

## CSEA Retirees in Florida

*Council 400 Kicks Off Annual Trip Across Florida with Representatives from Aetna and Cigna*

By Kevin Sullivan, Retiree Organizer

This February, I had the opportunity to travel across Florida and South Carolina to meet with retired State of Connecticut employees and share the important work CSEA is doing to protect their pensions and healthcare. Over the course of nearly three weeks, I connected with members from coast to coast, answering questions, signing up new members, and strengthening our collective voice.

I landed in Tampa on February 3rd and began the first of several meetings the following day in Clearwater. From there, I drove south to Sarasota and Ft. Myers before making my way across Alligator Alley to Boca Raton, then up the coast to Vero Beach. I continued north to Daytona for another gathering with retirees before wrapping up my Florida meetings in Ocala. Finally, on February 19th, I flew

*continue onto page 4*



Retiree Organizer, Kevin Sullivan, kicked off two weeks of meetings in Florida with Chapter 425 in Clearwater.



Retiree Chapter 421 in Daytona Florida packed the room to gather for their annual meeting.

## Paraeducators Prepare for Another Fight in the 2025 Legislative Session

Paraeducators across the state are once again standing together, demanding fair wages, improved benefits, and better working conditions. Their fight is not just for themselves—it's about strengthening schools and ensuring the best experience for students. Recent legislative victories have made real progress, but

much more remains to be done. In past legislative sessions, union advocacy secured critical improvements in health care and professional development opportunities.

In 2023, more than 4,100 paraeducators enrolled in high-

*continue onto page 6*



(From left to right) TJ Clark, AFSCME Council 4 Chief of staff, Shellye Davis, AFL-CIO Vice President and Cynthia Ross-Zweig, CSEA Para President, met with Legislative leaders at the Capitol as the session kicked off to highlight critical para needs.

## GOP Announces Latest Attempt to Freeze State Wages

*Tax Cut Proposal Seeks to Divide Workers*

Connecticut Republicans are at it again—pushing a so-called tax cut plan that does little to help working families while protecting a tax system that benefits only the wealthiest individuals and corporations. Their latest proposal hinges on a wage freeze for state employees, a familiar political maneuver designed to pit working people against each other rather than address the real issues in our tax system.

It's a playbook we've seen

before—sowing division among working people while delivering massive tax breaks to corporations and the ultra-wealthy. The Connecticut GOP is offering a vague promise of tax relief while targeting public workers and the essential services they provide. Their goal is clear: weaken public programs, erode solidarity among working people, and maintain a tax structure that shields the rich.

*continue onto page 4*

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### Also in this Edition:

**Page 2:**  
March Meetings

**Page 4:**  
SEIU & AFL-CIO Join Forces

**Page 5:**  
House Bill to Reform Fiscal Roadblocks

**Page 5:**  
CSEA In the Press

**Page 5:**  
CSEA Stands Against Attacks on Federal Workers

**Page 7:**  
Public Hearing Update

**Page 7:**  
Child Care Council Meeting

**Page 8:**  
Workers and Unions are Under Attack





## Meetings And News

### MEETING DATES

The March Delegates Meeting will be held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday March 20th at 10am at the CSEA Union Hall and via Zoom

Chapter 401 (Hartford area)  
Thursday, April 3rd - 1pm  
CSEA Union Hall & Zoom  
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford  
Zoom Mtg ID: 83617277918  
Patrice Peterson: 860 416-0306

Chapter 402 (Danbury area)  
Wed., March 12th - 10am  
Speaker: Aetna Representative  
United Methodist Church  
5 Clapboard Ridge Road  
Danbury, CT  
Linda Albanese: 860 354-6965

Chapter 403 (Norwich area)  
Tues., March 11th - 1:30pm  
Speaker: Cigna Dental  
Rose City Senior Center  
8 Mahan Drive, Norwich  
Carol Burgess: 860 303-7267

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area)  
Tues. March 11th - 10am  
Speaker: Probate Judge,  
Matthew Vaccarelli  
Trinity Orthodox Church  
937 Chase Pkwy, Waterbury  
Tina Franco: (203) 721-4382

Chapter 405 (New Haven)  
Thurs. March 13th - 10:30am  
Speaker from 2-1-1, the  
Health & Human Services  
Hamden Government  
Center Building, 3rd Floor  
2750 Dixwell Ave., Hamden  
Sue Pierson (203) 376-7207

Chapter 406 (Middletown)  
Tues. March 11th - 12:30pm  
Guest Speaker from the  
Alzheimer's Association  
American Legion Post 75  
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr.  
Middletown, CT

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area)  
Wed., March 19th 1pm  
St. Josephs of Stratford  
National Catholic Church  
1300 Stratford Rd., Stratford  
Zoom ID: 872 4952 3823  
Passcode: 000891  
Liz Anderson (203) 676-0659

Chapter 408 (Willimantic)  
Wed., March 12th, 12:30pm  
Speaker: Kevin Sullivan  
CSEA Retiree Organizer  
Mansfield Senior Center  
303 Maple Rd., Storrs  
Doug Racicot (860) 234-2537

Chapter 409 (Retired  
State University Professors)  
Speaker: Cigna Dental  
Friday, March 21st - 10am  
CSEA Union Hall & Zoom  
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford  
Zoom ID: 868 8922 7158  
Dave Walsh (860) 684-4773

Chapter 410 (Windsor area)  
\*NEW MEETING SPACE\*  
Monday, March 10th - 1pm  
Kent Memorial Library  
50 N Main St, Suffield  
Amelia Smith 860 687-1848

Chapter 411 (Rocky Hill area)  
Thursday, March 20 1pm  
Guest Speakers: Aetna Rep &  
Cigna Dental Representative  
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., March 18th - 1:30pm  
Speaker: Cigna Dental  
New Putnam Town Hall  
200 School Street, Putnam  
Don Gladding (860) 933-9998

Chapter 414 (Torrington area)  
Monday, March 17 at 10am  
Speaker: Aetna Representative  
Five Point Extension Bldg  
852 University Dr., Torrington  
Kathryn Doan 860 324-8300

Chapter 415 (Manchester)  
Mon., March 24th - 1pm  
Speaker: Kevin Sullivan  
CSEA Retiree Organizer  
Elks Lodge in Manchester  
30 Bissell Street  
Stu Clark: (860) 205-0657

Chapter 416 (New London)  
Tues. March 11th at 12pm  
Speaker: Aetna Representative  
Waterford Public Library  
49 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford  
John Knaff: 860-857-4244

Chapter 417 (Plainville area)  
Wed., March 12th - 1pm  
Plainville Public Library  
56 East Main St., Plainville  
Mark Kirschner  
(860) 882-2717

Chapter 418  
(Community College Retirees)  
Tues., March 18th - 10am  
4C's Union Hall in Hartford  
907 Wethersfield Ave  
Colleen Richard  
(860) 202-4128

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

## Important numbers to have on hand:

Retirement Division Payroll: 860-702-3528

Aetna Customer Service: 1-855-648-0391

Retirement Division Life Insurance: 860-702-3537

Caremark: 1-800-318-2572

Retirement Division Health Insurance: 860-702-3533

Cigna: 1-800-244-6224

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

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

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



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**Dividend Rates - Fourth Quarter 2024**

	Dividend Rate	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.

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<b>MIDDLETOWN</b> 15 Ward Street 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

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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.

- Baisden, Mary, Healthcare
- Beach, Ann, Ct Housing And Finance Auth
- Bernasconi, Judith, Administrative Clerical
- Bost, Dorothy, Administrative Clerical
- Brault, Russell, Comm College Faculty
- Burgarella, Richard, State Police
- Casanelli, Angelo, Engineer, Scien, Tech
- Celotto, Ruth, Health Professional
- Crowder, Dorothea, Judicial
- Dagle, Donna, Administrative Clerical
- Dawson, David, State University Faculty
- Durfee, David, Uconn Health
- Erickson, Clare, Administrative Clerical
- Fiore, Philip, Service/Maintenance
- Foster, Elizabeth, Confidential
- Geer, Bernice, Judicial
- Ginocchio, James, Judicial
- Golembiewski, Carol, Administrative Clerical
- Gormley, Joseph, No Designated Unit
- Gormley, Joseph, No Designated Unit
- Greene, Leonard, Service/Maintenance
- Griffin, James, Judicial
- Gruendel, F. Herbert, No Designated Unit
- Hewitt, Carey, Social And Human Services
- Hurley, Richard, State Police
- Jamialkowski, Ceil, Administrative Clerical
- Klancko, Raymond, Judicial
- Laquer, Maribel, Healthcare
- Lawler, Thomas, Social And Human Services
- Lewis, Diane, Healthcare
- Liscio, Peter, Admin And Residua
- Morton, Barbara, Healthcare
- Narducci, Raymond, Service/Maintenance
- O'keefe, Maryanne, Judicial; Education
- Ortiz, Teresa, Health Professional
- Parkinson, David, Engineer, Scien, Tech
- Pinchuk, Paul, Protective Services
- Plante, Barbara, Uconn
- Popko, Elizabeth, Education A
- Rapkin, Anne, Judicial
- Ridolfo, Joseph, Service/Maintenance
- Robitaille, Elinor, Protective Services
- Russell, Lucy, Service/Maintenance
- Serra, Joseph, Legislative Management
- Shea, Paul, No Designated Unit
- Spence, Beverly, Higher Education
- Tollin, Judith, Administrative Clerical
- Uschmann, Frederick, Judicial
- Violin, Henry, St Vocation Federation Teacher
- Whitlatch, Robert, Uconn
- Wilkos, Mary, Administrative Clerical
- Williams, James, State University
- Wilson, Edward, No Designated Unit

**CSEA NEWS**

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Public Service Employees & Retirees*

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# CSEA Retirees in Florida

## Council 400 Kicks Off Annual Trip Across Florida with Representatives from Aetna and Cigna

continued from page 1  
to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, for one last meeting with retirees there before returning home to Connecticut on February 20th.

The primary focus of these meetings was to ensure retirees understand the ongoing efforts of CSEA to safeguard their hard-earned benefits. We discussed legislative advocacy, the importance of maintaining

retiree healthcare protections, and the challenges we're tackling to secure a better future for all members. I'm proud to say that many retirees showed their support by joining CSEA or contributing to our Political Action Committee, helping us build the strength needed to fight for their interests.

Overall, the trip was a great success, but I'm glad to be back in Connecticut, continuing the

work of protecting and expanding the rights of our members. To all the retirees who took the time to meet with me—thank you for your dedication and commitment to CSEA. Our collective power is what keeps us strong.

If you have any questions about CSEA's efforts or want to get more involved, don't hesitate to reach out!




CSEA Retirees in Chapter 424 in Sarasota Florida listen to their Chapter President, Robert Mackiewicz, give his annual report.




One of the last meetings of the two-week series, retirees in Vero Beach join the annual Chapter 427 meeting.



Retiree members in Ocala, Florida enjoyed hearing from Aetna and Cigna representatives at their annual meeting.



**The labor movement just got stronger! SEIU has officially rejoined the AFL-CIO, uniting 2 million SEIU members with 12.5 million AFL-CIO workers to build more power for all. Here in Connecticut, CSEA SEIU Local 2001 is now a proud member of the CT AFL-CIO, strengthening our fight for workers' rights, fair wages, and a better future. When we stand together, we win!**



# GOP's Tax Proposal: The Same Old Divide-and-Conquer Playbook

continued from page 1

Connecticut's tax system is already one of the most regressive in the country. The wealthiest residents pay far less of their income in state and local taxes than working- and middle-class families. Instead of addressing this imbalance, Republicans continue to push tax policies that further tilt the scales in favor of those at the top.

By freezing wages for state employees—the very workers who provide critical services like healthcare, education, public safety, and infrastructure maintenance—the GOP is attempting to balance the budget on the backs of working people. This is not about fiscal responsibility; it's about dismantling public programs and shifting blame

away from the real issue: Connecticut's upside-down tax code.

Rather than slashing public services and targeting state workers, Connecticut should be looking toward progressive revenue solutions that ensure the ultra-wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share. We need policies that provide meaningful tax relief for working families without gutting essential services.

CSEA SEIU Local 2001 stands united against these divide-and-conquer tactics. We refuse to be pitted against each other while billionaires and corporate interests continue to dodge their fair share. We will fight for a Connecticut that works for all of us—not just the wealthiest few.



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## CSEA Condemns Federal Attacks on Workers & Public Services

Billionaires and their anti-union extremist friends have amassed more power and influence than ever, and they are wielding that power in Washington to directly attack workers, their unions, and the critical public services they provide. These actions – which are straight from the Project 2025 playbook – also threaten devastating impact to public and private sector working families in Connecticut. CSEA joins our union brothers and sisters in federal employee unions and throughout the labor movement to condemn these actions.

### Attacks on Federal Workers:

First, was a directive to fire federal workers who work to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the federal workplace. Thousands of federal workers were also threatened with “adverse consequences” if they fail to report their colleagues whose work promotes diversity, equity or inclusion. This was further

followed by an email to all federal workers announcing plans of downsizing the workforce and urging them to resign to avoid the risk of layoff. Most recently, hundreds of federal employees at USAID were placed on administrative leave, hundreds of contract employees were abruptly laid off, and vital health care services to hundreds of thousands around the world were abruptly ended as USAID worker living overseas were recalled to the United States, many without homes here due to their overseas posting. These actions threaten core workplace rights as well as the critical public services upon which we all rely. SEBAC stands in solidarity with our union siblings in the federal sector, and opposes efforts to erode the federal workforce, or make it less inclusive to all workers.

### Attacks on Private Sector Workers:

The White House has fired a pro-worker member of the National Labor Relations Board (“NLRB”), leaving the Board without a quorum to function and workers without the protection of the federal agency charged with protecting their right to unionize. This is the first time in the 90-year history of the NLRB that a president has fired a member of the Board. This also sets up a legal challenge to invalidate the National Labor Relations Act, which would

remove all federal legal protections for private sector employees to form a union and collectively bargain.

### Cuts to State and Local Funding:

After a federal judge blocked an Executive Order that would have frozen all federal funding, federal agencies began issuing memos outlining more targeted efforts to withhold federal funds from states. For example, a memo from the U.S. Department of Transportation ties federal transportation funds to unrelated policies such as immigration and birth and marriage rates. These appear to be efforts to direct funding to states based upon which way a majority voted in the national elections. Many positions at CT DOT are federally funded. In total, about 18% to 30% of state and local government funding in Connecticut comes from the federal government. Cuts to such funds puts workers’ livelihoods and essential services at risk.

CSEA will continue to, as it always has, oppose efforts that hurt workers and unions in Connecticut, regardless of the party or person leading such efforts and efforts that hurt the people those workers care for. And CSEA stands in solidarity with our union siblings in the private, municipal, and federal sectors against federal attacks directed at them.

## CSEA In the Press!

CSEA members are no strangers to advocating for the issues that matter most to working families across Connecticut. Our union is proud to be at the forefront of public conversations on key policy decisions, ensuring that the voices of workers are heard loud and clear.

On February 4, CT Public covered the urgent need for increased childcare funding ahead of Governor Lamont’s budget address. CSEA SEIU Local 2001 President Travis Woodward spoke to the necessity of bold reforms to Connecticut’s restrictive fiscal roadblocks. As Woodward explained:

*“Without affordable, accessible, and high-quality care, families are shut out of the workforce, and children are deprived of crucial early education and development. At the same time, providers – who are essential to the system – remain severely undervalued.”*

The next day, on February 5, CT Public again covered the childcare funding debate, this time reporting on Governor Lamont’s proposal for the next two-year state budget. While the plan included investments in universal pre-K, Adrean Rodriguez, Director of Child Care & Organizing, pushed back on the idea that simply funding pre-K without addressing industry-wide underpayment would solve the crisis. Rodriguez stated: *“Putting money towards the concept and the idea of universal pre-k does not ad-*

*dress the root issue that the industry is severely underpaid. We need to address that first if we want to see success in our childcare industry in Connecticut.”*

Rodriguez also highlighted a priority bill in the House that seeks long-term funding solutions for the child care sector, ensuring that providers receive the wages and support they deserve.

These instances of media coverage underscore the importance of CSEA’s presence in the press. By speaking out on critical issues like child care funding and fiscal policy, we hold lawmakers accountable and push for policies that truly benefit working families. Our ability to comment on these stories not only amplifies our advocacy efforts but also solidifies our union as a key voice in policy discussions that impact thousands across the state.

As we continue to fight for fair wages, quality services, and economic justice, it’s essential that we maintain our visibility in the media. Several members across our union are actively working on opinion pieces that they plan to submit to their local and statewide papers. If you are interested, please reach out to our Communications Director, Drew Stoner at [DStoner@csea760.com](mailto:DStoner@csea760.com). Every interview, opinion piece, and statement ensures that our message is heard—because when workers speak, change happens.



## PAVING THE WAY FOR A BETTER CONNECTICUT: LEGISLATION FOR FISCAL ROADBLOCK REFORM

**Over the past 7 years, our overly restrictive fiscal policies have siphoned off more than \$12B from critical investments in a misguided effort to pay down debt at an irresponsible rate - stagnating economic growth and burdening the wallets of working families.**

### SMARTER BUDGET PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Instead of an arbitrary and short-term snapshot, this bill changes how we calculate how much money can be transferred to savings by averaging revenue over a 10-year period to smooth out highs and lows, helping the state plan ahead and avoid unnecessary budget cuts.

### FIXING THE SPENDING CAP TO KEEP UP WITH COSTS

The spending cap doesn’t accurately reflect the true rise in costs so our budget doesn’t keep up with economic changes. This bill updates how inflation is calculated so that it matches real-world price increases.

### BETTER USE OF THE RAINY DAY FUNDS

Right now, state budget limits are strict, even when we have extra money in our reserves. This bill adjusts the rules so that when Connecticut has strong savings, we can reinvest in our communities instead of letting funds sit unused.

### A MORE TRANSPARENT BONDING PROCESS

Every time the state borrows money for projects, it impacts our economy and taxpayers. This bill requires the Treasurer to analyze and report on the economic effects of borrowing, making sure taxpayer dollars are used wisely and investments benefit Connecticut’s future.

## COMMON SENSE BUDGET PRACTICES

If your house had a hole in the roof, would you continue to make extra mortgage payments or use the money to fix the hole? Connecticut’s fiscal house is leaking, it’s time to fix the damage.



## Paraeducators Celebrate Gains in Past Years, but Look Forward to Making Gains in the 2025 Legislative Session

*continued from page 1*

deductible health plans with Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) received an average of \$1,185 in healthcare assistance.

In 2024, union members successfully expanded this program to cover an additional 3,000 paraeducators with traditional health plans. These members now receive over 7% of their premium costs covered by the state.

Professional development opportunities have also been expanded, with districts like New Fairfield offering training sessions tailored to paraeducators' needs.

While these gains are impor-

tant, challenges remain. The healthcare stipend is not guaranteed beyond this year, and even with the recent improvements, many paraeducators still struggle to afford quality health insurance. Additionally, wages and working conditions continue to be a major focus for the union as many paras remain underpaid despite their essential role in schools.

Union leaders have already begun discussions with state legislative leadership to push for further progress in 2025. Advocacy efforts will ramp up throughout the session, and paraeducators will be called upon to take action, including:

- Participating in forums and public hearings and submitting testimony

- Participating in press conferences and rallies

- Submitting opinion pieces to local newspapers

By standing together, they have won meaningful improvements in the past, and with con-

tinued advocacy and collective action, they will secure even more in the future. The fight for fair pay, better benefits, and improved working conditions is far from over—but with unwavering solidarity, paraeducators will continue to make their voices heard and achieve the respect they deserve.



Paraeducators in Tolland attend professional development training virtually.

## Line of Duty Death Benefits & a Fairer Process for Permanently Disabled Correction Officer

In a significant victory for state employees and their families, CSEA, through SEBAC, and the State of Connecticut have reached agreements that provide stronger protections for workers who face the most extreme circumstances in service to the public. Two new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) address critical gaps in benefits—one ensuring fair compensation for families of employees who lose their lives in the line of duty, and the other improving the disability retirement process for correctional officers permanently injured due to job-related hazards.

### Line-of-Duty Death Benefits: Honoring the Ultimate Sacrifice

State workers' pre-retirement death benefits were previously minimal, offering only a return of the employee's pension contributions. Additionally, the lump-sum cash payment under Connecticut General

Statute §5-144 had not increased since 1998. The tragic deaths of a state trooper and a DOT construction worker in 2024 highlighted the urgent need for change. Effective January 1, 2024, the new agreement:

- Provides periodic retirement payments to surviving spouses.
- Supports minor dependents until age 21.
- Adjusts the lump-sum cash benefit for inflation.

This agreement ensures that families of fallen workers receive fair compensation and reflects the commitment of unions to protect those who serve Connecticut.

### Extraordinary Circumstances Agreement: A Fairer Process for Permanently Disabled Correction Officers

Correction officers face unique job hazards. Since 2005, state law (PA 05-284)

has ensured those permanently disabled from job-related risks receive retirement benefits at the top salary step. However, the process for determining eligibility was cumbersome, requiring applications through the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) with disputes settled by arbitration.

Under the new agreement:

- Applications will be processed through the Retirement Division of the Comptroller's Office.
- Disputes will be handled by the Retirement Commission, which has expertise in retirement issues.
- The commission, composed of equal union and management trustees, will ensure fair determinations, with a neutral arbitrator resolving disputes.

This change streamlines the process, ensuring timely and just decisions for correction officers facing life-altering injuries.

## Good Works Committee Announces Habitat For Humanity Opportunity

The Good Works Committee is proud to announce an upcoming volunteer event that will make a meaningful impact in the community.

### Habitat for Humanity Build Event – Volunteer and Sponsorship Opportunities

**Saturday, May 17th**

**Location: East Hartford, CT**

**Time: 8:00 AM – Full day (lunch provided)**

The Good Works Committee is seeking volunteers and sponsors for the Habitat for Humanity Build Event. This is the second year the committee has partnered with Habitat for Humanity to raise the profile of CSEA's membership through hands-on community service. Volunteers will assist in

building homes for families in need and help make a significant difference in the community.

**Volunteer Teams:** Two teams of 10 volunteers will be needed for the event.

**Sponsorship:** Sponsorship is available at \$250 per person to support the event and the work of Habitat for Humanity.

For those unable to volunteer, financial contributions are also welcome. Donations can be sent to CSEA Good Works Committee, 760 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106, with checks made out to the Good Works Committee.

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about this event, please reach out to Bernadette Conway at [bconway@csea760.com](mailto:bconway@csea760.com). Your participation

and support for this important event will help make a lasting impact in our communities. We look forward to seeing you there!



# Family Child Care Provider News

## Noticias para Proveedores de Cuidado Infantil

### Make Your Voice Heard! Join Us at the Union Hall on March 8th

Your voice matters in shaping the future of child care in Connecticut! Join us on Saturday, March 8th, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the Union Hall for an important discussion on legislative policies impacting child care providers like you.

This is your opportunity to:

- Review proposed policies affecting child care services
- Identify key issues that matter most to you and your work
- Craft and prepare your testimony to submit to legislators

Lawmakers will be making critical decisions that shape the future of child care education. Let's ensure that child care providers have a strong voice in the process. Your input is essential in advocating for the changes and support you need!

**Where: CSEA Union Hall, 760 Capital Ave, Hartford, CT**

**When: Saturday, March 8th, 2025**

**Time: 10:00 AM**

Let us know if you'll be attending by RSVPing at [seiu2001.cc/takeaction2025](http://seiu2001.cc/takeaction2025)

### ¡Haz que tu voz sea escuchada! Únase a nosotros en el Union Hall el 8 de marzo

¡Tu voz importa para dar forma al futuro del cuidado infantil en Connecticut! Únase a nosotros el sábado 8 de marzo de 2025 a las 10:00 a. m. en la sala del sindicato para una importante discusión sobre las políticas legislativas que afectan a los proveedores de cuidado infantil como usted.

Esta es tu oportunidad de:

- Revisar las políticas propuestas que afectan a los servicios de cuidado infantil
- Identifica los problemas clave que más te importan a ti y a tu trabajo
- Elabora y prepara tu testimonio para presentarlo a los legisladores

Los legisladores tomarán decisiones críticas que darán forma al futuro de la educación en el cuidado infantil. Asegurémonos de que los proveedores de cuidado infantil tengan una voz fuerte en el proceso. ¡Tu aportación es esencial para abogar por los cambios y el apoyo que necesitan!

**Dónde: CSEA Union Hall, 760 Capital Ave, Hartford, CT**

**Cuándo: Sábado, 8 de marzo de 2025**

**Hora: 10:00 AM**

Háganos saber si asistirá confirmando su asistencia en [seiu2001.cc/takeaction2025](http://seiu2001.cc/takeaction2025)

## Public Hearings Kick-Off!

### CSEA Members Testify on a Multitude of Bills

As the 2025 legislative session unfolds, our union members are stepping up to advocate for critical issues impacting their workplaces, families, and communities. From childcare and education to public safety and labor rights, our members have submitted powerful testimony—both in writing and in person—before key legislative committees. Their voices are helping shape policies that will affect countless working families across the state.

Childcare workers from our union have provided testimony before the Children's Committee in support of House Bill 6180, which addresses gun safety and its impact on children. These members submitted written testimony emphasizing the importance of protecting children from gun violence, an issue that directly affects both their workplaces and the families they serve.

Additionally, childcare providers are advocating for increased state support for early childhood education through House Bills 6839 and 6840. Their testimonies highlight the need for better funding and resources to ensure that every child receives a strong start in life.

Several members testified on issues related to transparency and labor rights. Members spoke before the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee regarding House Bill 6850, which focuses on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) protections. In that same hearing, CSEA President Travis Woodward also spoke on behalf of our union to address concerns over child labor laws and the need for strong regulations to protect young workers. In budget hearings, members provided testimony on agency funding under House Bill 6864. Their advocacy ensures that state employees have the resources necessary to serve the public effectively.

Travis Woodward also testified before the Labor Committee in favor of House Bill 6904, which seeks to extend unemployment insurance to striking workers. Additionally, he joined housing advocates in supporting

House Bill 6889, aimed at strengthening just cause eviction protections for renters.

Meanwhile, paraeducators have testified before the Education Committee in support of Senate Bill 1244, which seeks to improve special education funding and support services for students with disabilities.

The dedication of our members in submitting testimony—whether in writing, via Zoom, or in person—is a testament to the power of collective advocacy. By standing up and speaking out on these critical issues, we are making sure that our lawmakers hear directly from those most affected by their decisions. As the session continues, we encourage all members to stay engaged and support their fellow union workers in fighting for fair policies that protect working families.



### WHO ARE THE "FREEDOM FOUNDATION"?

- ✗ It's an out-of-state, corporate-sponsored organization that is contacting members with fake checks and trying to trick them into leaving our union.
- ✗ They won't disclose its donors, but the Freedom Foundation is funded by billionaires who don't support unions or workers rights.
- ✗ The Freedom Foundation opposes wage increases, paid sick leave and other benefits for workers.
- ✗ Unlike our union, the Freedom Foundation does NOT protect the rights and benefits of members.



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## Attacks on Workers Heat Up in the Legislative Session

Unions exist to protect the rights, wages, and benefits of the hardworking men and women who keep our state and communities running. Every legislative session, we see bills introduced that aim to weaken our ability to collectively bargain, reduce our wages and benefits, and undermine the dignity of public service. This year is no different. A slate of proposed bills seeks to erode the rights of union members and public employees across Connecticut, including state workers, paraeducators, childcare workers, and other essential personnel. Here are some of the most egregious attacks our members must be aware of:

### An Assault on Collective Bargaining

HB-5185 pretends to support workers' rights by affirming their ability to join a union, but this bill exists alongside HB-5606 and SB-221, which emphasize a public employee's

right not to be a union member. These bills are designed to sow division and weaken union solidarity, impacting state employees, paraeducators, and childcare workers alike.

SB-624 would prohibit collective bargaining agreements and binding arbitration awards from exceeding the "available funds" in a government's budget. This would give politicians a blank check to claim they "can't afford" fair wages or benefits, even when funding exists.

SB-26 takes it a step further by prohibiting collective bargaining agreements and arbitration rulings from overriding state law, potentially nullifying decades of negotiated protections for workers.

### Attacks on Retirement and Benefits

HB-5492, HB-5701, HB-5830, and SB-27 all attempt to limit or reduce state employee pensions, disregarding the fact that pensions are earned com-

pensation, not giveaways.

HB-5493, SB-24, and SB-25 aim to exclude overtime pay from pension calculations, cutting deeply into the retirement security of workers, especially those in our public safety councils.

SB-380 proposes a "study" of pension buyouts, a dangerous first step toward weakening the retirement system we've fought to maintain. Restricting Workplace Protections and Fair Wages

HB-5776 threatens state employee wages, freezing wages for at least two years.

HB-5705 seeks to limit remote work for state employees, disregarding its proven effectiveness in improving work-life balance and reducing costs for the state and workers in roles that allow it.

HB-5846 would cap state employee salaries, ensuring that no worker earns more than the governor—an arbitrary and unfair limit that ignores the com-

plexity and responsibility of many public sector jobs.

### Attacks on Public Education

HB-6402 and HB-6411 aim to exempt classroom employees from paid sick leave protections, essentially punishing paraeducators for getting sick or caring for a loved one.

These bills are part of a coordinated effort to weaken unions, drive down wages, and strip workers of hard-earned benefits. We must remain vigilant and mobilize against these attacks. Our strength is in our unity, and our ability to push back against these harmful policies depends on our collective action.

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