



Health Insurance Pooling Highlights Challenging Legislative Session



Council 4 members turned out in force for our annual Legislative Lobby Day in Hartford.

Against the backdrop of a contentious and bitter partisan debate over the state budget deficit, Council 4 accomplished many of the goals laid out in our legislative agenda for the 2015 session of the Connecticut General Assembly that finally concluded at the end of June.

The passage of SB 913, a landmark health care pooling law, headlined our achievements.

This bill will enable municipalities and boards of education to voluntarily enroll their employees in the state health insurance plan "at cost," thus reining in rising health care costs, providing taxpayers with significant savings and ensuring employees access to high-quality, affordable coverage.

Pooling, Continued on Page 7

Rowland Lawsuit: Long March to Justice

The wheels of justice may turn slowly, but in Connecticut they turned decisively toward workers.

Just ask Merisa Williams of Local 562 (NP-3 Clerical) and Paul Lavallee of Local 2663 (P-2 Social & Human Services), two of the more than 2,700 Connecticut public employees who are on the winning end of a 12-year legal battle recently marked by the state legislature's approval of an out-of-court settlement for up to an estimated \$125 million in back pay and additional leave time.

The settlement stems from former Gov. John Rowland's decision in 2003 to fire 2,300 unionized workers and force an additional 400 to take lower paying jobs. Under the guise of fiscal savings, the three-term governor, who has been convicted twice on corruption charges, attempted to break the unions by targeting only bargaining unit members for layoff.

Council 4 members didn't back down, working in concert with the 16 unions that comprise the State Employees Bargaining Agency Coalition (SEBAC) to take the state to court and fight the injustice.

The U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in 2013 that the state violated its employees' First Amendment right to freedom of association by discriminatorily laying off only union members. They concluded that the state employees were fired because of their union membership. Settlement talks with the State concluded in April.

"This outcome sends a clear message to elected officials across the country that when you target workers — when you go after unions and their families — we will not be bullied and we will not give up until we get justice for everyone," said Williams, who, like many layoff victims, was out of work for six months.

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State employees held several rallies in the winter of 2003 to protest the Rowland layoffs that were recently ruled a violation of law.

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A Tale of Two Jeffreys



If you're looking for a dose of common sense about the state budget and the taxes we pay – not to mention a refrigerator or a television – then stop by Bousquet's Appliances and TV in Danielson. Jeffrey Bousquet is proud that he's kept his family-owned business alive in the age of big box retailers.

A couple of years ago, Bousquet joined with the Better Choices for Connecticut Coalition in highlighting the need for new revenues to help balance the state budget while protecting critical services from further cuts. One idea he supported was establishing mandatory (or unitary) combined reporting to prevent multi-state corporations like GE from avoiding state income taxes on profits made here in CT.

Unitary corporate reporting, Bousquet told reporters, would have a virtuous impact: "It will also help level the playing field with small businesses. We have to remember that small business is the staple of our community, donating to our local little league teams, churches and schools."

It should be noted that *Bousquet pays more in state taxes than Fairfield-based General Electric Corporation* whose equipment he sells to consumers. His words made sense back then, and even more so now, in the aftermath of a messy and tumultuous legislative session that disintegrated in part over the inclusion of landmark unitary reporting provisions in the budget. But when Corporate Connecticut, most notably General Electric, Aetna and Travelers, whined, moaned and threatened to leave the state, Gov. Malloy and legislators crafted a revised spending and revenue package that reduced the offending corporate tax increases.

As this newsletter went to press, legislators were set to vote on the budget in the June 29-30 special session. Whatever the outcome of the budget debate, we must continue standing up and speaking truth to power. While corporations like GE

claim that Connecticut's business tax burden is too high, a study by Ernst and Young for the Council on State Taxation found that Connecticut businesses face the second lowest state and local tax burden in the nation.

What's more, Citizens for Tax Justice just released a report showing that GE has been astonishingly successful in reducing or even zeroing out their state income taxes nationwide

According to CTJ, in 2014 alone, GE reported \$5.75 billion in U.S. profits, and didn't pay a dime in current state income taxes on those profits. In fact, the company received a net state income tax rebate of \$71 million. Over the five-year period between 2010 and 2014, the company reported \$34 billion in U.S. profits and paid just \$530 million in current state income taxes nationwide, for an effective state income tax rate of just 1.6 percent.

When we let corporations and the super-rich off the hook, the burden gets shifted in some pretty ugly and fundamentally unfair ways.

Which brings us to another Jeffrey — in this case Jeffrey Immelt, CEO of the same General Electric company that manufactures the products that Jeffrey Bousquet sells. Last year, Immelt hauled in a salary of \$37,250,774, not including stock options. The average Connecticut worker, by contrast, earned \$49,201, according to the AFL-CIO's Executive Paywatch website.

Call me naïve, but our economy and our society are better off when we listen more to the Jeffrey Bousquets and less to the Jeffrey Immelts. That's why Council 4 will continue to fight for a state budget that asks our wealthiest citizens and biggest corporations to pay a bit more in taxes to fund the services our members provide to every citizen of this state, regardless of their station in life.

In solidarity,

Sal Luciano

Sal Luciano
Executive Director



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P-2 Members Lead Fight to Save Social Services in Torrington



L-R: Local 714 members Glenn Guerrero, Tina Churchill and Neil Winn, all from the Torrington DSS office, at Council 4 Lobby Day in May.

In Torrington, an oppressive Connecticut winter got chillier when Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's proposed two-year budget recommended closing the local Department of Social Services office.

By early June, the weather changed, and so did the mood, as the legislature passed a revised budget that included funds to keep the Torrington DSS branch open.

What happened to change the picture? Members of AFSCME Local 714 (State P-2 Social & Human Services) campaigned to save their office, which serves more than 20 towns in Northwest Connecticut and assists thousands of vulnerable residents.

"Many of our clients have been facing difficult economic times for several years," said Tina Churchill, a veteran eligibility services specialist at the Torrington office. "They are barely making ends meet, even when they are working. Closing our office would have been a disaster for them."

"Traveling to [DSS offices in] Waterbury or Danbury was not a viable option for many of the people we help," added Glenn Guerrero, also an eligibility services specialist. "They simply don't have the transportation. We couldn't let their safety net get shredded."

Local 714 members like Churchill and Guerrero spoke out in opposition to the proposed closing through phone calls, emails, letters and personal visits with state legislators. They also collected hundreds of signatures on a petition. Members of Locals 2663 (P-2) and 562 (NP-3 Clerical) also contributed to the team effort.

AFSCME members magnified their voices through a coalition that included local municipal officials, human service agencies and the clients themselves. State Rep. Michelle Cook, whose district includes the local DSS branch, spearheaded the legislative effort to restore funding for the Torrington office.

"It wasn't lost on us that we were fighting to protect people in need at the same time legislators were debating a budget plan that asked Connecticut's wealthiest citizens and most profitable corporations to pay their fair share toward the common good," said AFSCME Local 714 President Jay Bartolomei, an eligibility services supervisor at the Hartford DSS office.

A Campaign for Dignity and a Contract in Killingly

Credit the members of AFSCME Local 3689, representing Killingly School Instructional Assistants, with patience and persistence. After going more than two years without a contract, the bargaining unit overwhelmingly ratified a new four-year collective bargaining agreement that includes general wage increases totaling more than 8% (with significant salary step movement), holds the line of health insurance costs and provides early release days for professional development.

The settlement – which also received the approval of the Board of Education – was crafted as the two sides entered interest arbitration over wages and health care.

Local 3689 members channeled their frustration over the lack of a contract by mobilizing their ranks and the Killingly community. Union members turned out and spoke up at Board of Education meetings, took out an advertisement in the local newspaper and kept the local media in the loop.

"We make sure every child in Killingly receives a quality education within a structured but nurturing environment," said AFSCME Local 3689 President Tricia Santos, an instructional assistant at Killingly Central School. "We were simply asking to be treated with dignity and respect. We accomplished that with our new contract. We're going to continue to be education advocates, not just for ourselves but for our students."

Santos credited Council 4 for providing the resources necessary to help the members over the course of a two-year struggle. Staff Representative Kelly Cashman advocated for the Local with assistance from Field Representative John Cole.



Council 4 Members Remembered at Workers Memorial Day

April 28 was a day to mourn for the dead and fight for the living as Council 4 marked Workers Memorial Day with a ceremony of remembrance at our Workers Memorial Monument in New Britain.

We paid tribute to Council 4 members who have died on the job since last year's event:

- **Anthony Amato III, Local 1303-385.** Anthony was a Foreman at the Westport sewage treatment plant, a former volunteer firefighter and special police officer in Westport. He was a dedicated husband and father whose family honored us with their presence at Workers Memorial Day.

- **Eddie Lee Love, Local 818.** Eddie was a Foreman and Superintendent with the Bridgeport Housing Authority. Eddie was a devoted husband and loving father, a man celebrated for his calming influence on others.

- **Iris Maxwell, Local 1716.** Iris was a legend at the Hartford Public Library, where she spent 18 years as a

children's librarian, bringing the joy of reading and learning to kids and their families. Members and co-workers from Local 1716 joined us to remember Iris.

- **Jorge Soto, Local 1579.** Jorge was employed as a custodian with the Torrington Board of Education and also served as a bilingual instructor. He was a loving husband and father of two. We were honored that his family attended our ceremony.

"Anthony, Eddie, Iris and Jorge left this world doing what they loved, helping others," Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano said, during the ceremony.

Every year on April 28 the unions of the AFL-CIO take time out to remember workers who died or suffered illness or injury on the job. Workers Memorial Day coincides with the enactment in 1970 of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).



Westport Local 1303-385 President Joseph Izzo, left, and member David Demace place flowers of remembrance for their co-worker Anthony Amato.



Local 1716 President William Ball and Vice President David Ionno took time to remember co-worker Iris Maxwell.

Essex DPW Union Pays Tribute to Fallen Tolland Colleague

On March 19, a Tolland Department of Public Works employee died tragically when a dump truck backed into him while he was filling potholes.

The death of 50-year-old David Ridzon, a Teamsters union member, prompted hundreds of public works employees, clad in fluorescent yellow work vests, from Connecticut and other states to attend his funeral in a show of sympathy and solidarity. Among them was Bill Angier, an equipment operator for the Town of Essex and president of AFSCME Local 1303-285.

"It's sad when you lose someone who does the same kind of work as you," Angier reflected. "I wanted to show respect for [Ridzon]."

Angier thanked First Selectman Norm Needleman and Public Works Director David Caroline for releasing him to attend the funeral ceremony.

The Essex crew consists of just four employees, who perform a wide variety of challenging physical tasks, including tar patching. "Filling potholes is a job we all do," Angier reflected. "When you go to work, you have to hope for the best and prepare for the worst."



Local 1303-285 President Bill Angier.

What's a Union Mean? \$70,000 for Local 2405's Tim Slauson

A good union fights hard for its members when they're wronged. And when Operations Management International, the private company that manages Norwalk's wastewater treatment plant, mistreated veteran worker Tim Slauson, his union, AFSCME Local 2405, and Council 4, pushed back.



Tim Slauson, center, holding check, with fellow AFSCME Local 2405 members.

In early 2014, OMI terminated Slauson, an operator with more than 25 years on the job. Local 2405 and Council 4 took up Slauson's cause, maintaining that the termination was without cause and that OMI had additionally violated Slauson's right under the Family and Medical Leave Act. It took 13 months, but Slauson returned to work after receiving more than \$70,000 in back pay and benefits to make him whole.

"The union did a great job for me," he said. "It shows what happens when you have someone protecting you."

Local 2405's Paul Dirsas, the chief steward at OMI, worked with Local 2405 President Milton Giddiens and Council 4 Staff Representative Todd Webb to help return Slauson to work and get back the money he was rightfully owed by OMI.

Norwich Local 2422 Saves Recreation Department

When the City of Norwich announced a reorganization plan this spring to break up the Recreation Department, AFSCME Local 2422 members responded with a community campaign they called "Don't Wreck the Rec."

Their efforts — which included a community petition, press outreach and speaking before the City Council — paid off as the City withdrew a petition before the State Board of Labor Relations that would have allowed modification of the makeup of Local 2422 by excluding four Recreation Facilities employees from the bargaining unit and moving them to the Department of Public Works. "This is a victory for the community," said Local 2422 President Angelo Callis.



Local 269 Members Share Union Solidarity in Greece

In late January 2015, seven members of AFSCME Local 269 (State P-2 Social & Human Services) and former local union president Blair Bertaccini participated in a seminar/training at the headquarters of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Athens, Greece at their own expense. The Local 269 members who took part were Emily Demicco, Melva Falberg, Xavier Gordon (current union president), Tenisha O'Reggio, Ashley Rivera, Steve Wierbicki and Amanda Winer..

Workshop presenters from Greece, Palestine, India, South Africa and Peru covered topics such as economics, bargaining and labor trends in other nations. "It was an eye-opener for me to see the lack of opportunities and a strong voice for workers around the globe," O'Reggio observed. "That's why international solidarity is so important. We're not alone in the struggle for workers' rights and strong unions."

The WFTU will organize another seminar for North American union members this year. If you're a Council 4 member and interested in participating, please contact Blair Bertaccini at (203) 574-0063.



Local 269 members were among the many trade unionists who traveled to Athens for the WFTU Summit in January.

East Lyme Dispatchers Demonstrate Their Value to Town

Chalk one up for quality public services delivered by AFSCME members – this time in East Lyme, CT, where First Selectman Mark Nickerson announced the town would not pursue regionalizing or outsourcing dispatch operations as Nickerson's predecessor, now State Senator Paul Formica, had done.

"I have no intention of moving our dispatch center out of town anytime soon, if at all," Nickerson wrote to the East Lyme dispatch community. "There is a sense of pride in our community that we serve and care for one another. That community spirit is a very special commodity that cannot be bought by a few dollars in savings."

"This is great news," said Forrest Andrews, President of AFSCME Local 1303-436, the union representing East Lyme dispatchers. We look forward to working with our First Selectman and other leaders in continuing to deliver the gold standard of quality public emergency services that our community has come to enjoy," Andrews said.

"It is our honor to be [the town's] first call for help in any situation, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," Andrews added.



L-R: East Lyme Dispatchers Molly Perrino, Forrest Andrews and Erik Quinn.

Courtney Pushes Legislation to Repeal ACA Excise Tax

Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-2) recently unveiled new legislation that would repeal the excise tax on high-cost health insurance plans scheduled to go into effect in 2018.

Also known as the "Cadillac tax," the policy would apply a 40 percent tax on health insurance expenditures over \$10,200 per person and \$27,500 per family.

The excise tax was established in a later version of the Affordable Care Act, but its scheduled implementation was delayed five years by an effort led by Courtney with 191

House colleagues in 2010.

Courtney said, "The excise tax is a flawed, one-size-fits-all penalty that will degrade workers' benefits, lead employers to choose less comprehensive plans, and force families to pay more out-of-pocket health care costs."

Studies of the excise tax policy have indicated that it will have a disproportionate and rapidly increasing impact on older workers, women, and workers in high-cost regions such as the Northeast.

Bridgeport Police Remember Their Own



L-R: Patrolman Richard Mercado, Patrolman Marie Cetti and Sgt. Charles Paris of Local 1159.

In honor of National Law Enforcement Week, members of AFSCME Local 1159, the Bridgeport Police Union, visited local cemeteries to place flags of remembrance in honor of their deceased law enforcement colleagues from the Bridgeport Police Department.

"We don't want these men and women ever to be forgotten," said Local 1159 President Charles Paris during a visit to St. Michael's Cemetery in Stratford.

"Many of our officers live in Bridgeport and are part of the extended community. This is a way of saying thanks, and remembering those who came before us," added Patrolman and Union Secretary Richard Mercado.

Union Steward Marie Cetti expressed similar sentiments as a four-year patrolman. "It's important to remember not only where we came from, but where we're going," she observed. "These are the people who paved the way for us."

Local 1159 represents more than 300 Bridgeport police officers and recently affiliated with Council 4.

We've been advocating for "true pooling" for more than a decade. Council 4 members, both state and municipal, stepped up to the plate to help make it a reality. They sent thousands of post cards and emails, and called their legislators to personally support the bill.

Another session highlight was the enactment of SB 963, which requires the state Department of Education to establish a curriculum for the instruction of labor history and capitalism in Connecticut's public schools.

Working with probate court employees, Council 4 again advocated for legislation that would give the 300-plus clerks and probate court officers the right to decide for themselves whether or not to form a union. While this bill made progress, it did not reach a vote on the floor despite the positive support of the legislature's Labor Committee.

Council 4 also made progress in educating legislators about the need to provide paraprofessionals with additional training. SB 972 would have required Boards of Education to provide professional development to paraprofessionals. It passed three committees on a bipartisan basis, but ultimately did not make it through both chambers.

Council 4's legislative and political advocacy team of Brian Anderson and Matthew Brokman worked tirelessly to make sure the final state budget was a fair document that funds the vital public services our members provide.

The final budget had many positive elements. It protected state employee jobs and maintained the financial commitment to fully funding our state members' pensions. It also included funding to maintain the Torrington Department of Social Services office, which had been threatened with closure. (See p. 3.)

Moreover, we blocked an attempt by the Republican House and Senate caucus to impose a "special concession tax" on state employees to the tune of \$283 million per year.



House Majority Leader (and Council 4 Education Coordinator) Joe Aresimowicz fired up the crowd at Council 4 Lobby Day.

Lost amid the rancorous debate over General Electric's threat to leave Connecticut because of a slight increase in business taxes is the fact that the legislature took a step toward fairness by increasing taxes on individuals making more than \$500,000 and couples making more than \$1 million by two tenths of a percent as part of the plan to raise needed revenue.

The Finance Committee had additionally proposed increasing taxes on capital gains. That piece, unfortunately, failed to make it into the final budget package.

The budget reached at the end of the regular session on June 3 also instituted a sorely needed mechanism known as "combined reporting" to prevent corporations from shielding their profits to avoid paying taxes the rest of us pay.

Unfortunately the big business lobby, led by the Connecticut Business & Industry Association, screamed in opposition to the tax increases, using Fairfield-based General Electric's threat to leave the state as a hammer to smash efforts at creating a fair revenue stream. Significantly, there were signs that GE had been planning for some time to abandon Connecticut, and used the new tax changes to dodge their responsibilities.

The governor proposed to roll back roughly \$220 million in business taxes (including a deferral of the combined reporting measure until July 1, 2016) and substitute spending cuts that were not announced. A special "budget implementer" session took place June 29-30 as this publication went to press.

Thanks to all of our members who made their voices heard throughout this long and difficult legislative session. AFSCME Green was an omnipresent force at the General Assembly, culminating in our Lobby Day on May 20 that attracted more than 200 Council 4 members and left legislators visibly impressed, whether they agreed or disagreed with our positions.

Please go to www.council4.org for a more complete summary of the 2015 legislative session.



Local 1186 President Susan Egan testified against a proposed bill to end municipal employee pensions, one of many anti-labor bills we successfully stopped.



Members of our NP-3 State Clerical Bargaining Unit testified before the Labor Committee in favor of pension equity legislation.

Legislature Rejects 401(k) Study for State Employees



**Judicial Local 749 President
Tino Sampaio.**

Council 4 is pointing to a recent recommendation from the legislative Program Review & Investigations (PRI) Committee staff as further evidence that replacing real pension plans with 401(k)-style savings plans is flawed public policy.

In an April 17 memorandum to Co-Chairs Sen. John Fonfara and Christie Carpino, PRI Committee staff advised against studying the feasibility of replacing state employee pensions with 401(k), or defined contribution, savings plans. Among other points, the memorandum noted that establishing a defined contribution retirement plan for new state employees would not reduce the existing unfunded pension liability but would cost more than a defined benefit plan.

PRI Committee staff also emphasized the State could not establish a new plan until the expiration of the SEBAC health and pension agreement in 2022.

The PRI recommendations came on the heels of a new report by the National Institute on Retirement Security showing that the average working household has virtually no retirement savings. According to the NIRS study, the median retirement account balance is \$2,500 for all working-age households and \$14,500 for near-retirement households.

One Council 4 local union leader said the NIRS report underscores the risk of substituting risky defined contribution plans for defined benefit plans that promote broad-based prosperity.

“I’m so thankful that I have a pension. It’s the reason I’ll be able to retire with dignity and spend some money in my community,” said Tino Sampaio, an investigator for the Public Defender’s Office and president of AFSCME Local 749, which represents 1,600 state judicial and criminal justice employees. “The solution to retirement insecurity isn’t taking away pensions from those who have them. It’s making sure everyone has access to a decent retirement.”

State Dispatchers Praise Decision to Scrap Consolidation

State police dispatchers represented by Council 4’s NP-3 Administrative-Clerical Bargaining Unit cheered loudly when Dora Schriro, commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), announced plans to reinstate dispatching and call-taking services at all state police barracks, starting in July, 2015. The announcement capped a more than year-long review of the consolidations that had been put in place by her predecessor in 2012 – and uniformly greeted with criticism from the public and staff, including uniformed state troopers and dispatchers.

Tim Walker of AFSCME Local 610, lead dispatcher at the Tolland barracks, welcomed the reversal as great news for all parties involved. “Reinstating dispatch and call taking functions at all troops is the best way to ensure the public’s safety and well-being. The governor and the commissioner deserve credit for listening to the concerns raised by front-line workers at barracks across the state,” he said.

According to Council 4 Staff Representative Jeff Scanlon, chief negotiator for the NP-3 unit, efforts to reduce the number of state police dispatch centers from 12 to 5 put a strain on services, particularly in eastern Connecticut. “You’re always going to have overtime in a 24/7 operation,” Scanlon said. “But for us, the combination of inadequate staffing and involuntary overtime was not an acceptable cost of doing business. It was compromising the safety of our members and the public.”

Working with Council 4 staff, state police dispatchers were able to bargain the impact of the consolidation at the same time they engaged legislators and news reporters to make their case for restoring 24/7 coverage to all the barracks.

Watertown Local 1049 Hits 50

Congratulations and thanks to the members of Local 1049, Watertown Board of Education Employees, who marked their 50th anniversary as a chartered AFSCME union. As Local President Tom Romano (accepting plaque from Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano) told his members, “You are the union.” Local 1049 represents custodial/maintenance, food service and information technology employees.



Rowland Lawsuit: What's Next for Members

On June 1, the General Assembly formally approved funding — \$20,700,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2016 and \$4,722,000 in FY 2017 — for the settlement in the lawsuit over former Gov. John Rowland's illegal layoffs in 2003.

The settlement next goes to federal court for review and final approval. Members of the affected class of state workers will receive advance notice of a hearing date, which is expected to take place this fall.

Compensation under the settlement will depend on whether class members were laid off, "bumped" to a different position within the state workforce, or suffered some other adverse job-related consequence.

Those members will receive compensation for their financial losses. In addition, there will be compensation available to all members of the class for non-tangible losses due to the chilling of members' rights to freedom of speech and association as a result of the former governor's anti-union animus. Such compensation will range from a minimum of \$100 or 1.5 personal days for members who were not tangibly injured, to a maximum of \$1,500 or 10 vacation and 5 personal leave days for members who were laid off.

Check www.council4.org for the latest updates, including a link to a new SEBAC class action web page.

Rowland, continued from page 1

Williams, who now works as a secretary at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, vividly remembers the day she was laid off from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services in New Haven. "I didn't know how I made it home that day through the tears rolling down my face," she recalled.

Lavallee, now the president of Local 2663, was working as adolescent specialist for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in Norwich when Rowland eliminated his position, forcing him to bump into a completely different job within DCF as an information technology consultant. "In one day, I went from being a subject matter expert in adolescent programming to being a software expert with no training," he said.



Rowland targets: Merisa Williams of Local 562 (NP-3 Clerical) and Paul Lavallee of Local 2663 (P-2 Human Services).

"A governor is supposed to set the standard for fair play," Lavallee continued. "Rowland abused his authority as governor to achieve political and personal satisfaction with complete disregard for the citizens he pledged to serve. His selfish behavior not only hurt dedicated state employees, it also diminished the quality of services that were being provided to Connecticut most vulnerable populations."

New London Local 1378 Contract Improves Wages, Pensions

During the brutal winter of 2015, New London Mayor Daryl Finizio went on CNN to praise the efforts of city employees, describing them as "the real New England Patriots" for their round the clock clean-up efforts.



Photo: Seated, l-r: Local 1378 Vice President Marianna Gaynor McGuirk, President David Kotecki and Negotiating Team member Brenda Fleming. Standing: Council 4 Staff Representative Troy Raccuia, Local 1378 E-Board members Wayne Burroughs, Bill Barlow, Kathy Harrington, Negotiating Team member Mary Carroll and Local Treasurer Danielle Delalla.

A few months later, members of AFSCME Local 1378, the New London Public Works Union, ratified a new collective bargaining agreement that respects and rewards their work throughout the year.

Under the terms of the four-year contract, Local 1378 members will receive general wage increases totaling six percent (a freeze for FY 2014-15, followed by three years of 2% GWIs) as well as layoff protection.

The agreement also moves Local 1378 members into the Connecticut Municipal Employee Retirement System (CMERS), thus stabilizing and ultimately improving their retirement security.

"This is one of the better contracts we've negotiated," said Local 1378 President David Kotecki. "At a time when public employers are jumping on the bandwagon to force concessions, we've been able to work with the Finizio administration to protect and improve our pay, pensions and health care."

Waterbury Local 353 Settles Contract, Celebrates 50th

Congratulations to AFSCME Local 353, the Waterbury Blue Collar Union. On May 31, Local 353 members overwhelmingly ratified a new four-year contract that includes general wage increases totaling 7.75%, salary step bonuses and minimizes premium cost-sharing for health insurance.

The agreement also delays the transition into a high-deductible health care plan until 2017 and subsidizes the out-of-pocket cost of that plan for low-wage earners within the bargaining unit (those making \$32,000 a year or less).

"I'm proud of our union members for stepping up to the plate," said Local 353 President Paul Pastore, a school maintainer. "This is a good contract for us, one of the best we've been able to negotiate in a long time."

Council 4 Staff Representative Lisa McKinnon and Service Representative Bob Parziale represented Local 353 throughout the negotiations. The Local represents more than nearly 500 city and board of education employees.



AFSCME New England Area Field Services Director Tim Birch, left, presents Waterbury Local 353 with its 50-year anniversary plaque and charter. Also pictured, l-r, are Local 353 Executive Board members Jeremy Gaudiosi, Erik Delpriore, Tony Cicchiello, Len Calo, Paul Pastore; Council 4 Service Representative Bob Parziale; Local 353 E-Board member Leo Bonicki; and Council 4 Staff Representative Lisa McKinnon. Missing from photo is Local 353 E-Board member Rey Melendez.

Thanks to Council 4, Local 704's Marilyn Rice Is Back at Work

Back in March, Marilyn Rice of AFSCME Local 704 (State NP-3 Administrative and Clerical Bargaining Unit) testified before the legislature's Labor Committee in favor of a raised bill that would help remedy workplace bullying at state agencies.

She spoke from a deep wellspring of experience, having been bullied, brow-beaten and ultimately fired from her own job as an administrative assistant at the Office of the Healthcare Advocate in October 2014.

But Rice refused to go quietly. She sought the help of Council 4, and eight months later, returned to a new job at Capitol Region Mental Health Center. Under the terms of a stipulated agreement crafted by Council 4 Staff Representative Jeff Scanlon and Service Representative Terri Paventi, Rice was made whole for lost pay and benefits.

"I feel great," Rice said in June, right after she received her first paycheck from CRMHC. "I can pay my mortgage. I was going to have to start spending my savings, which was really scary."

Paventi said Rice was the victim of an abusive work environment that led to several employees either quitting or getting fired.

"There was real history there [at OHA]," she noted. "Other people had been let go. The reasons they gave [for terminating Rice] were ridiculous. Jeff and I were confident that we would have a strong case if we went to arbitration."

That the State decided to settle the case instead was a tribute to the tenacity displayed by Rice and her Council 4 representatives.

"I absolutely made the right call by contacting my union," Rice said. "It wasn't just the legal part of it. Terri was there with moral support."

Rice also credited the federal Department of Labor and agent Cris Moses for their help in determining that OHA was in violation of the Family and Medical Leave Act when it terminated her.

"If you know you've been treated wrong, make sure you call the union," Rice said. "You owe it to yourself and your co-workers to speak up."



Local 704 member Marilyn Rice, left, and Council 4 Service Representative Terri Paventi.

2015 Council 4 Conference Honors Members



Council 4's annual conference took place April 17-19, 2015 in Mystic, CT. More than 300 delegates attended to learn about the challenges facing our union and how to be a part of "AFSCME Strong," a special program to mobilize and engage our members.

Thanks to our local union leaders and Council 4 staff for their energy and commitment. And congratulations to the Council 4 members and retirees who received our Special Recognition Awards on April 17. They are as follows:

Kenneth Hinson, Local 184
Brenda Albert, Local 196
Yolanda Rolando, Local 196
Marie Jeudy, Local 318
Julie Bouchard, Local 355
Carol Millette, Local 355
Aaron Lichwalla, Local 387
Jose Delgado, Local 391
Marie DeSousa, Local 391
Shermaine Edmonds, Local 478
Yvonne Dillon-Terry, Local 538
Merisa Williams, Local 562
Kim Rice, Local 714
Richard Waselik, Local 1378

Catherine Combs, Local 1522
Engracia Rivera, Local 1522
John Devito, Local 1565
Godfrey Ferguson, Local 2663
Joseph Luteri, Local 2706
Clifford Cohen, Local 2836
Jon Derman, Local 2836
Anne Marie Sunderland, Local 2930
Velisha Cloud, Local 3144
Linda Davis Cannon, Local 3144
Sebastiano Fraello, Local 3713
Lois Gottlieb, Local 1303-35
Lillian Sewell, AFSCME Retirees

Local 749 Joins the Kelly Martinez Team to Fight Cancer



L-R: Local 749's Charles Marino and Kristy Porter; Council 4 Staff Reps Tricia Cardin and Kelly Martinez; and Local 749's Jeff Chambers, Manda Manzotti and Tino Sampaio.

The leadership of AFSCME Local 749 (State Judicial and Criminal Justice) recently presented Council 4 Staff Representative Kelly Martinez with a contribution of \$749 to support her participation in the Pan-Mass Challenge, the annual bike-a-thon dedicated to raising funds for adult and pediatric patient care and cancer research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute through the Jimmy Fund. Martinez is a 10-year leukemia survivor who benefited from a bone marrow transplant from her brother. She has been training rigorously for the Aug. 1-2 event.

You can support Kelly's efforts to conquer cancer by going to <http://www2.pmc.org/donation.asp> and typing "Kelly Martinez" in the search box.

Council 4 AFSCME, AFL-CIO
444 East Main Street
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12th Annual Veterans Picnic

May 23, 2015 was a special day as Council 4 sponsored the 12th Annual Picnic for Veterans at the State Veterans Home in Rocky Hill. Union members, retirees and staff prepared and served food to appreciative war veterans. The Departments of Veterans Affairs and Corrections also contributed significantly.

Thanks to the Council 4 Veterans Committee (chaired by Steve Curran of Local 1565) and the many volunteers for their hard work. Thanks most of all to our state war veterans, for their sacrifice and service to country. It's an honor to be in their company every year.



Above: Council 4 Executive Secretary Megan Batchelder, 3rd from left, accepts a certificate of recognition from the Veterans Advisory Council. Below: Veterans at the Rocky Hill facility enjoy the barbecue feast prepared and served by Council 4 members and staff.



AFSCME Local 1303 Notice of Annual Meeting & Officer Elections

Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015 @ 10 a.m.

Council 4 AFSCME, 444 East Main St.
New Britain, CT 06051

Info: (860) 612-3847/local1303@gmail.com

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