

Scholarship Alert

McCusker Applications Now Available

Throughout the 50+ year history of the Bernard McCusker Memorial Scholarship, CSEA has awarded approximately 1,000 scholarships totaling over \$1,000,000.00! We give great thanks to all the CSEA councils, chapters and individuals that have contributed over the years.

The 2026 Bernard McCusker Memorial Scholarship application window is open until 4:30PM on April 30th.

State Units Push Forward on Contract Negotiations

Since last reporting in the CSEA News, there has been significant progress made in some of CSEA's seven state units, as well as several sister locals in SEBAC (State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition). We are optimistic that this progress will create momentum for additional settlements across the Coalition.

P-3A and P-3B have reached informal tentative

agreements that the Negotiation Teams are in the process of finalizing - with a goal of bringing back the agreements to the membership soon and enthusiastically encouraging members to vote YES.TA and voting information will be sent to dues-paying members, in the meantime, please update your contact information now so you don't miss an email.

The P4 Council, Supervising Judicial Marshals Council, NP-9 Council and the Inspectors Council all remain at impasse, but continue to push for progress at each respective local table. And in the meantime, the Corrections Supervisors Council (NP8) Negotiations Team commenced arbitration proceedings, which included the State's weak ability-to-pay presentation. We continue our fight for an honorable contract at that table as well.

Outside of CSEA, we have also seen tentative agreements reached with NP-2 (CEUI), NP-3 (AFSCME Council 4), and NP-4 (AFSCME Council 4). This movement comes after over a year of stalemate between the Governor and all 35 state bargaining units with expired contracts. We are hopeful that this is a signal that further movement will happen over the coming weeks, resulting in fair and honorable contracts for all of our state members.

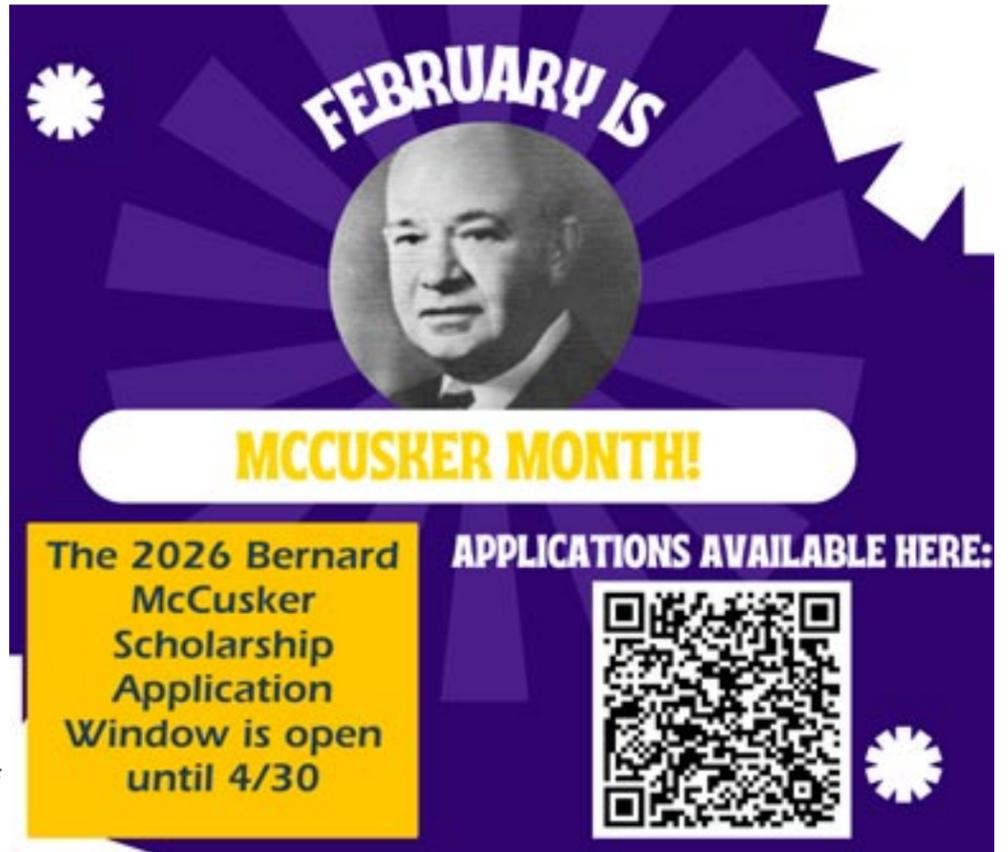
As more information becomes available, your Negotiation Teams will be in touch. Don't forget to update your contact information so that you don't miss any emails about negotiations, ratification, or legislative approval.

State Workers:
Don't miss contract news-
update your email address NOW.



TA & Arbitration Updates

Ratification & Q&A Forms



FEBRUARY IS MCCUSKER MONTH!

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE HERE:

The 2026 Bernard McCusker Scholarship Application Window is open until 4/30

Child Care Contract Fight Heats Up

Don't Miss the First Statewide Meeting of 2026

Se intensifica la disputa por el contrato de servicios de cuidado infantil

No se pierda la primera reunión estatal de 2026

Join us on Saturday, Feb 21st, at 10AM for our Child Care Contract Update Meeting.

We'll be discussing bargaining goals, the Gov.'s Budget Proposal, this year's elections, upcoming regional meetings and more!

Register for the FCC Statewide union meeting: seiu2001.cc/FCC-meeting

Save the Date for CT Regional FCC Meetings:

Eastern - Friday, March 6th (Time TBD)

North Central - Friday, March 13th (Time TBD)

Waterbury - Saturday, March 28th 10am
More dates to come!

Únase a nosotros el sábado 21 de febrero a las 10 a. m. para nuestra reunión de actualización del contrato de cuidado infantil.

¡Discutiremos los objetivos de negociación, la propuesta presupuestaria del gobierno, las elecciones de este año y las próximas reuniones regionales y más!

Regístrese para la reunión sindical estatal de la FCC: seiu2001.cc/FCC-meeting

Reserve la fecha para las reuniones regionales de la FCC de CT:

Este - Viernes, 6 de marzo

Centro Norte - Viernes, 13 de marzo

Waterbury - Sábado, 28 de marzo 10 am

¡Más fechas por venir!

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

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

Also in this Edition:

Page 2:

Council 400 Meetings

Page 3:

Gone Too Soon

Page 4:

W-2s & Billionaires

Page 4:

Good Works

Committee Update

Page 5:

Sarah L. Jones & 6

Terms in Manchester

Page 5:

SEIU Lawsuit on Child Care Funding

Page 7:

Retiree Phone Scam

Page 8:

Billionaire Ring Alarm Over Capitalism



Meetings And News

The February Delegates Meeting will be held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday February 19th at 10am at the CSEA Union Hall and via Zoom

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

Chapter 402 (Danbury area)
Wed., February 11th - 10am
United Methodist Church
5 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT
Linda Albanese:860 354-6965

Chapter 403 (Norwich area)
Tues., February 10th - 1:30pm
Rose City Senior Center
8 Mahan Drive, Norwich
Carol Burgess:860 303-7267

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area)
Tues. February 10th - 10am
CT House Representative,
Jane Garibay
CSEA Political Director
Trinity Orthodox Church
937 Chase Pkwy, Waterbury

Chapter 405 (New Haven)
Thurs. February 12th 10:30am
Speaker: Natalie A. Webb,
MS, RDN, LDN, FAND
Big Y Nutritionist
Hamden Government
Center Building, 3rd Floor
2750 Dixwell Ave., Hamden
Sue Pierson (203) 376-7207

Chapter 406 (Middletown)
Tues. February 10th 12:30pm
American Legion Post 75
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr.
Middletown, CT
Speaker:Aetna Representative
Questions: Bob Westendorff
(860) 343-0683

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area)
Wed., February 18th - 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, Feb. 11th, 1pm
Guest Speaker: Elder Law
Attorney, Dan Tully
Mansfield Senior Center
303 Maple Rd., Storrs
Doug Racicot (860) 234-2537

Chapter 409 (Retired
State University Professors)
Friday, February 20th - 10am
CSEA Union Hall & Zoom
760 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Zoom ID: 868 8922 7158
Dave Walsh (860) 684-4773

Chapter 410 (Windsor area)
Monday, February 9th - 1pm
Speaker:Aetna Representative
Kent Memorial Library
50 N Main St, Suffield
Amelia Smith 860 687-1848

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., February., 17th 1:30pm
Putnam Town Hall 1st Floor
200 School Street, Putnam
Guest Speaker: Luigi Santori
Northeast District Department
of Public Health
Don Gladding (860) 933-9998

Chapter 414 (Torrington area)
Mon., February 16th - 10am
Guest Speaker: Bernadette
Conway, CSEA Director
of Retiree Services
Five Point Extension Bldg
852 University Dr., Torrington
Kathryn Doan 860 324-8300

Chapter 415 (Manchester)
Mon. February 23rd - 1pm
Guest Speaker:Angie
Nelson from Cigna Dental
Elks Lodge in Manchester
30 Bissell Street
Stu Clark: (860) 205-0657

Chapter 416 (New London)
Tues. February 10th at 12pm
Speakers: Groton Police to
discuss elder fraud AND
Bernadette Conway, CSEA
Director of Retiree Services
Groton Public Library
52 Newtown Rd., Groton
John Knaff: 860-857-4244

Chapter 417 (Plainville area)
Wed., February 11th - 1pm
Speaker: from the Office
of the State Comptroller
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 South Carolina
meeting with Aetna, Cigna
and CSEA Council 400
Organizer: Kevin Sullivan**

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

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:

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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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 on Lincoln's Birthday Thurs. Feb 12
Closed on Washington's Birthday Mon. Feb 16**

Dividend Rates - Fourth Quarter 2025 Rates

	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.

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.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Balzer, David, Department Of Transportation | Mccooy, Dave, Department Of Transportation |
| Barber, Valerie, Healthcare | Mcsweeney, Vincent, Managerial |
| Battestelli, James, Judicial Marshal | Montesi, Constance, Admin And Residual |
| Bendezu, Luis, Admin And Residual | Mosca, Elizabeth, Confidential |
| Berube, Edgar, Corrections | Olesen, Anna Mae, Administrative Clerical |
| Bosse, Elaine, Administrative Clerical | Ouellette, Roland, Corrections |
| Briggs, William, Social And Human Services | Palmer, Michael, Social And Human Services(P-2) |
| Buccino, Lucy, Engineer, Scien, Tech | Panasci, Wendy, Healthcare |
| Burdsall, Cynthia, Administrative Clerical (Np-3) | Parrish, Lillian, Healthcare |
| Burroughs, Ronald, Healthcare | Phillips, Cathryn, Managerial |
| Caesar, Martha, Healthcare | Reese, Kathleen, Legislative Management |
| Cannon, William, State Police | Roy, Dolores, Judicial Marshal |
| Carangelo, Pasqual, St Vocation Federation Teacher | Santavenere, Gilbert, Managerial |
| Cartolano, Louis, Engineer, Scien, Tech | Santos, Antonio, Comm College Faculty |
| Caselli, Dawn, Healthcare | Schacht, Rebecca, Healthcare |
| Chartier, Gerard, State Police | Sienna, Dolores, Admin And Residual |
| Divita, James, Admin And Residual | Slesinski, Mary Ellen, Admin And Residual (P-5) |
| Donat, Nafi, Admin And Residual | Soboleski, Edward, Admin And Residual |
| Erickson, E Robert, Managerial | Stone, Basil, Uconn Health |
| Forrest, Frank, Admin And Residual | Sullivan, Henry, Service/Maintenance |
| Frysinger, Elma, Service/Maintenance | Thompson, Edward, Protective Services |
| Gauvin, Henry, Service/Maintenance | Wheeler, Daniel, Corrections |
| Grillo, Rosalie, Administrative Clerical | Wilcox, Leslie, Healthcare |
| Gross, David, Social And Human Services | Wood, Yvonne, Healthcare |
| Hicks, Daniel, Service/Maintenance | Wren, James, Service & Maintenance |
| Hyland, Harriet, Uconn Health | Zito, Paul, Managerial |
| Johnson, Laura, Corrections | |
| Keith, Joan, Healthcare | |
| Kinne, Robert, Service/Maintenance | |
| Kozik, Michael, Confidential | |
| Kvietkauskas, Gary, Corrections | |
| Malette, Charlene, Healthcare | |
| Malone, Ann, Admin And Residual | |
| Maloney, Brian, Law Clerk | |
| Mazzorana, Mirella, Healthcare | |

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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W-2's Arrive Leaving Working Families Disappointed (and Billionaires Richer)

As members begin receiving their W-2s and preparing to file taxes, many are noticing something troubling: refunds are smaller than expected, tax relief feels underwhelming, and the promises made to working families simply don't match reality.

When Congress passed the so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill," working people were told it would deliver huge refunds, lower taxes, and meaningful relief. Instead, families are discovering that the law delivered permanent gains for corporations and the ultra-wealthy—and temporary, limited, or disappearing benefits for everyone else.

The fine print mattered. And it was written to favor shareholders and executives, not public servants, care workers, or retirees.

What Actually Happened Under the Trump Tax Cuts:

- Corporate tax rates were slashed from 35% → 21%. Corporations saved billions. Workers saw little to none of that money in their paychecks.
- The wealthy received the vast majority of permanent tax cuts. Cuts for working families were temporary and are now expiring.
- New "No Tax on Overtime" and "No Tax on Tips" provisions are limiting and expire in 2028. These working people tax breaks are only for the next few years and come with a lot of fine print that cuts refunds and limits access.
- Childcare tax credits were not meaningfully expanded. This leaves working parents — especially child care educators and families who rely on them — struggling with rising costs.
- The federal government lost trillions in revenue. Which then served as the backdrop to devastating and unprecedented cuts to housing, SNAP, childcare, and public-sector jobs.

When the overtime deduction was debated, it was sold to working people as major tax relief. But when the details were finalized, it became clear that the policy was built with restrictions, exclusions, and caps that dramatically limit its impact, particularly for public-sector and lower-wage workers.

For workers who covered vacancies, worked extra shifts, or carried short-staffed agencies on their backs, this feels like the bait-and-switch it is. Below are a few important points about the tax code changes:

1. The Overtime Deduction Has a Hard Cap

— And It's Much Smaller Than People Realize
Under the federal policy passed in late 2025, single filers can deduct up to \$12,500 and joint filers can deduct up to \$25,000

But your W-2 will not show these caps. By IRS rule, your W-2 lists what could be deductible, even if your eligible amount is higher than the cap. You will only apply the cap when you file your federal tax return.

2. You Cannot Deduct Your Full Overtime Pay — Only a Small Portion of It
This is where many members will feel misled. The deduction only applies to the overtime premium, not the full overtime earnings. For many members, especially those who worked substantial overtime during staffing shortages, this distinction significantly reduces the real benefit.

The FLSA includes several adjustments that raise an employee's overtime rate beyond time-and-a-half (e.g., for shift differentials). None of these additional amounts are deductible. Only the portion above your standard hourly rate counts.

Example: If your base rate is \$40/hr, and you earn \$60/hr for overtime, the deductible amount is only the extra \$20, not the full \$60.

3. Only Certain Kinds of Overtime Count — And Many Public Employees Won't Qualify at All

The law only allows deductions for overtime mandated under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). That means if your contract provides overtime between 35 and 40 hours at time-and-a-half, none of that overtime is deductible. Many state and municipal employees fall into this category and will see no deduction, even if they worked large amounts of overtime.

The tax law didn't just reshape refunds—it blew a massive hole in federal revenue, losing trillions of dollars over the decade. That loss quickly became the justification for devastating cuts to programs working families rely on every day. Families are now facing:

- Cuts to Medicaid, increasing out-of-pocket health care costs and threatening coverage for children, seniors, and people with disabilities
- Weakened Affordable Care Act subsidies, raising premiums and deductibles for middle-class families
- Deep reductions to SNAP, making it harder for families to put food on the table during a time of record grocery prices

- Cuts to housing, childcare, and public-sector jobs, directly impacting community stability and service quality

In other words, families are paying twice: once through an unfair tax system, and again through higher costs and fewer services.

Connecticut did not enact new tax increases on working families in 2024–2025. That matters. But the state also failed to take meaningful action to fix a tax system that remains upside-down—one where working families pay a higher share of their income in taxes than the wealthiest residents.

Washington broke its promises. Connecticut missed an opportunity to do better. And working families are left holding the bill. A bill that truly put working families first would look very different. It would:

- Raise revenue from the ultra-wealthy and large corporations who benefited most from the last round of tax cuts
- Permanently expand child tax credits and childcare investments, lowering costs for families and strengthening the care workforce
- Protect and expand Medicaid, SNAP, and ACA subsidies, reducing health care and food costs—not increasing them
- Lift the SALT cap, ending double taxation on middle-class households
- Deeply invest in public services, from education and housing to healthcare and public safety
- Create stable, long-term tax relief for workers, not temporary provisions designed to expire

That would be a tax policy built around dignity, fairness, and shared prosperity—not trickle-down promises that never arrive.

We know many members feel overpromised and under delivered. At the state level, we are pushing for tax and budget policies that actually work for working families. Through our partnership with Connecticut For All, we are building a campaign to flip our upside-down tax structure—so working families can afford to live, raise kids, retire, and thrive in Connecticut.

Because a beautiful bill isn't one that pads corporate balance sheets. It's one that makes life more affordable for the people who keep our communities running.

Good Works Committee: New Opportunity!

The CT Winter Special Olympics date is set for Saturday, February 28th at the Bloomfield Eversource Campus, 1985 Blue Hills Ave. Ext., Windsor, CT beginning at 8am!

Cross Country skiing and snowshoeing events will need volunteers. If you would like to participate you can register at: <https://www.soct.org/get-involved/event-volunteer-opportunities>

Eversource Windsor – 1985 Blue Hills Ave Ext, Windsor
8:15am to 3:30pm
Look for the CSEA Tent!



Job Descriptions

Athlete Escort – Under the direction of a team's head Coach, volunteer will be assigned to an athlete/team for the day and escort them to staging areas, competition venues, lunch and Olympic town.

Cross Country Straight – Staging, timing, monitoring, or scorekeeping the 100/50/25M Courses

Cross Country Loop – Staging, timing, monitoring, or scorekeeping the 250M Course

Snowshoe Loop – Staging, timing, monitoring, or scorekeeping the snowshoe races & assisting the athlete with getting their snowshoes on and off.

FEBRERO ES

¡IMES MCCUSKER!

La ventana de solicitud de becas Bernard McCusker 2026 está abierta hasta el 30/4

APLICACIONES DISPONIBLES AQUÍ:

Unions & Small Businesses Unite to Fight Federal Child Care Funding Freeze

SEIU, AFSCME and a small business advocacy group have united to challenge more than \$10 billion in transparently partisan political cuts to programs that help provide child care and family assistance in California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and New York.

While Connecticut is not affected at this time, this decision raises serious concerns for families, providers, and communities across the state. 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.

Maria Reyes, Family Child Care Provider & Council President responded, "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."

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.

The challenge, filed this month argues that not only did a \$10 billion funding freeze announced on January 6, 2026, violate the Administrative Procedure Act by ignoring the legally-required process for stopping funding to these essential programs and by targeting the five affected states for improper partisan reasons, but that the Trump-Vance administration is also violating the First Amendment rights of the organization's members by attempting to stifle speech.

"For small businesses, child care isn't a side issue, it's essential infrastructure," said Richard Trent, Executive Director of Main Street Alliance. "When this funding is frozen, our employees can't find or afford care, parents are forced to cut hours or leave jobs, and local businesses lose the stable workforce they depend on. The ripple effects hit entire communities, and small business owners, including the owners and educators at these child care businesses, are left paying the price for a politically motivated decision that makes it harder for

families and local economies to survive."

Over the past year, the Trump-Vance administration has repeatedly admitted to terminating federal grants in retribution because the recipients were located in "blue states."

We will continue to keep members updated on the status of this lawsuit and any other funding threats.



Leading Where it Matters

Sarah L. Jones Decade of Service in Manchester Shows the Power of Local Government

When we talk about politics, it's easy to jump straight to Washington, D.C. or the latest national headline. But for Sarah Jones, politics happens in town meeting rooms, neighborhoods, recreation fields, and in the everyday decisions that shape people's lives.

Sarah, a CSEA member and P-3A state worker, was just re-elected to her sixth term on the Manchester Board of Directors, the town's governing body. This most recent election also marks her third term as Deputy Mayor, a position awarded to the highest vote-getter among the board members (besides the Mayor). Sarah doesn't just win, she WINS.

"I don't always think about what I do as 'politics,'" Sarah said. "It's hyper-local. It's trash pickup, sewer rates, parks, schools — the things people interact with every single day."

For Sarah, that day-to-day impact is what makes local government important. A few years ago at one of the Board of Directors meetings, a group of 10-12 year old softball players showed up to talk about the lack of softball fields in town. Each young girl stood up and addressed the Board, explaining how after a field closure due to flooding, the girls now had less total fields than the boys and lacked a consistent place to play and improve.

That same night, the board allocated ARPA funds to rebuild the fields. "A year later, we were cutting the ribbon with those same girls," Sarah said. "They threw the first pitch. That's government working the way it should."

Sarah recognized that Government doesn't often work this swiftly, but projects like that have become familiar in Manchester. During Sarah's time on the Board, the town has responded to members of the Bangladeshi community about Cricket fields and has replaced an aging skate park. While not everything Sarah and the rest of the Board works on is as fun as recreational improvements, these new spaces provided intergenerational and interracial public spaces for community members.

"These are the decisions that shape a community," Sarah said. "And they happen whether people are paying attention or not."

Sarah joined the state in October 2023 and now works at the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) in the Regional School Choice Office, where she handles marketing and outreach for magnet schools, technical high schools, and the Open Choice program. Her role helps ensure families understand their educational options — a responsibility directly tied to the state's long-standing obligations under the Sheff v.

O'Neill school desegregation settlement.

"This work is mandated, and it matters," Sarah explained. "Families can't access opportunities they don't know exist."

Before joining the state, Sarah spent years working in public education in and around Manchester. And even though she was never in a union position, she saw firsthand how union contracts improved working conditions and healthcare for non-union staff.

"I benefited from union work long before I was ever in a union," she said. So when Sarah became a P-3A CSEA member in 2023, she immediately stepped up to become a steward.

Sarah Jones is a committed union member and a seasoned local elected official and for more than a decade, she has helped shape decisions in Manchester that af-

fect families, seniors, workers, and young people in real, visible ways. At a time when national politics can feel overwhelming and disconnected from daily life, Sarah's work is a reminder that power still lives close to home. Local government is where union values — fairness, access, and accountability — are translated into action, and where ordinary people can see the results. "Even when everything feels challenging and hopeless," Sarah said, "there is hope in your community."



Sarah L. Jones has a long list of accomplishments to be proud of, but the community of Manchester is the biggest beneficiary of her service.

Update on Tier IV Risk Sharing Provision

The risk-sharing provision of the Tier IV pension plan – which covers most state employees hired after 7/31/2017 – permits the State on July 1st of each year to temporarily increase employee contributions by half of the amount by which the plan's investment returns failed to reach the projected average amount of 6.9% in the prior calendar year, up

to a maximum of 2%. The increase lasts for one year only.

In calendar year 2025, the SERS fund's investment income exceeded the 6.9% projected average, and therefore no risk sharing provision will be enacted for the upcoming contract year. Therefore, Tier IV employees will not have any pension surcharge deducted from their paychecks.

While we are glad that this financial hardship will not be impacting Tier IV members, this provision among other aspects of Tier IV is a central focus for SEBAC as we continue informal discussion with the Administration on the 2027 Pension and Healthcare Agreement. SEBAC continues to voice concerns with recruitment and retention efforts

leading to short staffing across state agencies and the connection that Tier IV's inadequacies has on the State's ability to bring in new talent and retain current employees.

We will keep members informed and involved as we work to make progress on these issues.

Short Session, Same Attacks

Before the ink was dry on the new legislative session calendar, the knives were out — not from people trying to fix Connecticut's real problems, but from the same special interests that have spent decades blaming workers for failures they created.

We've gone through and gathered a few of the most egregious pieces that were published in Connecticut outlets over the last few weeks.

An Inside Investigator piece by Marc Fitch (a Yankee Institute employee) claimed that Connecticut state employee pay "beats" Massachusetts and Rhode Island relies on a misleading apples-to-oranges comparison. It uses broad averages while ignoring critical factors like vastly different job classifications, agency staffing levels, and cost-of-living pressures —

especially housing. Most importantly, it leaves out chronic understaffing that forces existing workers to cover vacancies through overtime and step increases, inflating averages without reflecting improved conditions. In other words, the article confuses workforce strain with worker prosperity — and gets both wrong.

The Yankee Institute also put out their annual attack piece on worker legislation, this time targeting paraeducators, childcare workers and state workers all in one effort. The piece treats collective bargaining as something suspicious, even reckless, while hiding their real intentions to further concentrate wealth at the very top at the expense of everyone else.

Chris Powell has always been a mouthpiece for the Yankee Institute and this legislative session appears to be no different. In his latest

piece targeting state workers, he argued, that "affordability doesn't apply" to state employee pay and benefits by cherry-picking a headline number about average salaries and then layering on insults about health care, job security, and remote work. He does this all while conveniently ignoring the real pressures public services face like chronic understaffing, rising workloads, and a cost-of-living crisis. Once again, he is relying on a tactic that tries to divide workers rather than focusing on solutions to the real affordability problems facing our state.

Different outlets. Different authors. Same message:

Your job costs too much. The rich should keep getting richer. And if services are failing, it's probably your fault too.

Does CSEA have your correct contact info on file?

Update your info by scanning the QR code below.



Pension & Healthcare Retiree Survey Results

More than 1,000 retired union members participated in a survey on pension and healthcare benefits ahead of the 2027 SEBAC Pension & Healthcare Agreement negotiations. In this survey, retirees indicated they overwhelmingly value and depend on their defined benefit pensions and healthcare, strongly support protecting these benefits, and are prepared to take action to defend them.

The results show both exceptionally high satisfaction with current benefits and near-universal agreement that these benefits must be preserved and strengthened through collective action.

Respondent Profile

Total Participants: 1,035 retirees.
Average Age: 71.6 years.
Average Years of Service: 26.5 years.
Top Represented Unions:
CSEA SEIU Local 2001
A&R
SEIU 1199 NE

Retirement Plans: The vast majority (84%) are in the SERS defined benefit plan.

Tiers: Most respondents are in Tier II (39%) or Tier I (32%), followed by Tier IIA (15%).

Priorities & Importance

(Scale of 1-10)

Retirees expressed an overwhelming consensus on the necessity of protecting their hard-earned benefits.

Protecting Retiree Healthcare: 9.95 (Highest)

Protecting Defined Benefit Pension: 9.91

Current Satisfaction

(Scale of 1-10)

Members report high levels of satisfaction with their current state-provided benefits.

Pension Satisfaction: 9.51/10

Healthcare Coverage Satisfaction: 9.41/10

Key Issues for Negotiations

The most frequently mentioned keywords were "Healthcare," "Pension," "Protection," and "Cost."

Maintenance of Benefits: A dominant theme is

to push back on any reductions of healthcare and pension benefits.

Stability: Members rely on these benefits to remain secure for their lifetime.

Commitment to Action

Retirees are motivated to mobilize to protect their benefits. Top commitments include:
Emailing Legislators: 662 members (64%)
Attending Meetings: 336 members (32%)
Calling Legislators: 310 members (30%)
Attending Rallies: 174 members (17%)
Out-of-State Advocacy: A significant number of retirees residing outside of Connecticut expressed their willingness to support through letter-writing and PAC contributions, despite their distance.

Retirees are unified, informed, and engaged. They overwhelmingly support protecting defined benefit pensions, and retiree healthcare. Just as importantly, many are ready to personally participate in advocacy efforts to make this happen.

BJ's Wholesale Discount Through CSEA

CSEA has partnered with BJ's Wholesale Club to offer deeply discounted memberships for our members.

Open Enrollment: Now through January 31, 2027

Already have a membership?

Extend it now and save: \$10 on Club\$20 on Club+ When you renew, 12 months will be added to your current expiration date.

All offers also include one household membership card free of charge.

**Tax where applicable*

Membership Options

BJ's Club Card (Standard Membership)
 - New Members: \$15 for 12 months (regularly \$60)*
 - Renewing Members: \$50 for 12 months (regularly \$60)*

BJ's Club+ Card Membership (Earn 2% cash back on most purchases, an extra 5 cents off per gallon of gas, free curbside pickup, and 2 free same-day deliveries.)
 - New Members: \$50 for 12 months (regularly \$120)*
 - Renewing Members: \$100 for 12 months (regularly \$120)*

How to Take Advantage of These Deals

Use Call Center and your Promo Code below. The Promo Code does not work online or in-store. Renewals must be made through the call center, not online.

Call: 1-800-313-8887
 Promo Code: 350150

Must enroll by January 31, 2027
 Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–6:00 PM (EST)
 (No weekend hours)

New Members can also visit bjs.com/cseact (Available 24/7)

Previous or existing members are not eligible for new member rates of \$15 or \$50.

PHONE SCAM Targeting State of CT Retirees

By: Kevin Sullivan, Retiree Organizer

A SCENARIO TO BE AWARE OF:

You receive an unexpected phone call claiming to be from someone from the State of Connecticut or a Retirement Services Provider. The caller knows your name and references retirement benefits, recent changes, or upcoming actions. They ask you to “verify” information, read back a one-time code, or confirm account details to avoid delays or issues.

THIS COULD BE A COMMON SCAM!

Scammers now use caller ID spoofing, publicly available information, and increasingly using AI-generated voices to sound legitimate and urgent.

If you receive a call like this:

1. Do not provide any information, even if the caller sounds credible or urgent.
2. End the call.
3. If you believe the call may be legitimate:

- Contact Retirement Services using a phone number listed on an official State of Connecticut website or official correspondence:

<https://osc.ct.gov/retirement/ser/s/new-and-active/>

- Do NOT use phone numbers provided by the caller.
- Report the call to Retirement.PhoneScams@ct.gov even if no information was shared.

Please include:

- Caller ID
- Date and Time
- Any information the

caller shares, i.e., Company, urgency, etc.

If a meeting invitation was shared, provide the sender's email address and submit the email invite as phishing by utilizing the report phishing button.

As always, we want to remind you to be cautious about phone calls, emails, and text messages. Remember: take your time and verify directly with the sender (don't reply or click on any links) if you are unsure!

Snow Day & Telework Stipulated Agreement for State Workers

The contract language provides the following if there is an inclement weather and declaration that staff do not have to report to the worksite:

- If the employee is scheduled to telework, they telework (see also 8.3.1).
- If the employee is scheduled to report to a work location and the offices are closed, they cannot be required or otherwise directed to telework.

SEBAC Telework Agreement, applicable language:

8.3. LATE OPENING, EARLY DISMISSAL, AGENCY CLOSURE
 8.3.1. If a situation arises at the teleworker's official duty station that interferes with the ability of non-teleworking employees to work at the official duty station (e.g. power failure, weather conditions, lack of heat in the office building; etc.) while the teleworker is working at his /her telework location, the teleworker is not excused from duty for this period of time as he/she would not be affected by these conditions.
 8.3.2. In addition, teleworkers may

be requested to telework on non-telework days as operational needs dictate or in the event of an emergency (e.g. power outage, flooding/water damage at official duty station etc.). Acceptance of such request shall be at the option of the employee.

Recent Arbitration Award on this issue:

There is nothing in the Final Telework Agreement that permits the Employer to direct an employee to telework on a day that the employee is not scheduled to work. To the contrary, as fully described above, the Agreement clearly provides that telework is voluntary.

As such, please find an important update regarding your telework rights, contract enforcement, and compensation hours related to State office closures on February 28, 2023 and/or March 14, 2023 (days when State offices were closed due to snowstorms).

If you were directed to telework, you are entitled to compensatory hours if you worked and if you did not telework and instead

used vacation, personal leave, or other accrued time off, that time must be restored to your leave balance.

Some members have already begun seeing these adjustments, and others will receive them soon.

Background on the Arbitration Win:

An arbitration decision issued on August 20, 2024 found that the State violated the collective bargaining agreement by directing office-designated employees to telework on days when State offices were closed and the employee was not otherwise scheduled to telework.

The arbitrator ruled that the agreement does not allow the State to mandate telework under these circumstances. In fact, the agreement explicitly addresses this situation and makes clear that telework is voluntary on office-closure days.

As a result, the arbitrator also ordered the State to cease mandating telework on State-closure days for employees not scheduled to telework.

Although the arbitration decision was initially issued for the A&R unit, the relevant contract language applies across bargaining units covered by the SEBAC Telework Agreement. After further enforcement efforts by CSEA and our coalition partners, the State has now agreed to apply this arbitration award to all impacted teleworking units and to honor the contract going forward.

This outcome is the direct result of collective action, persistence, and enforcement. It reinforces a fundamental principle: contract rights only have value when unions are willing to defend them — and CSEA will continue to do exactly that.

Ask your Union Steward: If you have questions regarding telework or inclement weather, if you believe you are affected by this decision or have questions about how it applies to your situation, please contact your Union Steward.

Even Billionaires at Davos World Economic Forum are Sounding the Alarm on Capitalism

It's not often that billionaire Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, the largest money-management firm in the world with more than \$10 trillion in assets, offers a critique that resonates with working families. Yet as 'Mayor of Davos' at the opening of the 56th Annual World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland, Fink stood before the world's most powerful elites and issued an unprecedented warning against capitalism.

While acknowledging that global capitalism has generated extraordinary wealth since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Fink warned that those gains have accrued to a far narrower share of people than any healthy society can sustain. He argued that prosperity cannot be measured solely by GDP growth or rising stock valuations, but by whether people can feel economic progress in their daily lives—whether they can build stable futures, afford necessities, and participate meaningfully in growth.

In Connecticut, state leaders often point to strong bond ratings, budget surpluses, and fiscal stability as evidence of success. Those metrics matter. But they are not the whole story. For many residents, the past several years have also meant rising housing costs, unaffordable childcare, strained public services, and an increasingly upside-down tax structure that places a heavier burden on

working families than on those with the greatest wealth.

Last year, Republicans and the Trump Administration passed the 'One Big Beautiful Bill'—a tax gift that saved Connecticut's top 1% over a billion dollars annually. Sold to the public as a middle-class tax cut, the bill overwhelmingly benefited corporations and the ultra-wealthy, through deep cuts to corporate tax rates, preferential treatment of capital income, and loopholes that reward wealth accumulation rather than work.

Economists estimate that tens of trillions of dollars that should have flowed to wages instead landed in the hands of the top one percent. Working families were left with temporary, modest tax relief, while the wealthiest Americans locked in permanent gains.

For states like Connecticut, this moment created a rare opportunity: to rebalance state tax policy, protect critical services, and offset the loss of federal support for healthcare, housing, and human services. Some states chose to act. Connecticut largely did not.

And when federal funds receded, the state lacked sufficient flexible resources to respond quickly and at scale. Legislators scrambled to assemble stopgap relief while families faced immediate consequences—higher heating costs, reduced benefits, delayed care, and housing instability.

Fink warned that capitalism must evolve to turn more people into "owners of growth," not spectators. That challenge applies as much at the state level as it does globally. The question is not whether Connecticut's finances are stronger on paper, but whether our economic system is delivering security and dignity for the people who make the state run.

Connecticut is wealthy by many measures—and deeply unequal by others. It can be both fiscally responsible and more responsive to human need. It can invest in communities while maintaining stability. Those are choices, not impossibilities.

If even leaders at Davos are acknowledging that today's economic model is failing too many people, Connecticut should take that signal seriously. Bond ratings alone cannot be the measure of success. The real test is whether families can afford to live here, whether seniors can stay warm, whether workers can access healthcare, and whether growth is something people participate in—not merely watch from the sidelines.

The path forward is about priorities—and deciding what kind of prosperity Connecticut wants to build next.

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