



Fighting Retirement Insecurity

Talk about a retirement crisis.

A recent study found that a majority of Americans are unprepared for retirement, with 57% of workers surveyed reporting less than \$25,000 in total household savings and investments.

The Employee Benefit Research Institute survey also found that 28% of Americans have no confidence they will have enough money to retire comfortably—the highest level in the study’s 23-year history.

The results come as no surprise to any retiree or person close to retirement whose 401(k) was wiped out in the Wall Street crash of 2008. Clearly, the “three-legged stool” meant to provide retirement security (pension, savings, Social Security) is in disrepair.

Experts paint an equally troubling picture in our own state

“Middle income workers in Connecticut will fare worse than today’s retirees. Access to any retirement plan is hard to find,” Economist Joelle Saad-Lessler recently told Connecticut legislators.

According to Saad-Lessler, more than 686,000 Connecticut workers,

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Help Arrives for Newtown Workers Affected by Tragedy

Help is on the way for workers traumatized by the Newtown school tragedy, including first responders and other public employees who are AFSCME members.

On March 12, 2013, Gov. Dannel Malloy signed into law a bill establishing the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Fund after it was unanimously approved by both chambers of the state General Assembly.

The fund will complement the state’s workers’ compensation benefits, which do not include coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder or other emotional or mental trauma. It is intended for all workers affected by the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School – from first responders and teachers to dispatchers, nurses and custodians.

“We commend General Assembly leaders for uniting in a bipartisan fashion to help workers who suffered great emotional trauma from responding to the massacre,” said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano.

Workers who walked into the horrific scene inside the school on Dec. 14 – after a gunman shot and killed 20 children and six adults – were traumatized by the experience. Many who needed help the most were left to fend for themselves.



Local 562 President Thursa Isaac, third from right, looks on as Gov. Malloy signs the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program into law. Local 562 represents state police dispatchers who responded to calls on the day the tragic shootings took place.

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Organizing
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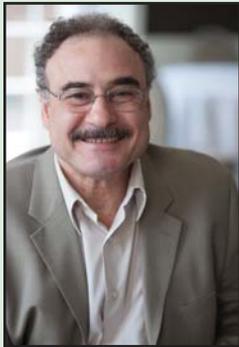
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The Wages of Inequality



I'd like you to consider some recent economic data that is troubling on many levels.

In its annual report, *The State of Working America*, the Economic Policy Institute reveals that America's vast middle class has suffered a lost decade and faces the threat of another, at the same time that income inequality has absolutely exploded:

- The median American household wealth has been steadily dropping. If family net worth had grown equally across all households, it would be \$119,000, but it's only \$57,000, less than half what it should be.
- The top 1% percent has seen its fortunes grow by 156% since 1979, while the wages of the bottom 90% of Americans have increased by only 17%.

There are accidents, and there are man-made disasters. It doesn't take an economist to figure out which category describes the corrosive effects of this steadily growing income inequality.

Thomas Hungerford of the non-partisan Congressional Research Service confirms the rapid rise in income inequality over the past 15 years, and explains why:

"The reason income inequality has been increasing has been the rising income going to the top one percent," Hungerford explained to the Washington Post. "Most of that has come in capital gains and dividends."

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither was income inequality. As the esteemed journalist Bill Moyers puts it, "America's vast inequality didn't just happen. It's been politically engineered."

Indeed it has. Disastrous politically engineered policy choices that have widened the gap between the super-rich and the rest of us and concentrated more power in the hands of corporations since President Roosevelt tamed the robber barons of the 1920s. This has seriously eroded the

economic livelihoods of middle class Americans: That's us I'm talking about.

By political engineering, Moyers means policy decisions such as cutting tax rates for wealthy individuals and corporations; deregulating industries; letting the big banks create the disastrous housing crisis; failing to protect the right of workers to organize and bargain decent contracts; and allowing the value of the minimum wage to erode beyond all reason.

Wealth inequality between the richest 1% and the rest of us has grown into a gaping chasm. This is not acceptable. We must press hard for fundamental change in Congress, the state legislature and every city and town hall.

It's time to restore (not raise!) taxes on the wealthy. It's time to close corporate loopholes for companies that ship jobs offshore or cut their workers' pay and benefits as a cost of doing business. It's time to raise federal and state minimum wages so we can get back to the time-honored concept of an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. It's time to fund the vital public services that put people to work and generate economic activity in our communities.

And it's way past time to insist that our elected leaders acknowledge the critical role unions have always played in building and protecting the middle class by bridging the economic divide between the 1% and the rest of us.

The paradigm of soaring corporate profits and nose-diving wages is no accident; it's a man-made disaster that we can and must fix – for ourselves, our unions, our families and our futures.

In solidarity

Sal Luciano
Executive Director



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Corrections Union Members Rally Against



AFSCME Local 391 members turn out for the protest against the Rocky Hill facility.

Members of the NP-4 State Correctional Bargaining Unit joined with Rocky Hill community members and lawmakers to protest the state's plan to house sick and elderly inmates and mental patients on the grounds of a former state hospital in a Rocky Hill neighborhood.

The NP-4 unions (AFSCME Locals 387, 391 and 1565) represent front line prison employees. They oppose the nursing home because the inmates have been remanded to the Department of Correction, yet would be supervised by private security guards instead of trained DOC personnel.



AFSCME Local 1565's Mike Lombardo, a Corrections Counselor and Rocky Hill resident, speaks out.

Salisbury Town Hall Employees Vote for Council 4



Back row: Barbara Bigos, Nancy Brusie, Jean Bell, Mike Fitting. Front row: Patty Williams, Rachel Lamb, Robert Stratman, Stacey Dodge, Mike Beck. Not Pictured; Kalya Johnson, Michelle Lull, Lisa McAuliffe.

Salisbury town hall employees were searching for respect on the job. They found it by voting to join Council 4 in a union representation election.

"We need job security, plain and simple," said Senior Services Director Michael Beck, who will serve as president of the new bargaining unit.

"We have a great group of dedicated workers who want to finish their careers here and protect the services we provide to Salisbury citizens and businesses," Beck added.

Council 4 Field Representative David Testa helped organize the workers. Council 4 Staff Representative Tim Oppenheimer will advocate for the local union in negotiations for a first contract.

East Windsor Dispatchers Join Council 4, Get New Contract

Serving as a public safety dispatcher is a challenging job. For the members of AFSCME Local 1303-460, it's a job made more secure by Council 4 representation.

The bargaining unit recently negotiated its first contract after choosing to join Council 4. The four-year agreement includes general wage increases totaling 8% and protects a work schedule that members say is critical to achieving a balance between job and personal demands. "Council 4 did a great job for us," said Local 1303-460 President Sharon Bourke. "Our goal was to protect what we had."

Local 1303-460 members praised Council 4 Staff Representative Laurie Webster for her work on their behalf and said Council 4's experience in advocating for dispatchers, whether at the bargaining table or the state legislature, played a major role in the decision to affiliate.

"We've got some challenging issues to deal with," Bourke noted, pointing to the lack of portal-to-portal workers'

compensation for dispatchers and the increased push for regionalizing services. "It's good to know Council 4 has our back and will fight for us."



Seated: Lorelei Rounds (l) and Sharon Bourke. Standing: BettyAnn Sheridan (l) and Cindy Urso.

Council 4 Recognizes Members at Annual Conference



Council 4 presented an outstanding group of union members with Special Recognition Awards at our Annual Conference last month in Danbury. Congratulations to the 2013 honorees, who are listed here:

Dean Gozzo, Local 184

Tom Mathiau, Local 184

Cheryl Christian, Local 196

John Neveu, Local 233

Karen Collins, Local 355

Shermaine Cooke, Local 478

Tonya Nelson, Local 478

Cheryl Drolet, Local 538

Nicoletta Quattro, Local 562

Jennifer Weekes-Osinowo, Local 562

Betsy Ann Brennan, Local 562

Karen LaPrade, Local 562

Mark Nedeau, Local 562

Therese O'Connor, Local 610

Chris Nowacki, Local 818

Barbara Yeager, Local 818

Rebecca Fettig, Local 1049

Thomas Ramsdell, Local 1303-136

Jeff Thomas, Local 1303-200

Sally Cox, Local 1303-215

Susan Fahy, Local 1303-215

Kathleen Kloeblen, Local 1303-215

Kathy Harrington, Local 1378

Cortello Family, Local 1522

David Kissko, Local 1579

Joseph East, Local 2422

Marilyn Fox, Local 2663

Esther Boriss, Local 2836

James LoMonaco, Local 2836

Janice Reska, Local 2836

Drita Bulica, Local 2930

Denise Griffith, Local 2930

Harold Brooks, Local 3144

CherylN Poindexter, Local 3144

Tania Gonzalez, Local 3713

Michael Oakes, Local 3429

Earl Jackson, Local 3429

Go to www.council4.org and click on our photo gallery to see more photos from our 2013 Conference.

Region 1 School Employees Support Their Community

AFSCME Local 1303-266, representing non-certified school employees in the Region 1 school district, donated \$2,500 to support organizations focused on helping children and providing mental health services.

The union donated \$1,000 to the Housatonic Valley Youth Services Bureau in Falls Village; \$1,000 to the Northwest Center for Family Service & Mental Health in Torrington; and \$500 to the Sandy Hook Memorial Playground Fund.

"The Sandy Hook tragedy really hit home for us," said Local 1303-266 President Julie Lang, the Executive Secretary at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. "Our members felt strongly about doing something to benefit children and families, as well as mental health."

AFSCME Local 1303-266 represents paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians and IT employees in Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon,



Local 1303-266 members, l-r: Gina Jasmine, Beth Ann Krupa, Julie Lang, Susan Harris, Michelle Curtis, In the back row: Katie Wood, Cindy Fuller, Pete Peterson, Jonathan Warren and Patricia Rimany.

Norwich City Workers Settle First Contract

Less than a year after joining Council 4, members of AFSCME Local 2422, Norwich City Hall employees, overwhelmingly ratified a three-year contract with the City. The three-year agreement includes general wage increases totaling 6 percent and lowers the health insurance premium share to 11.5% from 13% in the first year.

“This is a fair agreement for city workers as well as the residents and businesses that rely on the services we proudly provide,” said AFSCME Local 2422 President Angelo Callis. “Negotiations were difficult. The city’s representative filed for impasse and moved the matter to binding arbitration against our objections. We were focused and resolute and able to reach a settlement.”

The Local 2422 bargaining team included Angelo Callis, Debra DelaPorta, Thomas Dougherty, Susan Goldman and Joe East. Council 4 Staff Representative Wayne Meyers served as the union’s advocate during the negotiations.



L-R: AFSCME Local 2422 members Thomas Dougherty, Debra DelaPorta and Angelo Callis; Council 4 Staff Rep Wayne Meyers and Service Rep Scott Soares; and Local 2422 members Susan Goldman, Joe East and Tenley Nelson.

Berlin School Secretaries Join Council 4

School secretaries employed by the Berlin Board of Education are among the newest members of Council 4 after voting to join our union in a representation election.

“Everyone’s excited to be part of Council 4,” said AFSCME Local 1278 President Tracey Lentini, who works at Berlin High School. “The vote to join AFSCME was overwhelming. We needed a new style of representation to move forward.”

The new local represents 21 workers. Along with Lentini, Local 1278 members elected Wendy Weed as Vice President and Ashley Dorsey as Treasurer.



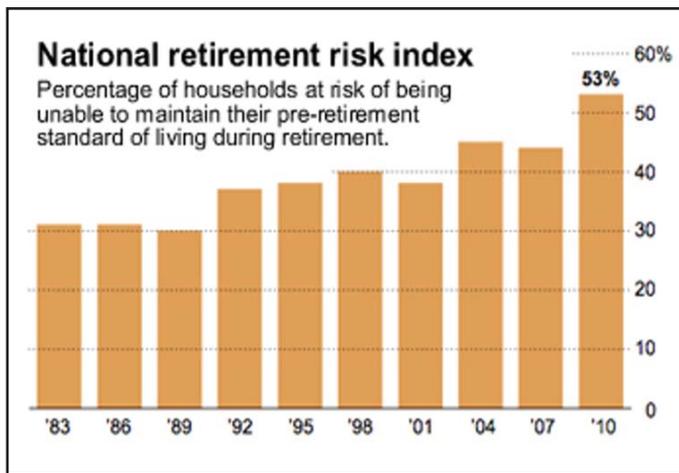
Pictured, l-r: Local 1278 members Linda Rogers, Christine Zigmont, Tari Joyce, Karen Bergstrom, Marie Siegal, Tracey Lentini, Angela Campagna, Carol Mongillo, Ashley Dorsey.

Training and Empowering Our Union Members



Council 4 Education Coordinator Joe Aresimowicz, above, leads a Steward Training for AFSCME Local 269 (State P-2 Unit) at our office in New Britain. Below, members of West Haven Locals 176, 345, 393, 681, 2706 (covering housing authority, water pollution control, library, city and board of education non-certified employees) participate in a similar leadership training held at the Ora Mason Library in West Haven.





age 25 to 64, did not have access to a retirement plan through their employer in 2010. That's why Council 4 is urging legislators to develop a state-administered, affordable, voluntary public retirement plan to expand retirement security and boost the local economy.

"We want to make sure that after a lifetime of work, every future retiree has the opportunity to retire with adequate income and dignity," Karen Friedman, Executive Vice President and Policy Director of the Pension Rights Center, told Connecticut legislators.

Saad-Lessler and Friedman testified before the General Assembly on two proposed bills (SB 885, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Evaluate the Utility of Creating

a Public Retirement Plan; and of SB 54, An Act Establishing a Retirement Savings Plan for Low-Income Private Sector Workers) that would ease retirement insecurity in Connecticut.

Our union is also fighting legislation that would harm the pensions of state and municipal workers. One particularly ghoulish bill would enable the state to purchase "dead-peasant insurance" policies on the lives of state employees, with the state as the beneficiary. Another proposed bill would increase the contribution paid by local government workers into the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS) without requiring municipalities to increase their fair share toward level funding.

Amid the fight for decent retirements, there is good news. Pensions are solidly recovering from the Wall Street crash, reducing their burden on state budgets. A study from the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College says that state and local pension reform efforts are offsetting the effects of the financial crisis. In most of the 32 plans examined, pension reforms have fully offset or more than offset the impact of the financial crisis.

In Connecticut, the study projected that the share of state and local budgets devoted to pensions would drop from 7 percent today to 2.2 percent by 2046.

Log onto www.campaignforretirementsecurity.com and learn more about how you can support expanding retirement security for Connecticut workers.

Local 269 Member Pushes Back Against Anti-Union Editorial

The Waterbury Republican-American is legendary for its seemingly daily invectives against unions. When the newspaper recently did a hatchet job on state workers, calling Connecticut "a paradise of state employees," Susan Gillespie of AFSCME Local 269 (State Department of Labor) responded in a letter published March 10:

"Connecticut state employees work hard, are committed to serving the public and love where they live. They are hardly living in a paradise of riches as The Sunday Republican suggested in its March 10 editorial "High-priced workforce."

"As a 25-year veteran of state service, my co-workers and I are proud to provide vital services to our communities. That's why we've agreed to hundreds of millions of dollars in concessions, including wage freezes and changes to our health care. We work hard and earn every cent of our regular wages and overtime. That money goes back to the state as taxes, and back to the economy

through purchases of products and services, generating jobs and keeping food on the table for other Connecticut residents.

"We will not apologize and will continue to work with pride. Decent wages, health care and the ability to retire with dignity are the foundations for a solid middle-class existence. Labor unions like mine have played an important role in laying that foundation. We believe a rising economic tide lifts all boats.

"The Sunday Republican editorial page, by contrast, wants to undermine the middle class by breaking the power of workers to stand up for their rights, and lowering wages and benefits for everyone across the board, within and outside of unions.

"Fortunately, Connecticut voters have not embraced [your newspaper's] cynical effort to keep the middle class fighting against itself in a spiraling race to the bottom."

More Revenues for Connecticut – Not Cuts

Better Choices for Connecticut, a coalition dedicated to creating a more sustainable and fair revenue system for the state, is calling on the Governor and legislators to consider raising taxes on residents earning more than \$1 million per year and closing corporate tax loopholes.

“We believe Connecticut can and should make different decisions about how to raise revenue and invest in the public good,” said Liz Dupont-Diehl, Policy Director of the Connecticut Association for Human Services. “To say that we need to continually reduce services before we have fairly raised taxes on those who can afford to pay is a false choice that only stunts our economic recovery and hinders the ability of working families and our middle class to succeed.”

Council 4 is a member of the Better Choices Coalition, which is made up of more than 50 non-profit, advocacy, labor, faith and other organizations. The Better Choices revenue options include:

1) **Raise income taxes for the top 1-2%: \$400 million.** Ask the wealthiest 1-2% of taxpayers to chip in a bit more while keeping our rates below New York's. New rates should be:

- 6.8% on income from \$1 to 2 million (NY's is 6.85%)
- 8.8% on income over \$2 million (NY's is 8.82%)

2) **Eliminate tax cuts for wealthy heirs and heiresses: \$25 million.** Connecticut can no longer afford the estate tax cut enacted in 2009.

3) **Close corporate tax loopholes with mandatory combined reporting: \$90 million.** Our tax system allows

multistate corporations to shift profits to subsidiaries in states with lower taxes. Requiring combined reporting of corporate incomes—which 22 states do—would expose the tax avoiders and close these loopholes.

4) **Use the throwback rule so corporate income doesn't escape taxation: \$20 million.** Since the 50 states' tax systems do not always sync perfectly, income from some multistate corporations falls through the cracks and is not taxed anywhere. The throwback rule makes sure this “nowhere income” is taxed appropriately.

5) **Reduce corporate tax expenditures: \$75 million.** Tax breaks for Connecticut's largest corporations have grown enormously over the past 20 years, but job growth has been virtually nonexistent. We should set annual caps on business tax credits and examine them regularly to make sure they are delivering real benefits.

6) **Improve enforcement at the Department of Revenue Services: \$75 million.** Every year, millions of dollars in taxes go uncollected because we do not have enough staff at DRS to catch corporate and wealthy tax avoiders and cheats. In lean times like these, at the very least we should ensure existing tax law is enforced.

7) **Increase the sales tax on certain professional services and luxury purchases: \$100 million+.** It is time our sales tax code acknowledges the shift from a goods- to a service-based economy and taxes both appropriately. We must also examine tax breaks that disproportionately benefit wealthier residents.

Learn more at betterchoicesforCT.org

Help Arrives, Continued from Page 1

“This fund will now take care of our members' immediate needs,” said Jeffrey Matchett, executive director of AFSCME Council 15, which includes members of the Newtown Police Department.

The Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program will be privately funded and administered by the state Office of Victim Services.

A coalition of unions that included Council 4, Council 15, AFT Connecticut and the AFL-CIO, worked for the passage of the legislation. Council 4 represents state police dispatchers, along with Newtown dispatchers, school nurses and public works employees.

The unions will continue pressing for legislation so that Connecticut's worker's compensation system covers treatment costs for mental illnesses resulting from future workplace traumas.



Council 4 presented Newtown responders and town workers with Special Recognition Awards at our annual conference in Danbury last month. L-R: Council 4 Staff Rep Kelly Martinez (accepting for Local 1303-136 Newtown Dispatchers); Karen LaPrade, Local 562, State Police Dispatchers/Troop L; Thursa Isaac, Local 562 President and Council 4 Conference Chair; Sally Cox, Local 1303-215, Newtown School Nurses; Jeff Thomas, Newtown Public Works, Local 1303-200; Betsy Brennan, Local 562, State Police Dispatchers/Troop L; Maddie Allen, Local 1303-215, Newtown School Nurses; and Mark Nadeau, Local 562, State Police Dispatchers, Troop L.

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CONNECTICUT VETERAN'S MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC Sponsored by Council 4 AFSCME

WHEN: Saturday, May 18, 2013

TIME: 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Rocky Hill Veterans Home & Hospital
287 West Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

This event will be held rain or shine!

To volunteer and help our veterans, please contact :
Steve Curran, AFSCME Local 1565, Chair
CT Veterans Committee
203-509-6342

Council 4 Lobby Day May 8, 2013 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Old Judiciary Room State Capitol 210 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT

Info: Matthew Brokman
mbrokman@council4.org

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