated Unit |
| Delaney, William, Correctional Officers (Np-4) | Sauer, Diane, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) |
| Dirgins, Benjamin, Managerial | Scott, Lottie, Judicial - Professional B |
| Donat, Nafi, Admin And Residual (P-5) | Shapiro, Lester, Engineer, Scien, Tech (P-4) |
| Elliott, Ernestine, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) | Sheehan, Joseph, Managerial |
| Flannigan, Janet, Health Nonprofessional (Np-6) | Siragusa, Anthony, Engineer, Scien, Tech (P-4) |
| Gere, Harriet, Social And Human Services(P-2) | Slesinski, Mary Ellen, Admin And Residual (P-5) |
| Grant, Stephen, Judicial - Mgr And Conf | Stenson, Judith, Correctional Officers (Np-4) |
| Hightower, Carmen, Admin And Residual (P-5) | Suess, Gary, Protective Services (Np-5) |
| Hubeny, Gene, Correctional Officers (Np-4) | Swider-Wirth, Janet, Health Nonprofessional (Np-6) |
| Jaworski, Richard, Engineer, Scien, Tech (P-4) | Tanguay, Norbert, Protective Services (Np-5) |
| Jensen, Helene, Uconn - Non-Faculty | Teraila, Jeanne, Uchc Univ Hlth Professionals |
| Kiernan, John, Comm College Faculty | Treschitta, Rita, St Vocation Federation Teacher |
| Kloszewski, Yolanda, Health Nonprofessional (Np-6) | Tripoli, Philip, Correctional Officers (Np-4) |
| Kochiss, John, Admin And Residual (P-5) | Trujillo, Jose, State Police (Np-1) |
| Lambert, Joseph, Correctional Officers (Np-4) | Turner, James, Admin And Residual (P-5) |
| Leclair, Charlotte, Managerial | Tuthill, Michael, Correctional Officers (Np-4) |
| Lucas, Leontina, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) | Verrastro, Kenneth, Admin And Residual (P-5) |
| Magnano, Salvatore, Health Nonprofessional (Np-6) | Walsh, Marie, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) |
| Natgrass, Robert, State Police | |
| Noheimer, Alice, Uconn | |

CSEA NEWS

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INSERTION DEADLINE: 1st of prior month.
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Update on State Contract Negotiations

As we move into the new year and hit six months on an expired contract, our Negotiations Teams across the seven CSEA state units are continuing the hard work of protecting and strengthening the rights, benefits, and working conditions our members depend on. While bargaining has remained active, it has also become increasingly clear that several key issues may not be resolved at the table alone.

We are fully expecting to exercise our collective power during the upcoming legislative session. Many of the challenges we

face—such as understaffing, funding constraints, and outdated policies that undermine recruitment and retention—cannot be fixed by bargaining alone. They require legislative action, and that means we will need members engaged, informed, and ready to mobilize when called upon.

In the weeks ahead, you will receive more detailed updates as negotiations progress and as we enter arbitration. You will also hear about opportunities to take action at the Capitol, share your story, and stand with fellow union members on key

priorities that affect our work and our families.

What remains clear is this: our strength has always come from our unity. Whether at the bargaining table, in arbitration, or in the legislature, we will meet this moment together—firm in our values, strategic in our approach, and committed to securing the best possible outcomes for every member.



Jan Lawrence: How the Union Prepared Him to Lead

continued from page 1

municipal government is one of the few places left where people can still agree on the basics. Roads should be safe. Seniors should be able to stay in their homes. Families should be able to afford to live where they grew up. Towns need to attract businesses while keeping taxes fair. These aren't partisan issues, they're community issues.

And union members are uniquely equipped to address them.

"We're used to solving problems. We're used to listening. We're used to building consensus," Jan said. "That's what local leadership requires."

In Hebron, the biggest challenges mirrored what many communities face: affordability, housing shortages, and a tax structure that places too much pressure on working families. Jan ran with a clear message: grow the town's economic base, expand affordable housing for seniors and young families, and modernize how the town invests in itself.

The result? Voters across parties, Democrats, Republicans, and the largest local bloc, unaffiliated residents, chose solutions over slogans.

Jan didn't have to learn leadership on the fly. Years as a CSEA leader had already taught him how to run complex meetings, navigate disagreement, negotiate fairly, and understand the value of strong public

services.

That experience was put to the test immediately: at his very first Town Council meeting, the newly elected chair was away—meaning Jan had to run the meeting himself.

"I wasn't nervous at all," he reflected. "Running P-4 Council meetings prepared me for that. The union teaches you how to be ready when it's your turn to step up."

His understanding of public-sector work has also shaped his priorities in office: ensuring town departments have the staffing, resources, and competitive wages they need to attract and retain talent. Hebron's success, he says, depends directly on the workers who pave roads, maintain buildings, keep the water safe, and support families.

"That's a union value," he said. "Strong communities require strong public services."

When Jan talks about why more union members should run for office, his answer is simple: because we bring the values communities need most.

Local government is where decisions feel tangible. It's where you can talk about affordability without it becoming a national debate. It's where you can work with neighbors across party lines. And it's where working people can see the impact of their leadership in real time.

"At the federal level, that 20% we disagree on gets amplified," Jan said. "But at

the local level, the 80% we do agree on is right in front of us. That's where we can make progress."

He believes deeply that local politics is one of the few spaces left untouched by the corrosive influence of big money and polarization.

"It's where democracy still feels real," he said. "It's where working people still have power."

Jan's win reflects the broader theme of what our union has been highlighting: the real political divide isn't left versus right, it's the haves versus the have-nots. And at the municipal level, that divide shows up as unaffordable housing, underfunded services, stagnant wages, and communities being priced out of their own towns.

By electing leaders rooted in the labor movement, towns gain champions who understand the stakes for working people and who bring practical, grounded solutions to the table.

Jan stepped up because he wanted to give back to the town he's lived in for 26 years. He stayed because his community needed leadership that put people first. Now, his story stands as an invitation to every union member who has ever wondered whether they could—or should—get involved.

The answer is yes.

Your community needs you.

And you might be the next leader who helps shape it.

The Top 1% Have Taken \$42k/ Year from the Average American

For more than forty years, the American economy has grown steadily. Workers have gotten more productive, companies have gotten more efficient, and the country has generated enormous wealth. But almost none of those gains have gone to the people who created them.

Economists now estimate that about \$50 trillion has shifted from the bottom 90% of Americans to the wealthiest 1% since the late 1970s. If pay had kept up with productivity, the average worker would be earning roughly \$42,000 more every year. That money wasn't lost, it moved upward.

And that shift didn't just happen. It was the result of choices made over decades.

Beginning in the late '70s and early '80s, a set of policies reshaped the U.S. economy:

- Union membership was pushed down, weakening workers' ability to negotiate fair wages.

- Major industries consolidated, giving big corporations more power over wages, prices, and working conditions.

- Tax laws were rewritten to favor wealth over work — rewarding investors

and high earners far more than the people actually producing value.

- And the economy shifted, profits came from speculation instead of real work.

As productivity grew and grew, workers simply stopped sharing in the gains. CEOs, shareholders, and the ultra-wealthy pocketed the difference.

This redistribution isn't just something economists talk about, it shows up in the daily lives of working people. It's when families are priced out of housing in their own communities and when people juggle multiple jobs just to cover basic expenses. It's when child care and public schools strain without the staffing or funding they need and medical debt rises even as the health-care industry reports record profits.

Meanwhile, billionaire wealth has skyrocketed. Corporate profits are at historic highs. The stock market climbs, even as food, rent, and car insurance eat away more and more of workers' paychecks.

Most people didn't fall behind though, they were pushed behind. Their share of economic growth was diverted upward by

policies that rewarded concentrated wealth and weakened worker power.

A \$50 trillion shift drains the middle class. It destabilizes communities. It erodes trust in government and democracy. When people work hard and still can't get ahead, the system feels rigged because in many ways, it has been.

Nothing about this is inevitable. The same tools that shifted wealth upward can be used to rebalance the economy. We can rebuild strong unions so workers have real bargaining power and fix the tax code so the ultra-wealthy pay what they should while investing in public services, which benefit everyone and support the workers who keep society running

Workers create the wealth of this country. They always have. And they deserve a fair share of what they produce.

The \$50 trillion figure is a reminder of what was taken — and a reminder that we can win it back. An economy built by millions of working people should work for them, not just for a handful of billionaires.

Leadership in Action

Celebrating Danbury Para Chapter President Missy Cole

In every school community, there are people whose quiet leadership makes an extraordinary difference. For CSEA's Danbury Paraeducators Chapter, that leader is Chapter President Missy Cole—a dedicated paraeducator whose compassion, creativity, and commitment to students have transformed support for some of the district's most vulnerable young people.

Missy's work at Shelley's Shelves, the DHS Food Pantry that she has helped build, organize, and sustain, is inspirational. What began as an effort to ensure that no student goes hungry has grown into a remarkable community resource—one that

now provides care packages to 75 students every single week. These packages aren't just bags of groceries. They include personal care items, snacks, ingredients for full meals, and the kind of thoughtful touches that show students someone is looking out for them.

Missy's leadership has been the driving force behind it all. She has coordinated donations, brought in partners, organized volunteers, and identified needs that too often go unseen. In the process, she has filled a gap that many students quietly struggle with: food insecurity and lack of basic essentials.

What makes this work so

special is not just the logistics—it's Missy's heart. She shows up for kids in ways that cannot be measured on any spreadsheet or budget line. Her compassion reminds us that paraeducators are more than classroom support staff; they are mentors, anchors, and champions for students who need someone in their corner.

Missy's example reflects the very best of our union: members stepping up, identifying community needs, and turning empathy into action. Her impact ripples far beyond the walls of the pantry. It reaches families, strengthens school culture, and inspires others to get involved.

Many of us are already

joining her in supporting Shelley's Shelves, and more help is always welcome. As one supporter put it: "I'm so very grateful for Ms. Cole's compassion and commitment to our kids. I'm making a donation, and if you'd like to support this incredible work, please send me a message."

CSEA is proud to uplift Missy Cole for her leadership, her generosity, and her unwavering belief that every student deserves to be cared for. She sets a powerful example of what it means to serve both our schools and our community—and we are honored to call her one of our own.



Missy Cole, President of the Danbury Para Chapter, provides care packages to 75 students a week.

Council 400 Chapter Meetings (Continued from Pg. 2)

Chapter 422 (Ocala Area)
Monday, February 2nd
Francesco's Ristorante,
16770 US-441, Summerfield, FL
Social time 11:30am
Lunch/meeting at 12pm
Meal Choice: Chicken
Parmesan, Sirloin Tips,
Whitefish Picatta, or
Eggplant Parmesan. All
meals include: salad, bread,
dessert, coffee/tea, softdrinks
Cost is \$19 for members
and \$24 per guest
Checks should be made to:
"CSEA 422" and sent along
with meal choice to:
Frank Berlinski
1030 Allaire Loop,
The Villages, FL, 32163
Door Prizes and 50/50 raffle!
ASL Interpreter will be there!
Questions? Call Frank at
(860) 604-7688

Chapter 423 (Boca Raton)
Wednesday, Feb 11th at 12pm
Renzo's Cafe & Pizzeria,
6900 N Federal Hwy,
Boca Raton, FL
Cost: \$25 per person
Meal Selection: You will have
the opportunity to choose
your meal on the day of the
luncheon/meeting.
Payment Instructions:
Make checks payable to:
"CSEA Chapter 423"
and send them to:
Philip Karas
278 Las Palmas St
West Palm Beach, FL 33411
Questions? Call President
Ron Herzig (954) 868-8941
Chapter 424 (Sarasota Area)
Thursday, February 5th
Meeting: 9am - 12:30pm
Cost is \$22 per person
Please RSVP by January 28th
Continental Breakfast Buffet
Carlisle Inn & Conference
Center, 3727 Bahia Vista St,
Sarasota, FL 34232
President Bob Mackiewicz
(941) 497-2370

Chapter 425 (Clearwater)
Wednesday, February 4th
Luncheon/Meeting 10:30am
Meal Choices: Pot Roast,
Turkey and Dressing,
Fisherman's Grille, or
Southwest Avocado Chicken
Salad. Each meal includes
dessert and soft drinks
Perkins Restaurant
2626 Gulf to Bay Blvd
Clearwater, FL
Cost: \$20 per person
Checks should be made to:
"CSEA Chapter 425", sent to:
Suzanne Cornwell
3817 Erin Brook Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34655
Questions: 203-530-9632

Chapter 426 (Ft. Myers Area)
Monday, February 9th
KJ's Steakhouse in Ft Myers
10950 S Cleveland Ave
Entrée Choices: Meatloaf
glazed with our sweet sauce,
Grilled chicken breast with
mushroom, bacon, & cheese,
Vegetarian Options too!
All meals include Gator Bites,
Truffle Fries, Ahi Tuna, and
House salad with Balsamic
Sides include: Garlic mashed
potatoes, Broccolini Simone
RSVP by January 30, 2026
Cost: \$30 per person
No payments taken at the door
Make checks payable to:
"CSEA Chapter 426" include
your meal choice with your
payment. Send checks to:
Linda Mathieu
5551 Luckett Rd Lot B25
Fort Myers, FL 33905
Questions? Call Chap Pres:
Deb Gould (860) 605-6690
Chapter 427 (Vero Beach)
Tuesday, February 17th
Meeting starts at 11am
Additional Guest Speaker:
A local Elder Law Attorney
Lunch options: Baked White
Fish, Pork Tenderloin, or
Baked Ziti. Includes rice
pilaf, salad and fresh rolls

Location: Elks Lodge 1520,
608 S 5th St, Fort Pierce, FL
Cost is \$25 per person
Please RSVP by February 5th
Martha Jurek (860) 558-8172

Chapter 431 (Myrtle Beach)
Tuesday, March 10th at 11am
Golden Corral,
868 Oak Forest Lane,
Myrtle Beach, SC
President John Yopp:
(203) 507-1022

WHY SPOUSES OF CT STATE RETIREES SHOULD JOIN CSEA COUNCIL 400

As the spouse of a Connecticut state retiree, you benefit directly from the hard-earned healthcare and pension protections your family relies on. By joining CSEA Council 400 for just \$60 per year, you help strengthen the voice of retirees and their families at the Capitol and in negotiations that affect your healthcare, cost-of-living adjustments, and long-term retirement security.

You don't need to have worked for the state — if you're receiving benefits through your spouse's retirement, you have a stake in protecting them. Your membership supports advocacy, representation, and access to helpful information and resources all year long. It's a small investment that helps protect what you've earned together.

**Does CSEA have your
correct contact info on file?**

**Update your info by
scanning the QR code below.**



Medicare Part B Reimbursement Update

By: Kevin Sullivan, Council 400 Retiree Organizer

We want to keep you informed about important developments regarding your Part B (and Part D, if applicable) reimbursements for the year 2026. The standard amount for Medicare Part B for the upcoming year will be \$202.90.

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 healthcare provider.

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 \$202.90 for Medicare

(including IRMAA, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount), you must submit a copy of your Medicare Premium Notice by February 27, 2026, 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 Medicare Employer Group
PO Box 14091
Lexington, KY 40512
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.

2026 Legislative Agenda

By: Daniel I. Medress, Political Education Director

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performed by CSEA members - everyone from teachers in Unified School District #1 to environmental analysts in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to family childcare providers to paraeducators to town hall workers and more. General Assembly members can reform our state's tax code to ensure that billionaires and large corporations pay their fair share. Representatives and Senators can pass legislation that improves access to and lowers the cost of healthcare. This is to say, the session might be short, but there is a lot that can happen.

And, because when the General Assembly convenes into session there is always an opportunity to fight for our careers, our families, and our communities; CSEA members are ready with a legislative agenda to advance our members' interests. The legislative agenda is recommended by CSEA's Legislative Action Committee (LAC), which is composed of members from all of our local's councils. The range of issues in the agenda is a testament to the variety of work and careers of CSEA members. After the LAC recommended the agenda, CSEA's Executive Council voted to approve it. While that is the technical process for approval of the agenda, at the end of the day, the agenda is the result of conversations with rank and file members, staff representatives, and union leadership and a reflection of the ambitions and experiences of CSEA's members.

2026 Legislative Agenda

Connecticut for All Agenda: as part of the Connecticut for All coalition, CSEA joins with allied partners working to ensure that Connecticut's budget and spending priorities put working people first. CSEA members will support the work of Con-

necticut for All as the coalition continues to fight for an equitable tax structure and full funding for the services provided by our members;

Connecticut AFL-CIO Agenda: In 2026, the AFL will continue its work supporting collective bargaining rights and fighting for the priorities of its affiliates. From combating wage theft to establishing standards and limits for the use of Artificial Intelligence in the workplace to investment in long-term care for seniors, and more, the AFL agenda is a reflection of the size and diversity of the Connecticut AFL and its membership;

SEBAC Legislative Proposals: Joining with allied unions in the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC), CSEA will work 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, 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;

Just Cause for Renters: 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;

State Employee and Childcare Contracts: 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;

Paraeducators: While the past several sessions have brought some progress for paraeducators around critical issues like healthcare and professional development, it has not been enough. In the coming session, CSEA paraeducators will work to pass legislation that raises pay, improves healthcare, gives all paraeducators access to a secure retirement, and allows paraeducators to collect unemployment insurance over the summer; and

Recruitment and Retention of Municipal and 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.

As always, our success in this legislative session rests in our ability to stand united and exercise our collective power. Keep an eye out for ways you can get involved and help push these priorities forward.

Billionaires are already done paying into Social Security for the year

Every January, millions of working people across the country start the year the same way: with Social Security contributions coming out of every paycheck, every week, all year long. For most of us, this doesn't stop until December 31. But for the wealthiest Americans? Their contributions have already stopped.

That's because Social Security payroll taxes apply only to wages up to the annual cap, which in 2026 is \$168,600. After someone earns that amount, they are done contributing for the year. For a teacher, a paraeducator, a custodian, a corrections officer, a bus driver, or a childcare worker, reaching that cap is unthinkable. But for CEOs, hedge fund managers, Wall Street traders, and tech billionaires? They hit it within days—sometimes even within hours.

The result is a system in which the people who rely most on Social Security fund it all year long, while the people who can most afford to contribute stop almost immediately.

It's not because they're paying a higher rate. It's because they're paying on less of their income.

A worker earning \$60,000 pays Social Security taxes on every dollar. A worker earning \$600,000 pays on less than a third

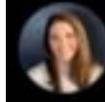
of their wages. A worker earning \$6 million pays on just 2.8% of their income. And the ultra-wealthy, who often take home far more than that? They pay a fraction of a fraction.

Meanwhile, politicians who push austerity warn that Social Security is "running out of money" and suggest cuts to benefits, higher retirement ages, or new restrictions on disability benefits. But the truth is far simpler: Social Security isn't struggling because benefits are too generous. It's struggling because the richest Americans pay into it for, at most, a few weeks a year.

Imagine what it would mean if high earners paid the same way everyone else does. Lifting or eliminating the cap would protect the program for generations, strengthen benefits, and ensure that every worker who built this country—and every retiree who depends on Social Security—can rely on it. Social Security is one of the most successful anti-poverty

programs in American history. It is a promise: after a lifetime of work, you will not be left behind. Working people uphold that promise every single day with every paycheck they earn.

It's long past time for the wealthiest to do the same.



Melanie D'Arrigo

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94% of Americans will pay into Social Security the entire year.

Here's when the wealthiest Americans will stop paying into it on Jan 1st:

Musk - 12:00:28am
 Ellison - 12:00:29am
 Page - 12:00:58am
 Brin - 12:01:05am
 Bezos - 12:01:45am
 Dell - 12:02:09am
 Huang - 12:02:18am

Scrap the cap.

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