

## Council 4 Education Workshops

### Workers' Compensation: April 29

*This workshop will explain our rights under the Workers' Compensation Act.*

### Family Medical Leave Act: May 20

*Learn about our rights under the state and federal Family & Medical Leave Acts.*

### Investing for Retirement: June 17

*This workshop is designed to help union members plan for retirement.*

All workshops are free of charge will be held at Central Connecticut State University (Connecticut Room in Memorial Hall) in New Britain from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Registration forms available online at [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org). Questions? Contact Wayne Marshall: [wmarshall@council4.org](mailto:wmarshall@council4.org) or (860) 989-9145.

## Local Union Meetings Now Online

Council 4 local union membership meetings are now available online at [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org) by clicking on the "Calendar" link. If you need to publish your local's meeting, please contact Rich Sivel of Council 4 at (860) 224-4000 or [rsivel@council4.org](mailto:rsivel@council4.org). Thank you.

## Obama Tackles Contracting Abuses

President Obama ordered new guidelines for contracting in federal agencies. In a memorandum sent to the heads of all executive departments and agencies, he ordered a government-wide review of federal contracting procedures to be completed by July 1 with new guidelines in place by September 30.

The president declared, "We will stop outsourcing services that should be performed by the government," noting that annual spending on private contracts had doubled to more than \$500 billion during the Bush administration.

## Shelton Paras Restock Food Bank

Shelton school paraprofessionals are doing their part to help restock a food bank destroyed by a Dec. 30 fire at Shelton High School. Members of Council 4 Local 1303-196 donated \$200 (in the form of Stop & Shop gift cards) to the food bank, which serves needy students and families throughout the school system.

"We want to help our families in a time of need," said Local 1303-196 President Lisa Wieczorkowski, a paraprofessional at Shelton High School. "The food bank is an important part of the community support system."

According to food bank administrator Audrey Dreyer, the head nurse at Shelton High School: "Our paraprofessionals work hard and are among the lowest paid employees in the school system. They went above and beyond by making this donation."



*Pictured, l-r: SHS Head Nurse Audrey Dreyer; Paraprofessional and Union President Lisa Wieczorkowski; Council 4 Field Rep Norris Person and SHS Senior Darek Leszczynski.*

Local 1303-196 represents 62 Shelton paraprofessionals.

## Council 4

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## The 4 Word

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PRSR STD  
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New Britain, CT

# the 4WORD

The Voice of Council 4 AFSCME Connecticut

April 2009

What's Inside

## The Economic Crisis: "We Need Lifelines, Not Anchors"



We must oppose deep cuts to the state budget and instead address the budget deficit with a sensible revenue solution. Instead, let's urge our legislators to support the Better Choices for Connecticut revenue proposal. Better Choices is a broad-based community coalition comprised of nonprofits, public service workers, and community organizations. Council 4 is a member of this new coalition.

The Better Choices plan would help fill in the gap in the state's budget by increasing state revenues rather than cutting vital public services by:

Revenues in the Better Choices tax plan for Fiscal Year 2010 come from:

- Raising income taxes on the state's wealthiest residents (generating \$0.8 to 1.2 billion)
- Closing corporate tax "loopholes" (\$130 to 150 million)
- A one percentage point increase in the sales tax (\$575 to \$625 million) that would be offset by tax credits aimed at stimulating the labor force and economy.
- Scaling back public subsidies to the entertainment industry (\$90 to 100 million)
- Increased taxes on alcohol and tobacco (\$78 to 80 million)
- Funds expected from the federal economic stimulus plan (\$700 million)
- Funds drawn from the state's "Rainy Day Fund" (\$500 million)

"Connecticut has a revenue problem that needs to be addressed with a revenue solution," said Douglas Hall, Acting Managing Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. "Finding ways to increase revenues and avoid severe cuts that would harm the economy is the path that is both fiscally and economically responsible."

We couldn't agree more. You can learn more at <http://www.betterchoicesforct.org/>.

Call it a 'doomsday scenario.' On March 9, Democratic leadership in the General Assembly released three versions of potential cuts for the FY10-11 biennial budget amounting to nearly \$3 billion.

These cuts are in addition to the budget cuts the Governor already proposed in her biennial budget. These Democrats identified the cuts because Governor Rell's biennial budget recommendations fell \$2.9 billion short of addressing the nearly \$9 billion deficit the state is facing.

The cuts released by Democratic leaders would be absolutely devastating to human services in Connecticut; they will undermine our quality of life and will damage our state's economy. The proposed cuts would:

- Eliminate medical care for very poor individuals with multiple needs.
- Eliminate prescription drug coverage for adults under Medicaid.
- Eliminate After School programs and Family Resource Centers.
- Close two UConn regional campuses, six community college campuses, and one Connecticut State University campus.
- Lay off 13.5 percent of the state employee workforce totaling 5,600 positions.
- Dramatically scale back aid to cities and towns.

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## CEOs, Not Workers, Are the Problem



According to the Institute for Policy Studies, America's CEOs make about 400 times more in compensation than their workers. That's up from about 30 times in the 1980s. During that time worker productivity has soared, but not much else. Benefits and pay for most Americans are being cut to the bone, jobs are disappearing, health care costs are skyrocketing and working families are struggling to make ends meet.

This is an unacceptable state of affairs, created in part by union-busting that drives down overall wages, since non-union jobs are generally lower paid than those represented by organized labor. To add insult to our injury, we are subsidizing this corporate greed with our hard earned tax dollars, both nationally and right here in Connecticut.

Here are some local examples cited recently by the *New Haven Advocate*:

The state approved a \$20 million tax break (that money comes out of your pocket) for Lowe's to build a regional distribution center in Plainfield — then watched the company post \$3 billion in profits and pay CEO Robert A. Niblock more than \$6 million. The average Lowe's cashier, meanwhile, earns less than \$9 an hour.

Groton-based General Dynamics Electric Boat got \$9.9 million in loans and \$6 million in additional aid to renovate two dry docks last year. General Dynamics, the parent company, then posted \$2.1 billion in profits and paid out \$8.7 million to CEO Nicholas D. Chabraja.

Even Warren Buffett, whose \$62 billion in personal wealth makes him the second richest man in the universe, got a \$9 million tax break from the state so his company General Reinsurance Corp. could furnish new offices in Stamford.

And, as we have learned, even when companies lose billions of dollars, including our tax money, their CEOs still take home huge compensation packages in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

For example, Martin J. Sullivan ran AIG, the giant insurance and financial services firm, into the ground. He was fired, but walked away with a severance package estimated at \$47 million. He wasn't alone. At a time when taxpayers were handing over \$700 billion to bailout failing banks, the top echelon of the banks collected more than \$18 billion in bonuses.

Fortunately, people are saying enough is enough, and we have an administration in Washington that agrees.

President Obama has supported legislation that would limit executive compensation to \$400,000 annually if they take federal help. We applaud and support the legislation.

In Connecticut, we have a similar bill (HB 5022) which would make a corporation ineligible for state grants or assistance if its CEO makes in excess of 25 times the wage of the corporation's lowest paid worker or cuts retiree pensions.

This bill fosters a stronger link between a CEO and his workers. It provides an incentive for CEOs to care about the fate of the families working for them. Sadly, this type of legislation is needed to buck the aforementioned trends. Unfortunately, Committee Chairman Sen. Gary LeBeau blocked the bill and let it die. Give him a call and tell him what you think about that.

In our state, where there is vast and widening gap between the wealthy and the middle class and working families, subsidizing obscene CEO compensation is ludicrous. And never more so than in the middle of an economic crisis.

I urge your support not only for this type of legislation, but also AFSCME's broader campaign to rein in the excessive and grotesque paychecks given to chief executive officers and their management teams.

In solidarity,

*Sal Luciano*

Sal Luciano

Executive Director

### Wal-Mart: "We Deduct For More"



In 2007, Wal-Mart CEO H. Lee Scott, Jr. made \$29,682,000 — 1,314 times as much as the company's average full-time workers. The discount giant refuses to disclose pay levels for its thousands of part-time workers, but reports that full-time workers make an average of \$10.86 per hour.

If Wal-Mart had been required to pay corporate income taxes on the portion of Scott's compensation that exceeded 25 times the value of the firm's average full-time compensation, the company's tax bill would have increased by \$10,191,069 in 2007

This seems a small price to pay, given that taxpayers have provided billions of dollars in subsidies to Wal-Mart over the years in the form of public assistance for the retailer's poorly compensated employees. (Source: *Institute for Policy Studies "Executive Excess 2008" report.*)

## CORRECTION EMPLOYEES MOBILIZE FOR AWARD

**G**rass roots member mobilization paid off for 5,000 state correctional employees represented by Connecticut Council 4 as the Connecticut General Assembly approved a contract arbitration award that includes pay increases totaling 8% over three years.

“This was a victory for union solidarity and the principle of fair play,” said Local 1565 President Luke Leone.

After the arbitrator issued his award January 5, Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell and her minority legislative leaders tried to turn public opinion against front-line prison employees, using Connecticut’s sagging economy as an excuse to jettison the agreement.

Their anti-worker tactics, including amendments to table implementation of the binding arbitration award, failed thanks to non-stop member activity on the part of Council 4’s NP-4 Corrections Bargaining Units (Locals 387, 391 and 1565).

The state House of Representatives on Jan. 14 voted 110-35 against an amendment to table the award until at least June. Two weeks later, the influential Appropriations Committee voted 34-14 against a resolution to table the award, effectively paving the way for the arbitration award to become an enforceable contract.

“We’ve made a concentrated effort to explain our difficult, dangerous and critically important work to the public,” said Local 391 President Jon Pepe. “Clearly, it was successful. Both the Rell Administration and legislative leaders acknowledged the critical importance of our work. The difference was the majority of the legislators saw that acknowledging it on one hand and trying to kill the contract on the other was wrong.”

The leaders of the three locals are well known to the legislators. They lobby hard for legislation for all of Council 4’s

35,000 members, not just corrections and law enforcement. It’s a culture that they believe in and work hard to support. “Council 4’s slogan is ‘a union 4 all,’ said PEOPLE Chair Ray Soucy of Local 387. “Those are not just words. It’s what we believe. We’re there for each other.”

Many Council 4 members from municipal and state locals responded by lobbying their legislators on behalf of the correction contract, as did members of other unions.

The public campaign began in earnest 18 months ago, starting with tours of prison facilities for legislators and the media. Council 4 and the three locals then sponsored a three-week television ad campaign through the middle of January called “Proud to Serve.” (You can see the ad on [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org).)

After the arbitrator issued his award, bargaining unit members turned out for legislative hearings and one-on-one lobbying, while generating a flood of phone calls, post-cards and e-mails urging legislators to support the process. .

“We kept our members informed every step of the way,” said Local 387 President David Moffa. “Instead of rolling over, we used the economic crisis as an opportunity to mobilize prison employees to stand up for their rights. It all paid off.”



*Members of Council 4’s three NP-4 Corrections Bargaining Unit participated in a television commercial “Proud To Serve” that aired statewide in January.*

## Local 749 Members Speak Out Against Proposed Court Closings

**M**embers of Council 4 Local 749, representing state judicial and criminal justice employees, are turning up the volume against Gov. Rell’s proposal to close two courthouses in Bristol and Meriden. Testifying before the General Assembly’s Appropriations Committee on Feb. 23, Local 749 member Stacy Tarkowski, a Court Support Services Intake Assistant at Meriden Superior Court told legislators that shutting down the Meriden courthouse would cause a tremendous hardship on indigent clients while hurting the local businesses that depend on courthouse employees.



*L-R: Local 749 members Charlie Cyr, Dawn Theriault, Stacy Tarkowski and Cynthia Egan.*

“If those who live near Meriden Superior Court had to attempt to get to another court, it would likely result in numerous failure-to-appear warrants being issued,” Tarkowski noted. “They would be rearrested for not being able to make it to court and then end up with a felony or a misdemeanor on their record. This is not fair.”

Local 749 members Charlie Cyr and Dawn Theriault, who work at Bristol Superior Court, also lobbied to keep the courthouses open, as did Local 749 President Cynthia Egan.

“I personally think we should look at closing corporate tax loopholes and raising incomes taxes on our wealthiest residents...to help save vital public services, like those we provide at Meriden Superior Court,” Tarkowski said, triggering applause from those at the public hearing.

## Real Pension Plans A Smart Move

By Peter Thor



*These days, our 401(k)s are taking hits that have reduced many Americans' retirement security to a bad day at the casino.*

If you have a 401(k) masquerading as a pension (often called a “DC” plan), and your employer says it’s a good deal for both you and the employer, just say this (nicely), “You’re nuts.” If you have a real pension (often called a “DB” plan) and your employer says it costs too much, say this (nicely): “You’re nuts.” That’s because a real pension is cheap and beneficial to the whole economy. A 401(k) is neither.

In previous articles we explained that a pension plan will cost taxpayers about 25¢ on the dollar, while a 401(k) can end up costing considerably more.

Apparently Alaska figured that out. Three years ago, Alaskan legislators thumbed their noses at union members, and switched their retirement plan for teachers, state and municipal employees to a 401(k) type plan. West Virginia and Nebraska dumped their 401(k)s and now Alaskan legislators are moving in that direction. The only remaining 401(k) holdout is Michigan (although several other states offer a choice).

The unfunded liability has grown about \$5 billion to almost \$12 billion since 2007; managers have found it much more difficult to hire employees, who find the benefit unimpressive.

*A Better Bang for the Buck*, a 2008 report by the National Institute of Retirement Security compared the cost to provide the same level of retirement benefits by a real pension plan and a 401(k). The results are staggering. Authors Beth Almeida and William B. Fornia found that a real pension would cost 12.5% of payroll while a comparable 401(k) would cost 22.9%!

The bottom line: Switching to a 401(k) is nuts.

*Peter Thor is Director of Policy & Planning for Council 4.*

## Norwalk Workers Settle Retirement Proposal, Save Jobs

Standing firm against the city’s effort to implement a flawed early retirement program, Local 2405, representing Public Works, took their case public and prevailed.

City personnel pushed for a targeted early retirement plan to reduce costs. While three other city unions accepted the agreement, Local 2405’s executive board unanimously rejected it because of a provision allowing the employer to replace retiring workers with temporary workers who have no collective bargaining rights.

Local 2405 members turned out for a city council hearing and explained their opposition, prompting council members to extend the timeline for negotiations to reach an agreement. Within two days, Local 2405 and the city reached agreement on an early retirement package minus the temporary worker language. “The local union took a strong stand for quality public services,” said Council 4 Staff Representative James Castelot. “This agreement is fair to our members and the citizens they serve.”

## In Newington, Union Members Help Zap The Cap



*L-R: Local 2930 members Kurt Larsen, Fran Kulesa, President Joe Cirigliano, Regina Prange and Tom Ledoux (also President of Council 4).*

Council 4 union members who live in Newington made their vote count by helping to defeat a proposed charter revision that would have led to cutbacks in town services and employee layoffs.

The charter revision specifically called for a mandatory 3% limit on annual increases to the town budget. The initiative failed by 47 votes, with union member turnout a key factor.

“Union members made the difference in Newington,” said Local 2930 President Joe Cirigliano, whose bargaining unit represents 170 town and board of education employees. “This was a vote for great public services and our future.”

Heading into the Feb. 24 referendum, union members participated in phone banks, distributed literature and made sure to turn out at the polls.

## New Haven Workers Fight DeStefano Layoffs

New Haven public service workers are fighting back against Mayor John DeStefano, the former Democratic gubernatorial candidate, after he rejected union concession efforts and proceeded with layoffs and service cuts to help close the city’s deficit.

Last month, DeStefano laid off 27 city workers, with 127 more city and board of education workers to be laid off in June. In addition to turning down concessions, the Mayor refused to look at other ways to save money, such as reducing the number of private contractors, part-timers and consultants doing the job of public service employees at much higher cost.

Since last September, DeStefano has laid off more than 40 city workers, most of them members of Council 4 Local 3144, the New Haven Management Union. Council 4 members should call Mayor DeStefano’s office at (203) 946-8200. Please urge the Mayor to bring back laid off workers and treat city workers with respect.



*Cherlyn Poindexter of Local 3144 speaks at a press conference in New Haven. Standing, l-r: Local 3144 President Larry Amendola, Local 3429 President Michael Ellison, Local 884 President Ronald Hobson and Local 287 President Robert Montuori.*

## Glastonbury Part-Time Paras Vote To Join Council 4



From left, Council 4 Field Rep Heather Longo; Glastonbury Paras Kathleen Baribault, Pamela Slocum, Amy LeLasher (with her children Sean and Katie), Deb Grillo, Susan McKone, Linda Anderson, Tracey Barnicle and Council 4 Service Rep Kelly Martinez. Missing are Organizing Committee members Marie Lodge and Deb Peterson.

**P**art-time paraprofessionals employed by the Glastonbury Board of Education embraced a message of dignity and respect when they enthusiastically voted to join Council 4 in a union representation election.

The new bargaining unit will represent 130 employees who work at least 15 but not more than 20 hours a week in the Glastonbury school system. Their chief concern was protecting and improving the services they provide to students.

“We play an integral part in contributing to the educational success of each and every one of our students,” said Pamela Slocum, a paraprofessional at Glastonbury High School. “Each of us is proud to assist in maintaining Glastonbury’s level of excellence. With Council 4 behind us, we will have the opportunity to improve the position of the part-time paraprofessionals, and to help retain and continue to attract capable, caring and dedicated people.”

Council 4 Staff Representative Laurie Webster will serve as spokesperson for the newly chartered Local 3817 as they negotiate their first contract.

## Union Membership Up In 2008

For the second straight year, the percentage of workers who belong to a union grew, according to the annual survey of union membership released in January by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

In 2008, union membership grew by 428,000, increasing the percentage of union members in the workforce to 12.4 percent, up from 12.1 percent in 2007. Overall, 16.1 million workers carry union cards.

The BLS survey also reports on the union advantage workers receive on payday. In 2008, full-time union workers earned a median weekly salary of \$886 while nonunion workers were paid 28 percent less per week, \$691.

The growth in union membership comes at a time when workers say they want and need unions. About 78% of the public supports legislation that will make it easier for workers to bargain with their employers and 60 million workers would join a union today if they could, according to Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

## Employee Free Choice Act Introduced in Congress

**T**he Employee Free Choice Act was introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate March 10, launching the legislative battle to restore workers’ freedom to form unions and bargain for a better life.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney called the introduction of this bill “is a milestone on the road to rebuilding our nation’s middle class.”

The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers, not corporations, to choose whether and how they want to form a union. It would:

Remove current obstacles to employees who want collective bargaining.

Guarantee that workers who can choose collective bargaining are able to achieve a contract.

Allow employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.

Learn more at [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org) or [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org).

## New Contract Pleases Greenwich School Nurses



Seated, l-r: Local 1303-222 President Dara Pinkert and Greenwich 1st Selectman Peter Tesei. Standing, l-r: Local 1303-222 negotiating team members Carlotta Garabedian, Ruth Holz and Judith Finneran; Council 4 Staff Representative Len LaLuna; and Greenwich Labor Relations Director Alfred Cava.

Members of Local 1303-222, representing the Greenwich Public Health Nurses Association, are pleased with a new four-year collective bargaining agreement that includes wage increases of 13.50% over the life of the agreement. “This contract is fair for us and ultimately for the students we serve in the Greenwich school system,” said Local President Dara Pinkert.

## Colchester School Custodians Support Local Food Bank



L-R: Local 1303-77 President David Fitzgerald, Treasurer Rick Whitney, Member Barbra Hock, Vice President Matt Childress, Colchester First Selectman Linda Hodge and Council 4 Field Representative Scott Soares.

Colchester School Custodians, Local 1303-77, recently donated food to a town-sponsored food bank to help residents in tough times. Colchester First Selectman Linda Hodge praised the Local’s efforts.

# SOLVING CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

The 13 unions in the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) began the month of February with a comprehensive media campaign to build public support for preserving the services our members deliver. Since then, leaders of our unions have continued meeting with representatives of the Rell Administration to reach agreement on an appropriate role for state workers to play in helping to weather the current economic storm.

Important developments over the past month in our campaign for a fair budget and a livable state with great public services are noted below. Each is detailed at SEBAC's website, [www.InThisTogetherCT.org](http://www.InThisTogetherCT.org), as well as our own Council 4 website, [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org).

**Feb. 3: SEBAC Offered Principles and Purposes to Governor Rell, Legislative Leaders.** In a letter to Governor Rell and leadership of both legislative chambers, union coalition leaders clarified our "principles and purposes," saying our members were willing to be part of solving the crisis, but not at the expense of public services or in any way that would make the state's economy worse.

**Feb. 4: Citizens Respond the Governor's Budget Proposals.** Hundreds of union members were at the State Capitol for the Governor's biennial budget address. When she told a joint session of the General Assembly she was preparing to make significant service cuts that would harm Connecticut's working families, SEBAC joined with community and labor allies in responding.

**Feb. 7: Retirement Proposals "Should be Addressed Across the Table."** SEBAC responded to press reports that the Governor planned to propose that the legislature implement a retirement incentive without the agreement of our coalition. Union leaders urged the governor instead to support our ongoing discussions with her Administration to craft comprehensive solutions.

**Feb. 9: Economic Forum Touts Importance of Stimulus, Public Spending.** Our coalition hosted "The Economic Crisis and Connecticut's Future," a forum featuring economist and *New York Times* columnist Robert Frank and Congressman Chris Murphy (D-5).



*Tonia McCown, left, of Local 1565 and Belinda May of Local 714 listen to the Governor's budget address before talking to the media about the dangers of cutting services in a crisis.*

**Feb. 13: Update on Rell's Retirement Proposal.** State agencies were circulating details of the retirement incentive program the Governor was expected to ask the legislature to implement. SEBAC publicly reiterated that any retirement program discussions should take place between SEBAC and the Administration.

**Feb. 18: Report Links Public Sector Cuts and Private Sector Job Losses.** UCONN's Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis reported that both wage cuts and employee layoffs in the public sector would worsen job losses in the private sector. Their economists warned that balancing the budget through state employee layoffs would be "devastating" and result in 70,000 lost jobs across all sectors in the state.

**Feb. 19: Gov Presents Another Deficit Mitigation Plan.** In her third current year deficit mitigation plan, Governor Rell included a state employee retirement incentive to be unilaterally imposed, and another \$48 million in proposed labor cost savings. SEBAC responded, stressing that these discussions must take place across the table where they can be part of a comprehensive plan to help close the gap.

**Feb. 26: Further Discussions with the Rell Administration.** In the first meeting in two weeks (a meeting scheduled for February 21 was postponed at the request of the Rell Administration), the governor's representatives finally put forward a formal proposal to SEBAC leaders.

**Feb. 28: Additional Discussions Between SEBAC and Administration Representatives.** SEBAC leadership responded to the first formal proposals from the Administration with thoughtful, detailed, and sensible solutions at both meetings on February 26 and 28.

**March 4: "The Wrong Time to Threaten Services and the Economy."** Governor Rell was quoted saying she is "trying very hard, very hard to avoid layoffs at all costs." Unfortunately, her office then issued a press release stating that "any meaningful cuts in Personal Services will now necessarily result in layoffs" and "cuts in higher education."

**March 9: "Job Killing" Budget Scenarios Released.** Democratic leaders of both chambers in the Connecticut General Assembly released three versions of what a balanced state budget would look like if they followed Governor Rell's directive and addressed the economic crisis with cuts in public services alone. (See cover story.)

**March 11: Rell Calls For Voluntary Schedule Reductions.** Gov. Rell contacted all state employees directly via email to encourage the use of the state's voluntary schedule reduction program. SEBAC supports voluntary schedule reductions to save money and allow employee flexibility. SEBAC initiated this program, but believes that it works better when created through bilateral discussions rather than unilateral implementation by the Governor.

At press time, SEBAC leaders remained in active

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# Connecticut Voters are Clear:

**84%** say cutting services like health care, education and public safety in an economic crisis will only make things worse!

A new poll released January 29<sup>th</sup> shows that Connecticut voters get it - this is not an economic crisis we can cut our way out of nor should we try.

## Connecticut voters place a high premium on maintaining services.

**84%** 84% agree that cutting funding for public services like health care, education and road maintenance during a time of recession further damages the economy and denies critical services to citizens at the very time they are needed most.

**83%** 83% say that job layoffs, whether for public sector or private sector employees, hurt everyone and further weaken the economy

**77%** And when asked if they felt cutting public services, like health care, lead to greater costs for the state further down the road, 77% said yes.

## So how do we close the budget gap?

**54%** A strong majority of Connecticut voters (54%) say the best way to fill the budget gap is to find new sources of revenue and get the money from those who have benefited most from this economy.

**83%** 83% favor raising taxes on those making over \$200,000 and

**83%** 83% favor eliminating corporate tax loopholes.

**SEBAC**

State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition

To view the complete poll results please visit [INTHISTOGETHERCT.org](http://INTHISTOGETHERCT.org)

*Continued from Page 6*

discussions with the Rell Administration to be a part of comprehensive solutions to the economic crisis. "The question isn't whether our members will be part of the solution" Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano said. "From the beginning of this crisis, we have reached out to elected leaders to craft a plan, and we are currently meeting with the Governor's representatives to help find the cost savings she said are needed."

SEBAC has continued to honor the Administration's request that we not publish the specifics of our meetings, in the interests of reaching a fair agreement that respects state workers and their families. Understandably, members of our Council 4 state employee bargaining units would like to learn more about the proposals being discussed; we are in the process of planning meetings to bring state employees together to review options.

In the meantime, check [www.InThisTogetherCT.org](http://www.InThisTogetherCT.org) for updates and action alerts enabling you to contact your state legislators and urge them to support a fair budget that invests in Connecticut and protects public services.

## Council 4 Local 1303 Scholarships Available

AFSCME Local 1303 is offering scholarships to college-bound students who meet the following criteria:

- Must be a graduating high school senior
- Must have a parent or guardian in good standing with AFSCME Local 1303
- Must be enrolled in an Accredited University, College or Technical School for the Fall 2009 semester.
- Must have two (2) signed Letters of Recommendation from persons not related to the applicant

Applicants must complete an essay titled "How Does Being Part of a Union Family Benefit Our Lives."

The application deadline is April 27, 2009. For more information, or to obtain an application, call Local 1303 at (860) 612-3847. You can also download the application at [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org).