CSEA NEWS

The Voice of Connecticut's Public Service Employees & Retirees

November, 2026 | CSEA SEIU Local 2001 | VOL. 59, NO. 11

Election Results Are In!

77 CSEA-Endorsed Candidates Claim Victory

Election Day was Tuesday, November 3, and working families had a lot at stake. The people elected to the State Capitol and Congress make decisions that directly affect CSEA members, from funding public services and approving negotiated contracts to protecting retirement benefits and strengthening workers' rights.

CSEA endorsed 91 candidates who stood with our members and demonstrated a commitment to working families, 77 of those candidates were victorious on Election Night, due in large part to union members talking to friends, families and coworkers and showing up to the polls.

As we head into the legislative session starting in January, all of our members have something at stake that these individuals will be responsible for debating and voting on. From the contract fight for CSEA family childcare educators, to the pension and healthcare negotiations for state workers and retirees, to the fight for a living wage for our paraeducators, CSEA families are also deeply impacted by our state's upside down fiscal roadblocks that are siphoning away funding from programs and services we all rely on. This session will be critical for us to not only show up for ourselves and our families, but to show up in solidarity for one another. Our logo might have changed (check it out on page 4!), but our tagline Stronger Together has not and that's because we truly are stronger when we stand together.

Take a moment to review the results from the election and commit to getting involved this legislative session - show up at the Capitol to testify, call your legislator, attend CSEA Day - keep an eye out for ways to join the fight.

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CSEA Celebrates 85 Years of Solidarity at 2026 Convention

Nearly 300 Union Leaders Gather to Elect Officers, Recognize Members and Prepare for the FIghts Ahead

Nearly 300 CSEA SEIU Local 2001 leaders came together at Central Connecticut State University for our union's 2026 Convention, celebrating 85 years of standing up for Connecticut's working families.

The convention brought together members from across CSEA's councils and chapters, including state employees, paraeducators, family child care educators, school bus drivers and monitors, municipal workers, and retirees. Members conducted union business, elected officers, celebrated the work of fellow union leaders, and heard from elected officials about the challenges facing working people. Members re-elected Travis Woodward as President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 and Sam Kamin was elected as our new Secretary-Treasurer.

The convention also gave members a chance to recognize the work that often happens without much fanfare. From stewards fighting grievances to bargaining teams winning stronger contracts, much of CSEA's success comes from members who use their time to stand up for their coworkers.

This year's Presidential Awards recognized members who have spent years building their union, along with chapters that demonstrated what can happen when workers take collective action. Among those recognized were the New Britain Public Library bargaining team and ACES Non-Certified Employees, both of which organized their coworkers during difficult contract negotiations.

For 85 years, CSEA members have fought for better wages, stronger benefits, and a voice on the job. While some things have changed over time, one thing will always remain the same: we have strength and power when members stand together.

The convention also welcomed several elected officials, including U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, Congressman Joe Courtney, Governor Ned Lamont, Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, State Representative Rebecca Martinez, and Bob Fernandez, candidate for the 48th House District.

Members attending this year's convention also got the first look at a new chapter in CSEA's history. As part of SEIU's new national branding, CSEA introduced an updated logo and visual identity that members will begin seeing in union communications, swag, signs, and other materials.

But the change is about more than a new logo. For 85 years, generations of CSEA members have built a union that has stood up for working people through difficult negotiations, political fights, and some of the toughest challenges facing public employees. That history isn't going anywhere. The goal of the new branding is to make CSEA more visible, better connected, and easier for members to recognize as their union continues to grow.

Convention delegates helped bring the new look to life by adding their handprints to a large canvas that will become a permanent piece of artwork at the CSEA Union Hall. Each handprint represented one member's contribution. Together, they formed something much larger. It's a fitting reminder that CSEA isn't a building, a logo, or a group of officers. The union belongs to the members who build it every day.

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ABOVE: 300 CSEA leaders gathered at our 85th Biennial Convention.

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

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CSEA, 760 CAPITOL AVE., HARTFORD, CT 06106

CSEA Council 400 RETIRED and ACTIVE

Chapter & Delegate Meetings

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

Chapter 401 (Hartford area)
2026 Holiday Luncheon
Thursday, December 3rd, Wood-n-Tap 11:30 to 2pm
99 Sisson Ave, Hartford
Questions? Call Ms. Sharon D. Mounds at (860) 529-9885

Chapter 402 (Danbury area)
Wed., November 11th - 10am
Speaker: Bernadette Conway CSEA Retiree Coordinator
United Methodist Church
5 Clapboard Ridge Road
Danbury, CT
Andrew Woods 203 417-8952

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

Chapter 404 (Waterbury area)
Tues. Nov 10th - 10am
Speaker: Cigna Dental Rep
Trinity Orthodox Church
937 Chase Pkwy, Waterbury
Tina Franco:(203) 721-4382

Chapter 405 (New Haven)
Thurs. Nov 12th - 10:30am
Speaker: Bob Rinker, Council 400 Regional Vice-President
Hamden Government Center Building, 3rd Floor
2750 Dixwell Ave., Hamden
Sue Pierson (203) 376-7207

Chapter 405 (New Haven)
Holiday Luncheon
Thursday, December 17th
12:00pm to 3:00pm
Lorenzo's Restaurant
39 Elm St., West Haven
RSVP by December 7th
Limited to 60 participants
RSVP early! Will sell out.
Cost per member: $15
Cost for spouse/partner: $20
Cost per guest: $25
Lunch buffet includes: Stuffed breads and pasta, Stuffed mushrooms, Chicken Marsala, Pork Roast, Eggplant Parmesan, tossed salad, pasta, dessert, coffee, tea & soda
Make Checks payable to: CSEA Chapter 405
Send to: CSEA Chapter 405
% William Morico
470 Ellsworth Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511-2854
Questions? Call Bill at (203) 776-0876 or Sue at (203) 376-7207

Chapter 406 (Middletown)
Tues. Nov. 10th - 12:30pm
Guest Speaker: Stephanie Saunders, Aetna Rep
American Legion Post 75
58 Bernie O'Rourke Dr.
Middletown, CT
Donna Maronde
(860) 305-1700

Chapter 407 (Bridgeport area)
Wed., Nov. 18th 1pm
St. Josephs of Stratford National Catholic Church
1300 Stratford Rd., Stratford
President Robert Bepko
(203) 521-4899

Chapter 408 (Windham Area)
Wed., Nov 11th, 12:30pm
Guest Speaker: Bette Marafino, CT ARA President
Mansfield Senior Center
303 Maple Rd., Storrs
Questions? Christine Ashe
(860) 742-0667

Chapter 408 (Windham Area)
Holiday Luncheon
Wednesday, December 9th
Georgina's Italian Restaurant
275 Boston Tnpk, Bolton
11:30 AM to 3:00 PM
Cheese & Crackers, Fruit & Vegetables served w/ dip
Cost per member: $30.00
Cost per guest: $40.00
Menu Choices: Stuffed Chicken with cornbread & Sausage Stuffing, Sliced Sirloin w/ Mushroom Sauce, Baked Stuffed Sole, All meals Served with: Fresh Salad, Green Bean Almandine, Roasted Potatoes, Dessert, Coffee, Tea, Soda, & Cash Bar
Please RSVP by December 1st
Checks payable to "CSEA Chapter 408" should be sent to: Christine Ashe, 141 Love Lane, Coventry, CT 06238
For further information or if you have special dietary concerns, contact Christine Ashe (860) 742-0667

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

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

Chapter 411 (Rocky Hill area)
2026 Holiday Banquet
Thursday, Dec. 17th at 12pm
Elaine's Restaurant
1541 Berlin Turnpike
Wethersfield, CT
Buffet includes: Cheese & Crudités, Fresh Bread, Pasta, Sliced Sirloin Burgandy, Chicken Parmigiana, Baked Boston Scrod, Vegetables, Potatoes, Dessert, Coffee & Tea, Cash Bar Available!
$25 per Chapter 411 Member
$50 for each guest
RSVP by December 1st
Make checks payable to: "CSEA Chapter 411"
Mail check to: Joy Gutis
34 Fairview Rd
Brookfield, CT 06804
No Walk-ins Please!
Questions or Dietary Restrictions? Call Joy at (860) 966-3340

Chapter 412 (Putnam area)
Tues., Nov 17th - 1:30pm
Putnam Town Hall
200 School Street, Putnam
Chuck Morrell 860 861-2099

Chapter 414 (Torrington area)
Monday, Nov 16th at 10am
Guest Speaker: Kevin Sullivan CSEA Retiree Organizer
Five Point Extension Bldg
852 University Dr., Torrington
Kathryn Doan 860 324-8300

Chapter 415 (Manchester)
Monday, Nov. 23rd - 1pm
Speaker: Cigna Dental Rep
Elks Lodge in Manchester
30 Bissell Street
David Olandt (860) 268-4614

Chapter 415 (Manchester)
Holiday Luncheon
Mon., December 21, 2026
Market Grille, 110 Buckland Hills Drive, Manchester, CT
Social Hour 12pm to 1pm
Luncheon: 1:00pm
Cost per chapter member: $30
Non-Member Spouse: $40
Menu includes New England Clam Chowder or Strawberry & Goat Cheese Salad.
Entree Choice of Fish & Chips, Chicken Picatta, Salmon, Eggplant Parmesan, or Mediterranean Grain Bowl with Chicken or Shrimp
Dessert: Chocolate Chip Cookies or Sorbet & Fresh Berries. include Coffee/Tea.
RSVP by Dec 10th. Expected to sell out. RSVP ASAP!
Mail your check payable to: CSEA Chapter 415 to William Dorn (Treasurer)
848 Center Street,
Manchester, CT 06040
For more information please call Bill at (860) 840-1688 or Dave at (860) 268-4614

Chapter 416 (New London)
Tuesday, November 10th
12pm Social & 1pm Meeting
Speaker: Bob Rinker Regional Vice-President
Groton Public Library
52 Newtown Rd, Groton
Beverly Washington
(860) 445-7328

Chapter 417 (Plainville area)
Wed., Nov 11th - 1pm
Guest Speaker: AETNA Rep
Plainville Public Library
56 East Main St., Plainville
Mark Kirschner
(860) 882-2717

Chapter 417 (Plainville area)
Holiday Luncheon
Wed., Dec. 9th - 1:00pm
Plainville Public Library (Lower Level Room)
56 East Main Street
Plainville, CT
Catered by Saints
Buffet Menu includes: Baked Penne, Meatballs, Sausage and Peppers, Broasted Chicken, Oven Browned Potatoes, Garden Salad & Rolls
RSVP to Julie Konopka at (860)-563-1058 or Mark Kirschner at (860)-882-2717
Send checks to: Julie Konopka
9 Barrington Drive, Unit A
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Chapter 418 (Community College Retirees)
Tues., Nov. 10th - 10am
Guest Speaker: Kevin Sullivan CSEA Retiree Organizer
4C's Union Hall in Hartford
907 Wethersfield Ave
President Colleen Richard
(860) 202-4128

Important numbers to have on hand:

Caremark: 1-800-318-2572
Cigna: 1-800-244-6224
Retirement Division Payroll: 860-702-3528
Retirement Division Life Insurance: 860-702-3537
Retirement Division Health Insurance: 860-702-3533
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

CONNECTICUT STATE EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION

CSE Credit Union continues to celebrate our 80th anniverary by gifting our members with a

2.80% DIVIDEND RATE

on Regular Share accounts for the 3rd quarter!



Don't forget our loan specials!

4.80% APR* NEW/USED AUTO

9.80% APR* PERSONAL LOAN

7.80% APR* DEBT CONSOLIDATION

**Annual Percentage Rate. Certain restrictions apply. Auto and personal loans cannot be applied toward existing CSE auto or personal loans. Debt consolidation not available to pay off CSE loans, including CSE Visas. Total CSE unsecured debt limit (excluding CSE Visa and student loan) not to exceed $25,000. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Rate may change without notice.*



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
Veterans Day: Wednesday, November 11, 2026
Thanksgiving Day: Thursday, November 26, 2026

Dividend Rates - Third Quarter 2026 Rates

	Dividend Rate	Percentage Yield
REGULAR SHARES	2.80%	2.84%
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.

Anders, Ricky, Education
Arigno, Carmelo, Protective Services
Borla, William, Engineer, Scien, Tech
Burk-Buckler, Constance, Social And Human Services
Busse, Charles, Service/ Maintenance
Campoli, Joan, Uconn Health
Cole, Deborah, Uconn Health
Coughlin, Shirley, Judicial
Curley, Jane, Education
Desanto, Robert, Engineer, Scien, Tech
Graham, Thomas, State Police
Haddon, Frances, Administrative Clerical
Heck, Mabelle, Administrative Clerical
Heine, Carolyn, Confidential
Johnson, William, Service/ Maintenance
Jovanelly, Henry, Managerial
Kusha, Donald, Service/ Maintenance
Lacroix, Judy, Health Nonprofessional
Loomis, Sharon, Service/ Maintenance
Lotito, Barbara, Uconn - Faculty
Mandeville, Eugene, Service/ Maintenance
Manthey, Susan, Education
Mccall, Donald, Engineer, Scien, Tech
Mcdonald, Edward, Correctional Officers
Mckeller, Mary, Service/Maintenance
Mcnary, Ann, Legislative Management
Modugno, Carol, No Designated Unit
Moffo, Carmine, Protective Services
Mundkur, Balaji, Uconn - Faculty
Munoz, Christine, Health Nonprofessional
Nadile, Charles, Service/ Maintenance
Olds, Astrida, Judicial
Orefice, Valerie, Managerial
Peck, Roger, State University Faculty
Piotrowski, Mona, Cscu
Plante, Allan, Managerial
Quinn, Bernard, Judicial
Rayon, Deborah, Administrative Clerical
Roy, Normand, Correctional Officers
Samuels, Leslie, Correctional Officers
Scherer, Matthew, Health Professional
Sinnamon, Lillian, Administrative Clerical
Stein, Alan, Uconn - Faculty
Sundt, Pauline, Admin And Residual
Szablinski, Hedwig, Admin And Residual
Weber, James, Service/Maintenance

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Travis Woodward .....President
Diane Murphy .....Secretary/Treasurer
David Glidden .....Executive Director
Drew E. Stoner .....Communication Director
Jason P. Webster .....Graphic/ Technical Assistance

INSERTION DEADLINE: 1st of prior month.

MAILING ADDRESS: CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, 760 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106; PHONES: (860) 951-6614, toll-free: (800) 894-9479, FAX: (860) 951-3526; INTERNET: www.csea-ct.com.

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85th Biennial Convention: Recognizing Our Members

At every CSEA convention, the Presidential Awards recognize members who go above and beyond for their coworkers.

This year's recipients represented nearly every corner of our union, from family child care educators and paraeducators to state employees, municipal workers, and retirees. Some have spent decades serving as stewards, council officers, and bargaining team members. Others have helped lead major contract campaigns or stepped into leadership roles more recently, but everyone has contributed to making our union stronger.

Presidential Awards for Dedication

Diane Murphy was recognized for her service as CSEA Secretary-Treasurer, P-3A Council President, Constitution and By-Laws Committee Chair, and P-3A bargaining team chair. As she prepares for retirement in Florida, CSEA thanked her for years of leadership and service.

Falk Von Plachecki, a longtime P-4 leader, was honored for decades of work as a steward, chapter officer, Executive Council member, and member of numerous bargaining teams.

Michelle Wilkerson, a Hartford crossing guard, was recognized for her work protecting students and advocating for her coworkers in a job that often puts employees in dangerous conditions.

Maria Reyes, a founding leader of CSEA's child care organizing movement in Waterbury, and most recently the former President of the Child Care Council, was honored for her years of work bringing providers together and fighting for their rights.

Presidential Awards for Volunteer Service

Janet Brutcher, a longtime P-3B leader, has served as a steward, McCusker Trustee, Good Works Committee member, and bargaining team member. Her years of service have made her a trusted advocate for members at the Department of Developmental Services.

Jeff Beckwith was recognized for his work as a chapter leader and steward. Known for helping members understand their contract and workplace rights, Jeff has spent years making sure coworkers have someone they can turn to.

Mike Molinaro Awards for Collective Action

Two chapters were recognized for showing what happens when members organize and act together. Named in the honor of former P3B leader and Secretary Treasurer of CSEA.

The New Britain Public Library bargaining team, led by **Chapter President Jason Villani and committee members Brett Garabedian, Rachel Szostek, and Vicki Aiudi,** fought back against management proposals that threatened their bargaining unit.

When management proposed removing classifications from the unit, the entire chapter signed a petition demanding better wages and an end to the attacks. Their campaign helped win annual raises, additional vacation time, and improved opportunities for advancement.

The ACES Non-Certified Employees were recognized for bringing hundreds of members together during difficult contract negotiations. When bargaining reached a standstill, chapter leaders organized a major petition delivery to management.

For many members, it was their first time participating in an action of that size. Their willingness to stand together changed the course of the campaign and demonstrated the power of an organized chapter.

Presidential Awards for Leadership

Andrea Wallen was honored for her work as a union steward and her commitment to bringing members and their families to rallies, legislative actions, and other union events.

Tom Titus, President of the Correction Supervisors' Council, was recognized for his tireless advocacy for members, including his leadership of the council's bargaining team.

Jen Corti, President of the P-3B Council, was honored for her work as a steward, council treasurer, bargaining team member, and leader in her council.

Missy Cole, a dedicated paraeducator and union leader, was recognized for her advocacy for coworkers and her commitment to students, including personally organizing school supplies and food for children in need.

Ed Daly Awards for Commitment

*Named in honor of longtime CSEA leader Ed Daly, these awards recognize members whose commitment to the union has made a last*ing impact.

Joan Holley was honored for decades of service to Council 400, including her work as council secretary and chapter leader.

Dave Walsh, co-chair of the Council 400 Legislative Action Committee, was recognized for his research, legislative advocacy, and work helping organize Council 400 Chapter 409.

Douglas Racicot was honored for becoming an active Council 400 leader following retirement, serving as a chapter president and co-chair of the Recruitment Committee.

Robert Rinker Awards for Concern

Renamed in honor of CSEA's longtime Executive Director Bob Rinker, these awards recognize members who demonstrate extraordinary concern for others and the union.

Rhonda Knowles, a leader in the Child Care Council, was honored for her work advocating for providers across Connecticut and chairing the council's Professional Development Committee.

Betsy Marcano was recognized for growing into a strong workplace leader who helps organize coworkers and encourages members to stand up for one another.

Liz Segui was honored for her commitment to enforcing the contract, organizing members, and helping coworkers understand the power they have when they act together.



Family Child Care Educators Show up in Waterbury to Knock Doors and Get Out the Vote for CSEA-Endorsed Candidates



CSEA family child care educators took their organizing work into the community in Waterbury ahead of the election, knocking on doors and talking with voters about the issues facing working families.

The effort brought union members together to have conversations with neighbors about the importance of voting and electing leaders who support affordable child care, stronger public services, and working people. For family child care educators, politics isn't something that happens far away from their workplaces.

Decisions made at the State Capitol help determine reimbursement rates, access to health care, and whether working parents can find affordable, reliable care. Those decisions affect the thousands of educators who open their homes every morning and the families who depend on them.

Rather than waiting for elected officials to come to them, child care educators are taking their message directly to voters. And whether members are bargaining a contract, meeting with lawmakers, or knocking on a neighbor's door, when working people get organized, they can make things happen.

After a Decade of FIghting, Childcare Providers Win Healthcare Subsidy

CSEA Child Care Council President Maria Amado joined Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz at the State Capitol to celebrate a long-overdue victory. For ten years, Connecticut's family child care providers have fought for help paying for health insurance. For ten years, they heard many of the same excuses. Not enough money. Not this year. Wait your turn.

Now, after a decade of organizing, CSEA child care providers have won financial assistance to help make health coverage more affordable. CSEA Child Care Council President Maria Amado joined Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz at the State Capitol to speak about the victory and what it means for providers across Connecticut.

Amado, who operates Green World Family Child Care Home, represents more than 4,000 Care4Kids providers through CSEA SEIU Local 2001. She spoke about the reality facing family child care providers, a workforce made up overwhelmingly of women who are educators, caregivers, and small business owners.

Providers often work well beyond 40 hours a week. Their days begin before parents leave for work and continue long after the last child goes home, with cleaning, paperwork, and preparation for the next day. And while providers spend their careers caring for other people's children, many struggle to afford health coverage for themselves.

"Just because getting sick is part of our job doesn't mean going broke to see a doctor should be," Amado told those gathered at the Capitol.

The new assistance is expected to provide approximately $1,000 to $1,200 annually toward health insurance premiums for eligible providers. For providers who have spent years struggling with the cost of health care, the money will make a real difference. But Amado was quick to point out that the victory did not happen on its own.

Last year, CSEA paraeducators won permanent funding for a similar health care subsidy after years of organizing. Paraeducators testified before legislative committees, met with lawmakers, rallied at the Capitol, and shared their stories with the public and they won.

Child care providers watched that campaign unfold and recognized that many of the same challenges existed in their own profession. Both workforces are made up overwhelmingly of women doing essential, often underpaid work caring for and educating Connecticut's children. And both were being asked to do that work without adequate help affording their own health care.

So providers organized, spoke out, and brought their fight back to the Capitol and the result is a victory that has been more than a decade in the making.

The new assistance is an important step, but it does not solve every challenge facing family child care providers. Reimbursement rates, rising costs, and access to affordable coverage remain major concerns for members. CSEA members will continue to push for improvements that allow providers to earn a decent living while keeping care accessible for working families.

Still, after ten years, this is a victory worth celebrating. "$1,000 to $1,200 a year toward our health insurance premiums. That's real money," Amado said. "Is it everything we need? No. But it's a victory we fought for, and one we earned together."



ABOVE: Maria Amado (right) delivers remarks alongside Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz. (left).

CSEA Paraeducator Lisa Atkinson of Montville Named 2026 Paraeducator of the Year

Every day, paraeducators across Connecticut help students learn, grow, and succeed. They provide one-on-one support, assist students with disabilities, work alongside teachers, and help create classrooms where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Much of that work happens behind the scenes, but the impact paraeducators have on students and families is enormous. The Paraeducator of the Year recognition is an opportunity to celebrate that work and the dedicated school employees who too often go without the recognition they deserve.

This year, we're especially proud that Connecticut's 2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year is CSEA member Lisa Atkinson, a paraeducator at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School in Montville.

Lisa has spent more than 20 years working with students in Montville Public Schools, beginning her career in 2005 at Mohegan Elementary School. She later worked at Oakdale Elementary School before moving to Leonard J. Tyl Middle School in 2015, where she supports students with a wide range of learning and developmental needs.

Her work includes helping students who communicate through augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, working alongside teachers and specialists, and helping students build the confidence and independence they need both inside and outside the classroom.

The award Lisa received carries a particularly meaningful name. In 2013, Connecticut renamed its statewide Paraeducator of the Year Award in honor of Anne Marie Murphy, a special education paraeducator who was killed in the December 14, 2012, shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Her final moments reflected the extraordinary love and dedication she had for the children in her care. And for Lisa, receiving an award named in Anne Marie's memory has made the recognition even more meaningful. Lisa's recognition is a tremendous honor for her, her school community and the approximately 2,500 paraeducators represented by CSEA SEIU Local 2001.

There is no question that the work paraeducators do is critical to the success of our students, but it's also an important ingredient in making students feel safe and seen at school. The value we put on the role of paraeducators in our classrooms needs to be reflected in how paraeducators are valued on the line item budget.

CSEA members are continuing our fight for a $45,000 statewide minimum salary for full-time paraeducators because the people doing this work should be able to afford to make a career out of it.

Paraeducators shouldn't have to work multiple jobs to support their families or leave the students they love because they can earn more somewhere else.

As we continue this fight, we pause to congratulate Lisa on this incredible lifetime achievement, but look ahead to the legislative session where CSEA paras will be demanding a living wage.

2027 Medicare Part B Reimbursement Update: What Retirees Need to Know

The standard Medicare Part B premium for 2027 has not been announced at the time of this printing, but is projected to be $209.50 per month, pending the federal government's official announcement. As in previous years, most state retirees will continue receiving reimbursement for their Medicare Part B premiums through their monthly pension checks.

However, retirees who pay more than the standard premium, including those subject to the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA), will need to submit documentation to ensure they receive their full reimbursement.

Standard Part B Premium: No Action Required

If you are paying the standard Medicare Part B premium, **no action is necessary.** Your reimbursement will automatically be included in your pension check, just as it has been in previous years.

Higher Part B Premiums or Part D: Documentation Required

If you pay any amount other than the standard Part B premium or are enrolled in Medicare Part D, you will need to submit the relevant documentation, as in previous years.

Aetna Medicare Advantage, our retiree healthcare provider, will continue handling Part B reimbursement submissions.

As a state retiree, **you should never independently enroll in Medicare Part D.** If the State of Connecticut places you on Medicare Part D, the cost will be reimbursed to you. Submitting the necessary documentation is essential to receiving these funds.

If you are charged an amount other than the standard Medicare Part B premium, including IRMAA, you must submit a copy of your Medicare Premium Notice by February 26, 2027

How to Submit Your Medicare Premium Notice

You can submit your notice to Aetna by email, fax or mail:

Email: STCTMailbox@aetna.com
Fax: 1-855-481-3124
Mail:
Aetna Medicare Employer Group
PO Box 14091
Lexington, KY 40512

Be sure to write your State Employee ID number above your name. If submitting documentation for your spouse, write your name and State Employee ID number above your spouse's name.

Important: Do not send your notice by Certified Mail. Certified Mail will be rejected.

Email and fax provide confirmation of when your documentation was sent. If you submit your notice by regular mail and would like to confirm that Aetna received it, call 855-648-0391.

Retirees will also receive additional information through *CSEA News*, union emails and traditional mail from the Office of the State Comptroller.

But What About the Medicare Wrap

Retirees may have recently received a letter from Aetna outlining a new choice in how they receive their state retiree healthcare benefits.

Beginning January 1, 2027, retirees will have the option of remaining in the existing Aetna Medicare Advantage plan or switching to a new Medicare Wrap plan negotiated under the SEBAC 2026 Agreement.

Both options provide the same core state retiree healthcare benefits, but there are important differences. **The new Medicare Wrap option costs an additional $379 per person, per month.** Retirees who remain in the existing Aetna Medicare Advantage plan will continue paying a $0 premium co-share.

The current Medicare Advantage plan also includes supplemental benefits that are **not available through Medicare Wrap,** including up to $200 annually in Healthy Rewards, SilverSneakers, transportation assistance, care-management services and post-hospitalization meals.

The Medicare Wrap option was negotiated to provide an alternative for retirees who express interest in it. It is not an upgrade to the existing Medicare Advantage plan.

If you have experienced specific difficulties accessing providers, particularly outside Connecticut, please reach out to the Aetna Retiree Member Services. The existing plan already includes procedures, including a free opt-out provision for qualifying circumstances, to help address these issues.

If your current Aetna Medicare Advantage plan is working for you, you do not need to do anything. Your coverage will continue automatically.

For questions about your retiree healthcare coverage, contact Aetna Retiree Member Services at 855-648-0391 (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.

For enrollment and eligibility questions, contact the Office of the State Comptroller's Retiree Health Insurance Unit at 860-702-3533, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET.

CSEA and SEBAC will continue working to protect the healthcare benefits retirees have earned and keep members informed about any changes affecting their coverage.

General Election Results

77 ENDORSED CANDIDATES WON

Preliminary results • 1 recount pending

STATEWIDE OFFICES



Ned Lamont
GOVERNOR
WON



Susan Bysiewicz
LT. GOVERNOR
WON



Erick Russell
TREASURER
WON



Sean Scanlon
COMPTROLLER
WON



William Tong
ATTORNEY GENERAL
WON

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Joe Courtney
2ND DISTRICT
WON



Rosa DeLauro
3RD DISTRICT
WON



Jim Himes
4TH DISTRICT
WON



Jahana Hayes
5TH DISTRICT
WON

STATE SENATE

Maryam Khan SENATE DISTRICT 2 — WON	**Matt Lesser** SENATE DISTRICT 9 — WON	**Catherine Osten** SENATE DISTRICT 19 — WON	**Mae Flexer** SENATE DISTRICT 29 — WON
Saud Anwar SENATE DISTRICT 3 — WON	**Gary Winfield** SENATE DISTRICT 10 — WON	**Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox** SENATE DISTRICT 22 — WON	**Aaron Zimmer** SENATE DISTRICT 30 — WON
MD Rahman SENATE DISTRICT 4 — WON	**Jack Fazzino** SENATE DISTRICT 13 — WON	**Julie Kushner** SENATE DISTRICT 24 — WON	**Matt Knickerbocker** SENATE DISTRICT 32 — LOST
Derek Slap SENATE DISTRICT 5 — WON	**Jack Perry** SENATE DISTRICT 16 — LOST	**Bob Duff** SENATE DISTRICT 25 — WON	**Brandi Mandato** SENATE DISTRICT 34 — WON
Rick Lopes SENATE DISTRICT 6 — WON	**Jorge Cabrera** SENATE DISTRICT 17 — WON	**Samantha Nestor** SENATE DISTRICT 26 — WON	
David Kiner SENATE DISTRICT 7 — WON	**Joe de la Cruz** SENATE DISTRICT 18 — WON	**Rob Blanchard** SENATE DISTRICT 28 — WON	

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Matt Ritter HD 1 — WON	**Emmanuel "Manny" Sanchez** HD 24 — WON	**Nick Menapace** HD 37 — WON	**Ellen Paul** HD 55 — WON	**Chad Cardillo** HD 83 — WON	**Bob Godfrey** HD 110 — WON
Angie Parkinson HD 10 — WON	**David DeFronzo** HD 26 — WON	**Nick Gauthier** HD 38 — WON	**Kevin Brown** HD 56 — WON	**Kathleen Kimball** HD 87 — LOST	**MJ Shannon** HD 117 — WON
Patrick Biggins HD 11 — WON	**Gary Turco** HD 27 — WON	**Anthony Nolan** HD 39 — WON	**Jane Garibay** HD 60 — WON	**Laurie Sweet** HD 91 — WON	**Toni Lombardi** HD 118 — WON
Geoffrey Luxenberg HD 12 — WON	**Amy Morrin Bello** HD 28 — WON	**Aundré Bumgardner** HD 41 — WON	**Kim Becker** HD 62 — WON	**Eli Sabin** HD 92 — WON	**Kaitlyn Shake** HD 120 — WON
Tom Delnicki HD 14 — WON	**Linda Pierce** HD 30 — LOST	**Matt Danieluk** HD 45 — LOST	**Maria Horn** HD 64 — WON	**Steven Winter** HD 94 — WON	**Sarah Keitt** HD 134 — WON
Bobby Gibson, Jr. HD 15 — WON	**Moise Carelus** HD 31 — WON	**Marcus Palumbo** HD 47 — LOST	**Edward Corey** HD 65 — LOST	**Wildaliz Bermudez** HD 97 — WON	**Anne M. Hughes** HD 135 — WON
Tiffani McGinnis HD 18 — WON	**Brandon Chafee** HD 33 — WON	**Bob Fernandez** HD 48 — RECOUNT	**Jeff Litke** HD 70 — LOST	**Kai Juanna Belton** HD 100 — WON	**Ken Gucker** HD 138 — WON
Kate Farrar HD 20 — WON	**Meghan Rosenfeld** HD 34 — LOST	**Susan Johnson** HD 49 — WON	**DeWayne K Wynn Jr.** HD 77 — WON	**Kara Rochelle** HD 104 — WON	**Dominique Johnson** HD 143 — WON
Mike Demicco HD 21 — WON	**Cinzia Lettieri** HD 35 — WON	**Michelle Doucette Cunningham** HD 53 — LOST	**Nate Brown** HD 78 — LOST	**Anne Weisberg** HD 108 — LOST	**Matt Blumenthal** HD 147 — WON
Rebecca Martinez HD 22 — WON	**Renee LaMark Muir** HD 36 — WON	**Gregg Haddad** HD 54 — WON	**Mary B Fortier** HD 79 — WON	**Farley Santos** HD 109 — WON	

Bernadette Conway Retires After 20 Years

By: Dave Glidden, Executive Director

For the last 20 years, Bernadette Conway (or BC as she is affectionately known) has been a bright ray of sunshine in our Union Hall. Whether you stopped by for a meeting, called with a question, or needed help with something that seemed impossible to resolve, chances are Bernadette was there to greet you with a smile and make sure you got the help you needed. And now, Bernadette is retiring, leaving behind a legacy that has touched nearly every corner of our union.

Bernadette first joined CSEA in 2006 as our Membership Coordinator. It didn't take long for her warmth, energy, and determination to make an impression on everyone around her. Over the next 20 years, she would take on several different roles, each time leaving the union a little stronger than she found it.

After serving as Membership Coordinator, Bernadette moved into the key Executive Secretary position working alongside CSEA's staff representatives, helping them better serve members across the state. She quickly became someone everyone in the office could count on, whether it was tracking down an answer, solving a problem, or making sure nothing fell through the cracks.

Later, Bernadette made an unprecedented move from support staff into a representational role as CSEA's Retiree Organizer. It was a job she didn't just take on, she transformed it. For thousands of retired state employees, Bernadette became a familiar face, a trusted advocate, and, often, a friend. She attended chapter meetings, helped retirees navigate complicated issues, and fought tirelessly for members who needed someone in their corner. Her compassion and determination set a new standard for what that position could be.

When longtime CSEA Director of Administration Mike Nortz retired after 30 years of keeping the union's day-to-day operations running, Bernadette once again stepped up as our Director of Administration and Retiree Services. Working alongside Operations Director Jason Webster, the two became the glue - the foundation that supports all of the work of the Union.

But Bernadette's contributions have always gone far beyond any job description. She is the type of person who makes you feel immediately understood. No matter how much work was on her plate, whenever a member needed help, she took the time to listen. And if she didn't know the answer, she wouldn't stop until she found it.

And while much of her work happened behind the scenes, her impact was felt throughout our entire organization. Through difficult contract negotiations, organizing campaigns, legislative fights, and major changes within CSEA, Bernadette was one of the people who helped keep everything moving. She brought kindness to difficult conversations, humor to stressful days, and Fritos on Fridays.

As Bernadette begins this next chapter, we know she'll be enjoying more time with her grandbabies and her growing family. After all the good she has put into the world over the last two decades, she has certainly earned it. Bernadette leaves CSEA a better, kinder, and stronger organization than the one she joined in 2006. Her impact will continue to be felt in the lives of the members she helped, the retirees she advocated for, and the colleagues who were lucky enough to work alongside her.

Thank you, BC, for 20 years of service, friendship, compassion, and unwavering dedication to CSEA and our members!



ABOVE: Dave Glidden, Executive Director, presents Bernadette Conway, Director of Administration and Retiree Services, the Presidents Award for Dedication at the 85th Biennial Convention for 20 years of service to CSEA members.

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