



ABOVE: CSEA President Travis Woodward addresses over 100 members who rallied at the Governor's Mansion to demand a moral budget..

## Care4Kids Providers Ratify HUGE Contract

*Raises, Professional Development & More!*

On May 20th it was confirmed that childcare members across Connecticut voted unanimously in favor of their new contract that includes huge gains in terms of wages,

professional development and gains in the workplace. The contract covers over 4,000 family child care providers and, following legislative approval, will be in effect until June 30, 2026.

Childcare providers have fought tirelessly for months to have their voices heard in the press, at the Capitol and outside the Governor's Mansion - they *continue onto page 4*

## CSEA Media Day & Rally Brings Over 100 Members to Hartford!

*Members Protest at the Governor's Mansion While Production Team Takes Photos & Videos*

On Friday, May 5th and Saturday, May 6th, CSEA hired a production team to come to Hartford and film content for us to use over the next two years. This production team worked alongside our Communications team (which included support from SEIU International) to create a two-day experience that included sit-down interviews with council leaders, headshots of our members, a rally at the Governor's mansion, and a fun afternoon at the Union Hall

with tacos (to celebrate Cinco de Mayo!).

Our initial goal for these events was just to create some powerful content

that we could use for commercials and ad spots or flyers and our website, but what we got was so much more. We saw members from different councils interacting and sharing lunch with one another. We saw members bring their families to the union hall to learn about the importance of unions. We saw members rally in solidarity with one another.

This event reminded us what it means *continue onto page 4*

## Equity Can't Wait: We Need a Moral Budget Now!

*Nearly 100 CSEA Members Join 1,500 Activists to Demand a Moral Budget*

Fifteen hundred people joined hands in a sunset circle around the State Capitol on May 17th, including nearly 100 CSEA members, demanding more social service and education funding, as well as higher taxes on Connecticut's wealthy.

The three-hour event that started on the south lawn of the Capitol, was organized by Recovery For All, a group of over 70 labor, community and faith organizations. After a 90-minute rally, we spread around *continue onto page 4*



ABOVE: Drone footage shows the 1,500 activists who came to the Capitol to demand a moral budget.

## Pandemic Pay Look-Up Tool for State Members

The pandemic pay lookup tool is now available for state employees to look up their pandemic pay award based on their risk designation and number of eligible hours.

As a reminder, this look-up tool is based on the state's records and will provide members with their current risk designation and the

amount of the pandemic pay award they will receive. Note that these figures are subject to change if errors are discovered by either party. This will allow members to review that information and raise any concerns they have about the accuracy of the information presented.

Remember that higher-risk employees are first responders, employees who worked in congregate settings, and employees who worked in healthcare

facilities during the relevant time period (March 20, 2020-March 27, 2021). Lower-risk employees are any other employees who worked onsite during that time period. The portal will also include a link to a form that will allow members

*continue onto page 6*

Visit our union's website at: [CSEA-CT.com](http://CSEA-CT.com)

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

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Spotlight on DEEP: New Members, Green Team and PBS Cutline!



**Meetings  
And News**

**MEETING DATES**

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

Chapter 401 (Hartford area):  
Thursday, September 7th  
12:30pm lunch & 1pm meeting  
CSEA Union Hall & via Zoom  
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford  
Patrice Peterson (860) 416-0306

Chapter 402 (Danbury area):  
Wednesday, September 13th - 10am  
United Methodist Church  
5 Clapboard Ridge Rd. Danbury  
Linda Albanese: (860) 354-6965

Chapter 403 (Norwich area):  
Tuesday, September 12th - 1:30pm  
Rose City Senior Center  
8 Mahan Drive., Norwich  
Carol Burgess: (860) 859-3641

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area):  
Tuesday, June 13th - 12pm-3pm  
Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
937 Chase Parkway, Waterbury  
Buffet will include; Ziti, Meatballs and Sausage, Eggplant Parm., Baked Chicken, Grilled Vegetables, Salad and Dessert!  
Cost: \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members  
Make checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 404" and send to:  
Tina Franco  
45 Peach Orchard Rd.  
Prospect, CT 06712

Chapter 405 (New Haven area):  
Thursday, September 14th - 10:30am  
Hamden Government Center Bldg  
2750 Dixwell Ave, Hamden  
Ron Osokow: (203) 671-7685

Chapter 406 (Middletown area):  
Tuesday, September 12th - 1pm  
American Legion Post 75  
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr. Middletown  
Joe Formica: (860) 347-4532

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area):  
Wednesday, September 20th - 1pm  
St. Josephs of Stratford Catholic Church  
1300 Stratford Rd., Stratford (on Rt. 113)  
Joan Matzonkai: (203) 751-0300

Chapter 408 (Willimantic area):  
Thursday, September 14th - 12:30pm  
Mansfield Senior Center  
303 Maple Road. Mansfield  
Doug Racicot: (860) 234-2537

Chapter 409 (State University Professors)  
Friday, June 16th - 10am  
CSEA Union Hall & via Zoom  
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford  
Dave Walsh: (860) 684-4773

Chapter 410 (Windsor Locks area):  
Monday, September 11th - 1pm  
Suffield Senior Center  
145 Bridge St., Suffield  
Amelia Smith: (860) 687-1848

Chapter 411 (Rocky Hill area):  
Thursday, September 21st - 12pm  
CSEA Union Hall  
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford  
Sebastian Puglisi: (860) 529-8336

Chapter 412 (Putnam area):  
Tuesday, September 19th - 1:30pm  
Putnam Town Hall  
200 School St., Putnam  
Don Gladding: (860) 933-9998

Chapter 414 (Torrington area):  
Monday, September 18th - 10am  
Cooperative Service Extension Bldg  
843 University Dr, Torrington  
Karen Pineman: (860) 354-6727

Chapter 415 (Manchester area):  
**\*\*Spring Luncheon\*\***  
Monday, June 26th 12pm-2:30pm  
Manchester Elks Lodge  
30 Bissell St., Manchester, CT  
Buffet includes; sandwiches, deli tray, rolls, salad, cookies and beverages.  
Cost: \$10 - members and \$15 - guests (limit 1 guest per member)  
RSVP by June 16th with checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 415"  
Mailed to: Bill Dorn  
848 Center Street  
Manchester, CT 06040  
(860) 840-1688

Chapter 416 (New London area):  
Tuesday, September 12th - 12pm  
Waterford Public Library  
49 Rope Ferry Rd., Waterford  
John Knaff (860) 857-4244

Chapter 417 (Plainville area):  
Wednesday, September 13th - 1pm  
Plainville Public Library - Auditorium  
56 East Main St., Plainville  
Mark Kirschner: (860) 882-2717

Chapter 418 (Community College Retirees):  
Tuesday, September 5th - 10am  
4C's Union Hall & via Zoom  
907 Wethersfield Ave, Hartford  
Bill Searle (860) 745-3692

**A Note for State Retirees with State Retiree Spouses:**

If you and your spouse are both State of Connecticut Retirees, then you may want to consider who holds your Health Insurance benefit in order to save cash at the pharmacy.

Your date of hire dictates your tier, whereas your retirement date dictates your group—both are important in determining your health and pension benefit, but the group determines your prescription drug co-pay. And since co-pays are based on the insurance holder, not the patient, you may want to consider having the person with the lowest group number (that is the person who retired first most often) hold the insurance for the both of you.

**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>



## Are You Overwhelmed by Bills?



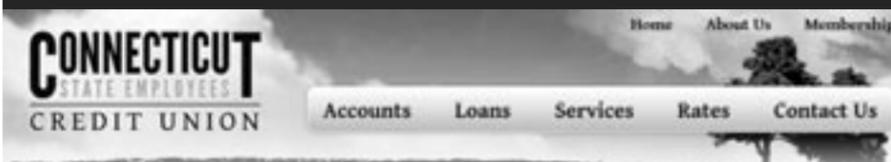
**A CSE Credit Union Debt Consolidation Loan Can Help!**

Loans up to \$25,000 are available  
 7.99% APR\* fixed rate  
 One bill to pay each month

Applications must be received by July 31, 2023.

\*Annual Percentage Rate. Not available to pay off CSE loans, including CSE VISA cards. Total CSE unsecured debt limit (excluding CSE VISA) not to exceed \$25,000. Rate may change without notice. Terms up to 5 years are available.

Visit Our Website: [www.CSECreditUnion.com](http://www.CSECreditUnion.com)



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](http://www.CSECreditUnion.com)

**Closed - Juneteenth  
 Monday, June 19th**

### Dividend Rates - First Quarter 2023

	Dividend Rate	Annual Percentage Yield
REGULAR SHARES	2.25%	2.28%
SHARE DRAFTS (Checking)	1.00%	1.01%
CLUB ACCOUNTS	1.50%	1.51%

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

<b>NORWICH</b> Uncas on Thames 401 West Thames St. Norwich, CT 06306 (860) 889-7378	<b>HARTFORD</b> 84 Wadsworth St. Hartford, CT 06106 (860) 522-5388 (Savings) (860) 522-7147 (Loans)	<b>NEW HAVEN</b> 1666 Litchfield Turnpike Woodbridge, CT 06525 (203) 397-2949
<b>MIDDLETOWN</b> Connecticut Valley Hospital P.O. Box 2485 Middletown, CT 06457 (860) 347-0479	<b>STORRS</b> 1244 Storrs Rd. Storrs, CT 06268 (860) 429-9306	<b>SOUTHBURY</b> Southbury Training School P.O. Box 644 Southbury, CT 06488 (203) 267-7610
		<b>NEWINGTON</b> 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 Only): 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.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Arsenault, Mary      | Monthei, Margaret    |
| Bent, Gary           | Nardozi, Theresa     |
| Brine, James         | Neuman, Alfred       |
| Bryden, Patricia     | Orchard, W Kay       |
| Chaput, Raymond      | Papineau, Roy        |
| Chiasson, Robert     | Pederson, Robert     |
| Cornish, Anita       | Perdue, Letty        |
| Day, Linda           | Pflomm, Robert       |
| Depolito, Arlene     | Piechowski, Pauline  |
| Dickinson, Carl      | Pierro, Louis        |
| Dietzer, James       | Prince, Joseph       |
| Dudley, Ronald       | Rogers, Doug         |
| Dudley-Cook, Minerva | Rosoff, Ellice       |
| Gatineau, Joanne     | Rotella, Olga        |
| Godwin, Nancy        | Schierholz, Rose     |
| Goodstein, Madeline  | Shea, Philip         |
| Gryk, Anthony        | Silva, Manuel        |
| Hahn, Cora           | Surette, M Kathleen  |
| Hernance, Genevieve  | Sweeney, Laurie      |
| Higgins, June        | Swett, David         |
| Jankowski, Joseph    | Szandrocha, John     |
| Kerr, Gloria         | Tambutto, Joseph     |
| Leone, Ann           | Williams, Ushakumari |
| Mcandrew, Eugene     | Zaczynski, Joseph    |
| Mclaughlin, Jayne    | Zelz, Michael        |
| Mellins, Sherwin     | Ziegra, Roberta      |
| Michna, Donald       |                      |
| Milhomens, Susanne   |                      |



## CSEA NEWS

The Voice of Connecticut's  
 Public Service Employees & Retirees

USPS # 224-100 ISSN # 0273-6055

Published Monthly by:

CONNECTICUT STATE EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

Local 2001, Service Employees International Union, CTW/CLC

- |                  |                                    |
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INSERTION DEADLINE: 1st of prior month.

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"CSEA NEWS" (USPS 224-100, ISSN 0273-6055) is published monthly for \$2.80 per year members, \$5.00 per year non-members, by CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, 760 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106-1263. Periodicals postage paid at Hartford, CT. Postmaster: Send address changes to "CSEA NEWS," 760 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106-1263.

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# Family Child Care Provider News

*Noticias para Proveedores de Cuidado Infantil*

## Childcare Providers Ratify HUGE Contract

*continued from page 1* showed up to rallies, they made calls, they sent emails, they did press interviews. In just a four week period, CSEA brought a collective 200 members to the Governor's Mansion to demand he address the childcare crisis.

Before members activated and got loud, childcare providers were making an average of just \$8.50 an hour, but now licensed

providers will see a 33% increase and unlicensed providers will see a 18% increase over the next three years, they will also all receive a 6.5% lump sum bonus this year. Other

wins include:

- 7.5% National Accreditation of Family Child Care NAFCC differential for licensed providers;
- 25% special needs differential for licensed and unlicensed providers;
- \$360,000 for a Professional Development fund to expand and improve trainings and career enhancement opportunities for family

child care providers;

- Establishes a work group to study the issue of health insurance coverage for family child care providers; and
- Establishes a joint union/OEC committee to meet and discuss systemic issues regarding inspection and compliance.

Without members in action and without the support of our allies in Recovery for All, the SEIU State Council and the Childcare Coalition, we would not be celebrating such a remarkable contract.

Next step: legislative approval!

## CSEA Media Day & Rally

*Members Protest at the Governor's Mansion While Production Team Takes Photos & Videos*

*continued from page 1* to be a CSEA member. It means Council 400 retirees showing up to demand healthcare for childcare providers. It means Childcare providers demanding a living wage for our para council members. It means paras demanding that our

state agencies be fully staffed and funded. Being a CSEA member means showing up and fighting for all working families.



ABOVE: Over 100 people came for lunch after protesting at the Governor's Mansion.



ABOVE: CSEA members came together to demand progress on all of our legislative priorities.



ABOVE: Vicky Ceylan, a paraeducator in Danbury, led the crowd in chants throughout the rally.



ABOVE: CSEA hired a professional photographer to take group shots of members after the rally.

## Rally for a Moral Budget

*1,500 Activists Crowd Capitol Lawn to Demand a Moral Budget*

*continued from page 1* the Capitol in a human chain.

Legislators inside the Capitol looked out the window to see thousands of supporters waving union banners and shouting "'If we don't get it, shut it,'; 'One two three four, no one should be working poor,' and 'They say cut back, we say fight back,'."

Inside the Capitol, the House and Senate debated bills and inside the warren of inner offices, legislative leaders haggled over what may eventually be an agreement over a two-year

spending package that could reach \$50.9 billion.

The legislature and the governor have an opportunity to make transformational investments in education, health care, housing, and social services that will help all Connecticut families prosper. That's why we must address the state's arbitrary and outdated spending caps by establishing an Equity Fund that would dedicate revenue outside the General Fund to invest in the basic services families need to thrive.



ABOVE: CSEA members came right from work to join the rally!



ABOVE: The chair reserved for Governor Lamont was left empty the entire event.



ABOVE: Over 100 CSEA members came to demand a moral budget!



ABOVE: CSEA members decked out in purple came to the rally ready to protest!

# Go Green!

## Opt-In to our Digital CSEA News

Did you know that the average person in the US uses more than 700 pounds of paper per year? Or that despite global digitalization, paper usage has actually grown 126% in the last 20 years in the US?

The CSEA News has been an integral part of our communications program for decades, but it is 2023 and we have a host of resources to reduce our carbon footprint and “Go Green.” The most effective way for our members to “Go Green” is to request that the CSEA News be sent digitally rather than a hardcopy in the mail!

“Going Green” not only helps decrease the amount of paper waste in our landfills, but it also reduces ink waste and the carbon emissions from delivery. Many of our CSEA members have been interested in decreasing their carbon footprint and opting into the digital E-Newsletter is a great way to take a small step towards a greener future! Every

month you will receive this digital paper in your email inbox - all of the same information, just a lot less waste! To opt into the Go Green E-Newsletter, simply visit [bit.ly/GoGreenCSEA](http://bit.ly/GoGreenCSEA) and fill out the form.

To make your communications experience even easier, we’ve launched a NEW WEBSITE! Visit [CSEA-CT.com](http://CSEA-CT.com) or [SEIU2001.org](http://SEIU2001.org) and let us know what you think - give us feedback on what you like, don’t like and what you want improved by visiting [bit.ly/CSEAWebSiteInput](http://bit.ly/CSEAWebSiteInput) (case sensitive).

If CSEA has your email address, then you’ve already received this survey in your inbox, but if we don’t then it is also a good opportunity for you to update your contact information by visiting [bit.ly/UpdateCSEA](http://bit.ly/UpdateCSEA) (case sensitive).

## Senate & House Pass BHCS & SSP Contracts

### P3B Members Celebrate New Compensation Plans!

Last year, as part of the P3B contract negotiations, our negotiating committee and Union leaders fought for, and achieved, the right to an additional set of negotiations to address inadequacies in the Behavioral Health Clinical Supervisors (BHCS) and State School

Principals (SSP) compensation plans.

After months of negotiations, a tentative agreement was reached for both groups which was ratified by the membership in overwhelming favor.

On May 17th, the House passed

the BHCS and SSP contracts that came out of those additional negotiations. The Senate then passed these contracts on May 23rd.

The BHCS contract passed with 108 representatives voting yes in the House (40 voting no and 3 not voting), and 33 legislators voting

yes in the Senate (2 voting no and 1 not voting).

The SSP contract passed with 103 representatives voting yes in the House (44 voting no and 4 not voting), and 33 legislators voting yes in the Senate (2 voting no and 1 not voting).

## Fight for Paras Continues

### Para President Cynthia Ross-Zweig Interviews with CT Examiner

The fight for a living wage for our paraprofessionals continued both through CSEA as well as through our allies in Recovery For All. Part of our fight is educating legislators and the general public about the important work paras do, the short staffing crisis Connecticut is facing with paras and the low wages and benefits they receive. Cynthia Ross-Zweig, our Para Council President, often does interviews with the press to get that information out, this month she met with Emilia Otte of the CT Examiner to discuss the para shortage, below is an excerpt from her interview:

“Cynthia Ross-Zweig, a paraprofessional at New Fairfield High School and president of the

paraprofessionals’ union, said the major issue was pay. The starting salary for a paraeducator, she said, ranged from \$15 per hour to \$28 per hour in the wealthier districts, and they often don’t receive adequate benefits. Additionally, paraprofessionals are not able to collect unemployment during the summer.

“You have to look at that and say, how can somebody survive on that type of an income?” Ross-Zweig said. “It’s not a question that they don’t like the work or that the work isn’t rewarding. It’s quite rewarding.”

“Ross-Zweig said while the state offers grants to school districts to help with special education costs, very little of that money goes to paraprofes-

sionals. She said she knew paraprofessionals who worked multiple jobs just to pay the bills.

[..] Ross-Zweig said the paraprofessional shortage was also creating a feedback loop, in which the remaining paraprofessionals in a school were taking on more work and consequently burning out more quickly.

“They’re compounding the situation. That’s exactly what’s happening. ... You’re giving more work to a lesser amount of people,” Ross-Zweig said. “And then you have people that perhaps have worked in the district for many, many years and are at the point where they’re just going to retire. ... If you’re only paying \$15 an hour or \$16 an hour, you’re not going to fill that spot.”

## 1,700 SEIU 1199 Group Home Workers on Strike

### How CSEA Members can Support Their Fight!

On May 24th, over 1,700 group home and day program caregivers in our sister local SEIU District 1199NE, went out on strike for a living wage, affordable

healthcare, and a pension. But they can’t win this strike alone.

These workers, who are fellow SEIU members, are holding strike lines every day at nine different locations until they get a fair contract.

Here are 5 ways you can support the striking workers and help them win a living wage. Use the QR code to get to the Strike Update page for more information as locations and actions may change day-to-day.

**1. Join the workers on the strike line!** The Hartford line will run every day from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. All other strike lines will run from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00

a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The strike line in Hartford is the priority if you’re able to make it there.

Andover: 23 Route 6  
Bridgeport: 179 Infield Street  
Bristol: 47 Upson Street  
Colchester: 84 Linwood Road  
Dayville: 60A Hartford Pike  
Hartford: 210 Capitol Ave – **\*\*PRIORITY STRIKE LINE\*\***

New London: 216 Broad Street  
Norwich: 554 West Thames Street  
Waterbury: 2457 East Main Street

**2. Call your legislators and call the Governor’s office!** Let them know that strikers deserve a living wage, affordable healthcare and a pension to provide care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Gov. Lamont’s office number is 860-566-4840.

**3. Sign the petition!** Go to the Strike Update page and sign the

workers’ petition and share it on social media.

**4. Make a contribution to the strike fund!** You can either use the Strike Update link to make an online donation or you can make a check out to "1199 Strike & Defense Fund" at 77 Huyshope Ave, Hartford, CT 06106.

**5. Donate water, snacks & other food!** Nonperishable staples like rice, pasta, cereals and canned goods will be distributed to strikers so they can feed their families during this difficult struggle. Call 1199’s office at 860-549-1199 to arrange a drop-off time to deliver your donation.



ABOVE: Council 400 Activist Tom Connolly stands with the 1199 strikers at the Legislative Office Building on the first day of their strike.



# CMERS Updates (CT Municipal Employee Retirement System)

## *Labor at the Table Leads to Wins and Increased Stability*

As we all know, over the last several years, public sector pensions have been under attack. As the number of workers who have a pension has decreased, the vulnerability of existing pension plans has increased. The Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement system (CMERS) is no exception. And CMERS is even more at risk because, of late, the employer cost of participating in CMERS has truly skyrocketed. One result of these rising costs is that CMERS towns and boards of education are seeking to cut costs in other ways – by cutting positions and/or by seeking wage and benefit concessions.

It is also important to note that CMERS is a product of the Connecticut General Assembly and, as such, the CGA has the ability to change the plan through legislation. The more unsustainable the costs of the plan become, the greater the risk that the CGA will significantly degrade the benefit.

In response to the mounting costs, State Comptroller Sean Scanlon assembled a working group of union leaders and municipal management leaders to collectively tackle the problem. This working group, on which CSEA participated, identified a set of goals for CMERS that included:

Fortifying CMERS so that current and future enrollees can count on the benefit in the future.

Reducing the skyrocketing employer costs of CMERS, but only by employing win-win cost saving solutions.

Making CMERS a good option for towns that don't currently have pensions, thereby dramatically increasing enrollment in the plan.

Following several weeks of intensive discussions, the committee

developed a set of recommendations for the CGA. Notably, these recommendations will not be incorporated into CMERS unless and until the legislature acts upon them. The recommendations are:

### **1. Re-Amortization of the Fund from 17 to 25 years**

- Re-amortize the 2022 Unfunded Actuarial Assumed Liability (UAAL) base layer from 17 years to 25 years and re-issuing the latest actuarial valuation. In other words, spread out the unfunded liability payments over a longer period of time to make those payments more manageable. Note that this concept has already been incorporated in the State Employee Retirement System and the Teachers' Retirement System.

### **2. Modify Cost of Living Adjustments and Increase the Multiplier.**

- COLA begins July 1 following 12 months of retirement

- COLA provided is the actual increase in the CPI-W if the CPI-W increases 2% or less. If the CPI-W increases by more than 2%, the COLA will vary between a minimum COLA increase of 2% and a maximum COLA increase of 7.5%.

Within this range, the COLA will be determined as 60% of the annual increase in the CPI-W up to 6% plus 75% of the annual increase in the CPI-W above 6% capped at 7.5%.

- Increase the multiplier to 2.2% (1.7% for Social Security covered eligible participants) based on the following eligibility:

- General Employees: Beginning for service at age 60 with at least 30 years of service

- Police and Fire: Beginning for service at age 55 with at least 27 years of service

### **3. Institute a DROP Plan**

- The Deferred Retirement Option Plan or DROP is an option for certain retirement eligible employees to choose to continue to work and accumulate their accrued pension benefit in their DROP account.

- General employees become eligible for DROP after attainment of age 62 with at least 5 years of service or age 60 with at least 30 years of service.

- Police and Fire employees become eligible for DROP after attainment of age 57 with at least 5 years of service or age 55 with at least 25 years of service.

- When an employee makes the irrevocable election to enter DROP, their accrued pension benefit is determined, and they select a form of payment the same as if they were retiring. However, instead of retiring, the DROP participant continues regular employment while their DROP account is credited with the full monthly pension amount based on their selection of benefit form.

- Also, upon entering DROP, their member contribution rate to MERS is reduced to half the otherwise rate of contribution (8% reduces to 4%, 5.25% reduces to 2.625%).

- The pension amount does not increase with annual COLAs while participating in DROP. Beginning annually at the 2nd anniversary of the member's DROP entry, the DROP account is credited with interest, not to exceed 4%. Interest is also credited at the 3rd, 4th, and 5th anniversary date of DROP entry. After 24 months of DROP participation, the member contribution rate is reduced to 0%. A participant can elect to exit DROP and begin receiving their selected pension benefit at any time and the total amount of their DROP account is available to be paid in a lump sum payment or may

be rolled over to an eligible account. An eligible member may participate in DROP for a period not to exceed 60 months at which time the member must cease employment and begin retirement.

### **4. Reform the Governance Structure**

- Creation of a CMERS Subcommittee added to the State Retirement Commission made up of equal representation from labor and management.

### **5. Introduce a New Plan / Tier in 2024**

- The working group agrees to continue researching and negotiating a new plan/tier to bring additional reform to the legislature in the 2024 legislative session with the intention of recruiting new entities to join MERS.

### **6. Data Collection**

- The working group agrees to allow the Comptroller to pursue obtaining better data from non-MERS towns on retirement plan options offered.

The recommendations, if enacted, will help to fortify the pension plan while providing for some enhanced benefits (DROP plan, higher COLA ceiling, and increased multiplier when working beyond normal retirement age). In addition to these enhancements, the first COLA would not be paid until the first July following 12 months of retirement and, during years of very low inflation, the COLA would match the CPI-W, instead of having a minimum floor of 2.5%.

We are hopeful that the CGA will consider these recommendations and enact them. The fact that unions had seats at the table led to the recommendations being truly win-win.

## State Tier IV Employee Contribution Increase

Last month, it was announced that the Lamont Administration plans to invoke a provision in the SEBAC 2017 Agreement that permits the State to increase employee contributions for Tier IV employees by 2%. Specifically, the base contribution of 5% (base contribution is 8% for Hazardous Duty members and members of the Hybrid Plan) can be increased for one year by one-half of the difference between the state investment performance and its predicted investment performance, up to 2%. The change is effective July 1st. Employees' contribution will return to 5% on July 1, 2024 unless the state's investment performance is less than its predicted investment performance.

We have a staffing crisis and an additional 2% contribution for approximately 13,000 employees will hurt the State's ability to recruit and retain employees. At a time when the State has billions of dollars in surplus and has

already made billions in additional pension payments over the last three years, this is not the time to implement this provision of the contract. While the impact on the pension debt will be negligible, it will be a significant impact on the 13,000 state workers and their families. And it is Connecticut families that will suffer as the people who provide essential public services will continue to leave for more lucrative opportunities.

Tier IV – which was negotiated in the middle of a nearly decade-long budget crisis – has proved inadequate in recruiting and retaining employees, particularly in years of surplus and a tight labor market. Implementation of this provision only exacerbates these issues.

We will continue to call on the Lamont Administration to delay the implementation of this provision during this current staffing crisis.

## Pandemic Pay Look-Up Tool Portal for SEBAC Members

*Check to see how much you can expect to receive!*

continued from page 1 to request a review of their pandemic pay award amount by SEBAC and CSEA if they think it is incorrect.

We are hopeful that the state will issue the pandemic pay no later than the first pay period following June 7, 2023, except where there is a dispute about the amount, or in certain units where the state does not have hourly records.

Retirees who worked during the covered period should see payment no later than December 29, 2023. Please be sure to review your pandemic pay in advance of this date since it is more efficient to make corrections in advance of paychecks being issued.



# Is your Spouse a Member of Council 400?

our strength—and for 2023 we've set out to drastically increase our membership numbers amidst the 2023 Legislative Session and expected legislative threats.

Spouses are a large part of our membership, and it's no secret why—they are affected by health insurance and pension benefit changes and are often slated for survivor benefits.

By becoming a member, your spouse will ensure they will continue to receive the CSEA News and important notifications regarding the benefits you worked hard to

The size of our membership is an important way that CSEA Council 400 demonstrates our power, our voice and

secure if you were to pass away. They will also be eligible for SEIU Member Benefits like travel rewards and reduced auto and home insurance rates.

But most importantly, by becoming a member, they will help to increase our membership numbers so that CSEA Council 400 will have an even larger voice against our opponents who want to slash benefits—your benefits, their benefits.

**If your spouse isn't yet a member, contact our Retiree Organizer, Kevin Sullivan at [Ksullivan@csea760.com](mailto:Ksullivan@csea760.com) or 860-951-6614 x 118 to get them signed up!**

# Cigna and Balance Billing on the Basic Plan

The State of Connecticut recently signed a new three year contract with Cigna Dental. Part of that agreement means Cigna will expand the number of doctors in their network!

For those that are enrolled in the Basic Plan, you do not need to worry about which dentists are in-network or out-of-network.

If you are on the Basic Plan, and receive a bill from the dentist... don't panic! According to our Dental Plan, those enrolled in the BASIC PLAN - cannot be Balance Billed!

What is Balance Billing? Dentists sometimes charge more for a service (cleaning, x-ray, etc.) than Cigna will pay. If that happens, the dentist may "balance bill" you for the difference.

If that does happen (and you are in the Basic Plan) simply pay the bill and Cigna will reimburse you!

If you have any questions or need the reimbursement form, call Cigna at (800) 244-6224



# Council 400



# Summer Picnic

**Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11AM-4PM**

**The Farmington Polo Club**  
162 Town Farm Road, Farmington, CT 06032

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$15 for Members</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$25 for Non-Member spouses</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$38 for Guests</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Buffet: 12Noon – 2:30PM</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Menu – Hamburgers, veggie burgers, hotdogs, chicken, NE Clam Chowder and MUCH More...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cash Bar – Non-Alcohol beverages Served ALL Day.</p>
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**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS COUPON**

**RSVP by Aug 1st**

Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter# - Location: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Guests: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Names: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed coupon and check payable to **"CSEA Council 400"**  
C/O **Tina Franco, 45 Peach Orchard rd, Prospect, CT 06712-1052**

**CUT OFF & SUBMIT THIS REGISTRATION FORM TO ATTEND**

# New Member Spotlight: Emma Coffey

## Chapter 24, DEEP Project Coordinator

Emma Coffey is a Project Coordinator for the Long Island Sound Study for DEEP, but in addition to her professional role, she volunteers on the DEEP Green Team.

This group of workers is trying to practice what they preach by making DEEP

workplaces more environmentally friendly.

Here, Emma poses next to a poster she made along with two other co-workers to celebrate World Water Day and educate DEEP workers on the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling our water source.

Before joining the watershed team as a full time employee back in July of 2022, Emma was a seasonal employee for the parks and water monitoring unit.

State workers like Emma are the future of Connecticut - the future looks bright!



ABOVE: Emma Coffey, DEEP Project Coordinator, stands with a bulletin board her and her colleagues created for Water Day.

### Chapter 24 New Member Meet & Greet



ABOVE: On May 24th, Chapter 24 welcomed new DEEP members to CSEA with a celebration at the main building including donuts, apple cider, coffee and a special raffle for four tickets to the P4 picnic. Since 2019 there are about 150 new workers that have joined DEEP and our union. It was great to see so many of those new faces in May.

### Cutline on PBS

#### Min Huang, Chapter 24 Member, on CT's Coastlines

Were you watching *Cutline* earlier in May? You might have seen a familiar face! Min Huang, a DEEP worker and Chapter 24 member, was interviewed about his knowledge on Connecticut's coastlines. Connecticut's coastline along Long Island Sound will be the frontline to some of the state's most severe impacts

of climate change. Knowledgeable workers like Min are critical resources in Connecticut's fight against climate change, that's why we must have strong recruitment and retention strategies to fill the vacancies that have left desks empty, programs closed, and critical ecosystems vulnerable.



ABOVE: Min Huang being interviewed for *Cutline's* episode on climate change and Connecticut's coast line.

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