

the 4 WORD

The Voice of Council 4 AFSCME Connecticut

September 2012

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“We are not dead. Not by a long shot.”

State clerical worker says young workers need unions

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of organized labor’s death are highly exaggerated.

This summer, anti-union zealots hailed the failure of the Wisconsin recall vote, which enabled right-wing Governor Scott Walker to retain his seat, as the beginning of the end of labor unions in general and public employee unions in particular.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Unions are vital for the progress of the American Dream. I believe it is important to get the message out there about the value of unions to the entire middle class, especially now and especially to young people.

I am 28 years old and became a Council AFSCME member at 23. I tell people not to believe the myth fabricated by the union busters that unions are a thing of the past in today’s economy, or that unions are irrelevant to today’s young worker.

AFSCME has launched a new initiative called the Next Wave to promote the benefits of union membership all over America to newer members. Next Wave is generating a fresh new voice in support of unions. We are energizing our members, getting them more involved politically.

In my case I joined a union because I wanted the job benefits for me and my family, as well as to positively affect our entire society. Better health care, pensions, a safer work environment, job protection, better wages are all the results of



**Patrick Kilby,
Local 562**

the impacts of unions on the American society. The American Dream for the middle class cannot be achieved without the benefits achieved by unions.

You cannot buy a nice house, send your kids to college, have reasonable job protection, get decent health care and live decently in retirement without strong unions fighting on your behalf.

We cannot leave this to the “generosity” of the big money, big corporations, Wall Street financiers and elected officials doing their bidding. They’re fighting for the 1 percent while stripping away our wages, our health care and our pensions.

The American Dream for the middle class cannot be achieved without the benefits achieved by our unions.

Now is the time for us to speak out and act. It does not take a lot of people to make a difference. Martin Luther King, Jr., who embraced the sanctity of

unions, only had a handful of faithful to start his movement, which changed our country for the better.

To those who are writing labor’s premature obituary, I say this: Stop your typing and your talking. We are not dead. Not by a long shot.

Patrick Kilby is a member of AFSCME Local 562 (NP-3 Administrative-Clerical Bargaining unit) and is employed by the State of Connecticut Workers’ Compensation Commission in Waterbury.

Deconstructing the New Narrative



Business leaders, editorial writers, Tea Party politicians, CEO's and bankers all have their sights set on us. They want to slash wages, get rid of pensions and health care, and erode even our right to bargain.

These guns are blazing at public employees from every direction. And the arms suppliers, — the Koch Brothers, Mort Zuckerman, the American Legislative Exchange Council (see below), Citizens for Prosperity and others — influence politicians from both parties as well as much of the media.

Only four years ago, after bringing the economy to its knees, the hedge fund managers, bankers and other masters of the financial world were in disrepute for the devastation they had wrought on this country and the world.

But, they did not slink off into a corner or allow themselves to be held responsible for their crimes. They deftly pivoted and rearmed, aiming their guns...at us.

Suddenly the very people who destroyed millions of jobs transformed themselves into 'job creators'.

Suddenly, the economic collapse was due not to their reckless investments or an unsustainable housing bubble they cynically constructed to fail.

Suddenly, it wasn't the banker in the Armani suit who brought our economy to its knees; it was middle class public employees, with their health care and pensions.

Welcome to the new narrative of blaming public workers.

Blame public employees when Stockton becomes the third California city to declare bankruptcy.

Blame public employees when Scranton's huge payrolls compel the poor mayor to pay city workers the minimum wage.

Blame public employees when their too powerful unions achieve levels of compensation that beggars those of CEOs.

The "blame game" strategy is working to tragic effect. Did you know more than 600,000 state and local government public service workers lost their jobs in the great recession, thanks to the risky bets of JP Morgan and other Wall Street firms? Or that 43 states reduced their pension programs?

We need to do the exact same thing the financial elite did after taking their body blows: Come back swinging. It's time to stop being defensive. It's time to tackle head-on this despicable fairy-tale narrative of over-compensated public service workers wreaking havoc on innocent taxpayers.

We must use all means necessary – political activism, social media, lunch-time union meetings, word-of-mouth – to remind our co-workers, friends and neighbors about the importance of unions in reducing income inequality. We must vigorously promote the vital and cost-effective services we provide.

We must take the offensive against politicians who are shielding the wealthy and the connected, and dumping on us instead. Our very survival as a middle class is at stake.

Are you in?

In solidarity,

Sal Luciano

Executive Director

ALEC Profiting from Public Dollars

ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council) has been a major force in pushing for the privatization of public services and assets. By connecting corporations with state legislators, ALEC has been able to actively promote laws that encourage government privatization, making it easier for corporations to profit off of public dollars. *In the Public Interest*, a resource center on privatization and responsible contracting, recently released a troubling new report, "Profiting from Public Dollars: How ALEC and its members promote privatization of government services and assets."

The report shows how ALEC's corporate donors stand to benefit from ALEC model legislation that encourages handing off public services and infrastructure to the private sector. For example, ALEC has pushed model legislation that allows corporations to enhance their profits using public taxpayer dollars in the following areas:

"Virtual" Public Schools: Virtual school companies project market growth to increase 43% between 2010 and 2015 and expect industry revenues to reach \$24.4 billion.

Private Prisons: Private prison operators expect the number of people incarcerated in prisons to increase, with sizable growth in federal immigration detention. At the end of 2010, 2.4 million people in the US were incarcerated in prisons.

Public Infrastructure: Public infrastructure privatization projects, including roads, bridges, and water systems, are estimated to be worth over \$100 billion over the next few years.

To learn more, go to www.inthepublicinterest.org.



Prison privatization is a top priority for ALEC's clients.

Local 1303 Awards College Scholarships

Continuing its commitment to higher education, AFSCME Local 1303, which represents 8,000 municipal and board of education employees, has awarded eight \$1,000 scholarships to college-bound students whose parents are members of 1303 chapters.

Every year, Local 1303 selects scholarship recipients based upon their grades, community involvement and an essay on the importance of union membership. This year's student winners (with parents listed in parenthesis):

Peter Greco (Richard Greco, 1303-266)

Allison Lacko (Nancy Lacko, 1303-329)

Sarah A. Jaeger (Michael W. Jaeger, 1303-393)

Allen Mark Rodriguez (Octavia Rodriguez, 1303-036)

Hannah Smith (Susan Smith, 1303-140)

Kayleigh Shaughnessy (Kathryn Shaughnessy, 1303-046)

Ervis Vukaj (Aleksander Vukaj 1303-186)

Haakon Weyel (Sherri L. Mutch, 1303-293)



Front: Sarah Jaeger, Peter Greco, Kayleigh Shaughnessy and Hannah Smith. Back: Michael Jaeger, Richard Greco, Kathryn Shaughnessy and Susan Smith.

“We’re extremely proud to help the children of our union members pursue their dream of attending college,” said Local 1303 President Brian Mitchell, an electrician for the West Hartford Board of Education and President of AFSCME Local 1303-061. “We passionately believe that union membership is the surest path to a decent middle class standard of living for our members and their children.”

This year’s scholarship recipients fully agree.

As Peter Greco, whose father Richard is a special education aide in the Region I school system, wrote in his essay, “I do not want to think about how different my life would be if unions were not out there helping the American workers provide for their families.”

Or, as Sarah Jaeger, whose father works for the New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority, expressed in her essay, “Everyone has been affected by the poor economy, but being part of a union makes it more bearable.”

Congratulations to the 2012 scholarship-winning students and their parents.

State Health Enhancement Program Update

The overwhelming majority of state employee participants in the Health Enhancement Program (HEP) – more than 99 percent – have complied with preventative screening requirements that will likely save the state significant long-term dollars, as well as lives, according to a recent announcement by Comptroller Kevin Lembo.



Comptroller Kevin Lembo, center, with AFSCME Local 2663 President Paul Lavallee, left, and Local 714 President Jay Bartolomei at this spring’s Council 4 convention.

The Comptroller’s Office reported that only 501 employees and spouses were not compliant with the new HEP requirements as of June 28, 2012. Approximately 53,000 state employees and new retirees are enrolled in the program.

The areas of largest non-compliance were dental cleanings, followed by cholesterol screenings and then wellness physicals.

Only 87 of Council 4’s approximately 16,000 state bargaining unit members were non-compliant. Employees who are non-compliant will have another chance to enroll in HEP.

“The Health Enhancement Program is doing precisely what we expected it would: encourage preventive care and healthier outcomes while holding down costs for our members and delivering savings to all Connecticut taxpayers,” said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano.

Earlier this year, Lembo announced the costs for state employee health care next year will go up 0%.

Paraprofessional FMLA Signed Into Law

School paraprofessionals in Connecticut achieved long overdue rights under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) when Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed into law Public Act 12-43 during a ceremony Aug. 3 at the State Capitol.

“This is a good day for all paraprofessionals in Connecticut,” said Council 4 Secretary and Local 1522 President Anna Montalvo, who attended the bill signing with Gov. Malloy, Lt. Governor Wyman, Education



Gov. Dannel Malloy signs the paraprofessional FMLA bill into law. Also pictured, l-r: Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, AFSCME Local 1522 President Anna Montalvo, Sen. Len Fasano, Council 4 Lobbyist Brian Anderson and Local 1522 Vice President Richard Dietz.

Commissioner Stefan Pryor, Acting Labor Commissioner Dennis Murphy and several legislators. “I hope this law sets a precedent for all states.”

FMLA allows workers time off to care for themselves or family members when they are ill. But paraprofessionals were unable to qualify for FMLA because as 10-month employees they fell short of the 1,250 annual work hours required under law.

P.A. 12-43 corrects this injustice and allows paraprofessionals receive the same FMLA benefits that other workers receive if they work 950 hours a year.

“It’s only fair that paraprofessionals have the same access to FMLA that other employees have,” said Montalvo, whose bargaining unit includes more than 400 paraprofessionals in the Bridgeport schools. “Workers should not fear losing their jobs because they need time to take care of themselves or their family.”

A coalition of labor unions that represent paraprofessionals, including Council 4, AFT Connecticut, CEUI, CSEA and the AFL-CIO, successfully lobbied for passage of the law during the 2012 legislative session. The bill gained unanimous approval in the Senate and passed the House of Representatives 132-9.

Council 4 Political Coordinator Brian Anderson called the enactment of the Para FMLA bill “an example of the positive outcome we can achieve at the State Capitol through member engagement and our active involvement in elections.”

Council 4 Representation Leads To D-SNAP Agreement

Council 4’s commitment to the labor relations process resulted in the settlement of nearly 40 fraud allegation cases involving state employees who applied for and received benefits under the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP). “Our union and the State of Connecticut agreed to a process of expedited arbitration for those members who had been dismissed from state service for receiving D-SNAP benefits,” Council 4 Staff Representative Neal Cunningham said.

The cases presented to the arbitrator were those where the individual made mistakes in the application but did not commit intentional fraud. Those individuals have made, or have committed to make, full restitution to the State for the amount they received from the program. Disciplinary suspensions ranging from 15 to 60 working days were imposed.

“These employees exercised their due process rights, paid back the money received, were disciplined and will be reinstated to their state positions,” Cunningham said.

Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano said the process was an appropriate solution for the individual Council 4 union members and the State.

“We made it clear from the time the allegations broke that any individuals who knowingly deceived taxpayers to receive a D-SNAP benefit must be held accountable. But we hold to the principle that people are innocent until proven guilty and that everyone is entitled to due process and union representation,” Luciano said.



Council 4 Staff Representative Neal Cunningham.

New Haven Local 884 Members Ratify Contract

Members of AFSCME Local 884, representing nearly 450 New Haven city employees, ratified a five-year collective bargaining agreement after difficult negotiations with an employer bent on sub-contracting work, using more part-timers, reducing overtime opportunities, eliminating employee choice in medical insurance and forcing employees to accept no wage increases for the entire contract.

The agreement includes wage increases of 3 percent, 2 percent and 2 percent in FY2013, 2014 and 2015, and according to the city, increases the take-home pay of the average Local 884 employee by \$3,230 over the life of the agreement.

“Negotiations were difficult, but our bargaining committee worked extraordinarily hard to find some middle ground between the outrageous demands of the City and the needs of our membership,” said Local 884 President Ronald Hobson, an emergency communications dispatcher. “In the end, we’re pleased that our members approved a contract that protects the services we provide to the people of New Haven.”

Council 4 Staff Representative Kip Lockhart served as Local 884’s spokesman in negotiations.



Local 884 Executive Board and Negotiating Team. Seated, l-r: J.C. Dore, Dawn Jackson, Evelyn Rodriguez and Doreen Rhodes. Standing, l-r: Dorothy Agnew, President Ron Hobson, Pamela McCain, Joann D’Angelo, Carl Alford and Council Staff Representative Kip Lockhart. Not pictured are Local 884 E-Board members Lori Lichtenberg and Tonya Covington.

Local 391 Helps East Windsor K-9 Service

AFSCME Local 391, representing Department of Correction employees in northern Connecticut, recently contributed to a campaign to fund a ballistic vest for the Town of Windsor Locks’ new canine, Jaxx.



Pictured at left: Windsor Locks Canine Officer Joe Malone, Jaxx and Local 391 member Kevin Brace.

Local 391 member Kevin Brace, who serves as the elected chair of the Windsor Locks Police Commission, welcomed his union’s support.

“Local 391 has a long history of supporting community causes,” he said. “I’m proud to be part of a union that understands the importance of being visible and supportive of our communities.”

Beacon Falls Unions Support Town Softball

Beacon Falls town workers recently contributed \$300 to support girls’ softball by purchasing a banner at the baseball field at the Beacon Falls Recreation Complex.

The donation came from AFSCME Local 1303-414 (Public Works), Local 1303-415 (Police) and Local 1303-423 (Town Hall).

“We’re proud to serve taxpayers and the community. Part of that involves supporting services and organization in town,” said Detective Brian Blakeman, President of AFSCME Local 1303-415. “This is a great facility and it’s maintained by AFSCME members so everyone can use it. It’s a great to see our AFSCME name at the field.”



AFSCME 1303-415 President Brian Blakeman.

State Employee Update: No Trust Fund Diversion

Recent press accounts regarding the health care trust fund created a misleading impression that the state is ignoring previous SEBAC agreements by using funds intended for retiree health care to pay its bills. Here's the real story:

The SEBAC 2009 agreement required state employees with less than 4 years of service as of 7/1/09 to begin paying 3% towards retiree health care (for up to 10 years), with the money to be put in a trust fund. However, to reduce the short-term budget crisis, the agreement did not require the money to be placed in the trust immediately.

In the 2011 SEBAC agreement, state employee unions agreed new employees would also begin making contributions (for 10 years) earmarked for the trust fund on 7/1/13, with the state making their contributions as well starting on 7/1/17.

Our union coalition made it absolutely clear that money placed in the trust could only be used to fund retiree healthcare for union members who made contributions to the fund; and that this obligation was permanent and irrevocable.

The inaccurate press stories emerged because a recent OFA analysis left out the provision of SEBAC 2009 that allows the state to use the money to pay current costs until 7/1/13.

The bottom line is the state has not used our members' contributions for the health care trust fund for any purpose other than to fund future retirement benefits. Moreover, the state will place monies used to pay for current retiree health care costs in the trust fund beginning in 2013, as called for in last year's SEBAC agreement.

Windham Crossing Guards Proudly March in Annual Boombox Parade



Members of AFSCME Local 1303-432, representing Windham School Crossing Guards, took time out on July 4 to march in the 27th annual Willimantic Boom Box Parade, carrying their union banners with pride. Pictured, L-R: Council 4 Field Representative Heather Longo and Local 1303-432 members Elaine LaChappelle, Local President David Fulk and Debora Brown.

Red Cross Behaving Poorly

Members of AFSCME Local 3145, representing blood collection workers at the American Red Cross in Farmington, are standing up to intimidation and retaliation.

On Aug. 16, Council 4 filed a federal unfair labor practice (ULP) complaint against the company for its mistreatment of workers.

The Red Cross recently fired six workers, all union supporters who participated in last November's 10-day strike. The company also suspended nine workers, eight of the union officers or supporters who went on strike.

"The company's callous disregard for its employees should concern blood donors and recipients," said Local 3145 President Nancy Newton, a quarantine-and-labeling technician at the Red Cross. "There is no place for this kind of corporate thuggery."

This is the second labor complaint Council 4 has filed with the National Labor Relations Board this year.

"We are the ones watching out for the donors and the recipients. For us, people come before profits," said Tammy Bennett, one of the fired workers.



L-R: Local 3145 members Tammy Bennett and Nancy Newton and Council 4 Staff Rep Kip Lockhart speak out against the Red Cross's mistreatment of employees.

Milford Local 1566 Celebrates 50th Anniversary



Happy Birthday to AFSCME Local 1566, which represents Milford Department of Public Works employees. AFSCME International Field Representative Suzanne Haviland, center, recently presented Local 1566 President Michael Hedman with a commemorative plaque to honor the milestone. Also pictured, l-r: Council 4 Service Representative Scott Soares; Local 1566 members Kevin Tyman, Larry Ives, Terry Gates, Kevin O'Donnell and Bob Renzoni.

Bristol Union Members Fight Republican Privateers

The extremist Republican political template is on full view in Bristol, where our members are fighting a major push to privatize public services, extract painful contract concessions and lay off public workers represented by Council 4 unions.

Using their 5-2 majority on the City Council to thwart any progress, Republicans have gone so far as to block the appointment of AFSCME Local 1338 President Paul Keegan to the city Pension Board. Local 1338, which represents public works employees, is entitled by city charter to a seat on the board, and union members unanimously signed a petition endorsing Keegan as their choice. Council 4 has filed a grievance and unfair labor practice over the action.



Local 1338 President Paul Keegan at a recent union rally. Also pictured, l-r: Bristol Mayor Art Ward, Councilman Kevin Fuller and Bristol Labor Council President Mike Petosa.

Council 4 Endorsements for 2012 Election

1st Congressional District:

Matt Ritter, State Representative 1st District (Hartford)
Leo Canty, State Representative 5th District (Windsor, Hartford)
Ed Vargas, State Representative 6th District (Hartford)
Geoff Luxenberg, State Representative 12th District (Manchester)

Joe Aresimowicz, State Representative 30th District (Berlin, Southington)
Dave Roche, State Senate 31st District (Bristol, Plymouth)

Jason Bowsza, State Representative 57th District (Ellington)

2nd CD:

John Murphy, State Representative 8th District (Coventry)
Cathy Osten, State Senator 19th District (Norwich, Columbia, Sprague, Ledyard)
Chris Phelps, State Representative 32nd District (Cromwell, Portland)
James Crawford, State Senator 33rd District (Westbrook, East Hampton, Portland)
Gregg Haddad, State Representative 54th District (Mansfield)

3rd CD:

Steve Fontana, State Senate 34th District (North Haven, East Haven, Wallingford, Durham)
Mary Mushinsky, State Representative 85th District (Wallingford)
James Albis, State Representative 99th District (East Haven)
Matt Lesser, State Representative 100th District (Middletown)

4th CD:

Anthony Musto, State Senate 22nd District (Trumbull, Bridgeport)
Terry Masters, State Representative 120th District (Stratford)
Jack Hennessy, State Representative 127th District (Bridgeport)

5th CD:

Dante Bartolomeo, State Senate 13th District (Meriden, Middletown, Cheshire, Middlefield)
Mike Demicco, State Representative 21st District (Farmington)
Rick Lopes, State Representative 24th District (New Britain, Newington)
Bobby Sanchez, State Representative 25th District (New Britain)
Chuck Marsella, State Representative 80th District (Wolcott, Southington)
Bob Godfrey, State Representative 110th District (Danbury)

President: Barack Obama

U.S. Senate: Chris Murphy

U.S. Congress:

John Larson, 1st CD
Joe Courtney, 2nd CD
Rosa DeLauro, 3rd CD
Jim Himes, 4th CD
5th District: No action as of press time.

Election Day is November 6, 2012.

Get the latest political action news, including updates to our list of endorsed candidates, by logging onto our website at www.council4.org.

Get Union Smart! Text message "CT" to AFSCME (237263) for the latest updates and alerts *standard rates apply

Report: You Paid \$46 in 2011 to Subsidize Fat CEO Pay

Next time you write your tax check to the Internal Revenue Service, imagine which multibillion-dollar corporation may get some of your hard-earned pay.

How about drugmaker Abbott Laboratories, which in 2011 claimed a \$586 million tax refund for its 64 subsidiaries operating in 16 countries considered tax havens? Or maybe Chesapeake Energy, a company that last year made \$2.8 billion in pre-tax U.S. profits—but whose effective tax rate over its 23-year history has averaged only about 1 percent?

Abbott and Chesapeake Energy are just two of the mega-corporations taking advantage of tax policies that reward offshoring and set lower tax rates for billionaires than for average workers, according to Institute for Policy Studies

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(IPS). The annual IPS report, “Executive Excess 2012: The CEO Hands in Uncle Sam’s Pocket,” finds:

Of last year’s 100 highest-paid U.S. corporate chief executives, 26 took home more in CEO pay than their companies

paid in federal income taxes.

The CEOs of these 26 firms received \$20.4 million in average total compensation last year. That’s a 23 percent increase over the average for last year’s list of 2010’s tax dodging executives

The four most direct tax subsidies for excessive executive pay cost taxpayers an estimated \$14.4 billion per year—\$46 for every American man, woman and child. That amount could cover the annual cost of hiring 211,732 elementary-school teachers or creating 241,593 clean-energy jobs.

CEOs have benefited enormously from the Bush tax cuts for upper-income taxpayers. Last year, 57 CEOs saved more than \$1 million on their personal income tax bills, thanks to these Bush-era cuts.

Meanwhile, the report notes, budget cuts nationwide have axed 627,000 public service jobs since June 2009. Between schools, health clinics, fire stations, parks and recreation facilities—virtually no public service has gone unsqueezed. Tax dollars haven’t seemed this scarce in generations. Yet tens of billions of dollars are getting diverted to the pockets of profit-rich corporations and their highly paid CEOs.

Learn more and get the report at www.ips-dc.org.

Staff Rep Don Sevas Retires

Council 4 Staff Representative Donald Sevas retired this summer after serving our members for 26 years. Don worked as a state Correction Officer for nine years and was a past president of AFSCME

Local 387, representing the Cheshire Correctional Complex. “Through thick and thin, Don worked hard to better the lives of thousands of AFSCME members and their families. We wish Don a long, healthy and happy retirement,” Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano said.



Don Sevas

Council 4

Executive Director: Sal Luciano (Local 2663)

President: Clarke King (Local 1716)

Secretary: Anna Montalvo (Local 1522)

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