

the **4**WORD

The Voice of Council 4 AFSCME Connecticut

June 2010

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Thanks to his union, Tyrone Douglas back at work

Tyrone Douglas, an able-bodied man with prosthetics below each knee, is finally back at work, and the union representing West Haven public service workers is standing right behind him to lead the cheers.

“I just want to get back to work. That’s all I ever wanted,” Douglas said.

Douglas, a city custodian and member of AFSCME Local 681, eagerly resumed his duties March 29 at 3:00 p.m. more than a year after having his left leg amputated below the knee. Although given a clean bill of health by his doctors, the city refused to allow Douglas to return to his job, forcing Local 681’s parent union, Council 4, to file a municipal prohibited practice complaint in January.

On March 23, the city agreed to put Douglas back on the job.

“Tyrone is a wonderful example of dedication and persistence,” said Local 681 President Lynn Jaqua. “He believes in hard work and he values public service.”



L-R: Lynn Jaqua, Tyrone Douglas and Len LaLuna.

Douglas, 58, is diabetic and vulnerable to a disease known as Charcot that weakens the bones. He had his right leg amputated below the knee in 1997. Despite having to undergo the same surgery on his left leg last year, he was determined to return to

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It’s time to go after the real “coddled” class

Whenver the economy is in dire straits, pundits and demagogues start looking for scapegoats. Union members, particularly in the public sector, are the chief target. Amy Traub from the Drum Major Institute begs to differ. Pointing to a new study by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence and the National Institute on Retirement Security on public employee compensation, Traub writes:



Marie DeSousa of Local 387, and Anne Konczakowski and Evelyn Rodriguez of Local 269 at a recent AFL-CIO rally outside the Bank of America’s Hartford office. Their message: Wall Street, not public employees, caused our economic crisis.

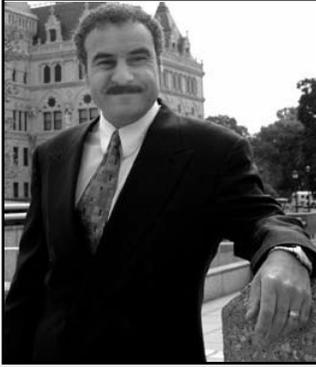
“When workforce factors such as education and work experience are taken into account, state and local employees make less than their private sector counterparts. Looking at pay alone, those supposedly ‘coddled’ state employees earn 11 percent less than comparable private sector workers. Employees of city and county governments earn 12 percent less than their private sector counterparts.”

Traub’s reference point is the CSLGE/NIRS study, *Out of Balance? Comparing Public and Private Sector Compensation Over 20 Years*. It’s worth a look, because as she notes:

“The new research offers no clarion call for public employee raises and benefit hikes to catch up with the private

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What if government were bigger?



What if government were just a little bigger? Say, big enough to stop the excessive criminal greed that saw the financial sector bring most of the world's economy to its knees.

Big enough to inspect our food before salmonella poisons us. Big enough to educate all our children for our sakes in this new world we call global. And big

enough to respond to Gulf Coast disasters like the BP oil spill and Hurricane Katrina.

But let me tell you how big government really is. It is the size George Bush and John Rowland and M. Jodi Rell made it. Which is bigger than it was when Weicker was governor.

We are tired of hearing that our government is too big. The anti-government talking heads and the political parrots have pushed anti government feeling to a new low.

And that should worry us. After all, on April 19, as we marked the 15th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing where 182 men, women and children were killed by an anti-government zealot for the "crime" of being in a government building.

Those talking heads know the truth: Government should be a little bigger, not a lot smaller. And so while they go on using public employees as target practice, we see double digit unemployment. Millions of homeowners underwater. Food insecurity on the rise, homelessness on the rise.

Yet just when we need government the most, we find unemployment compensation phones clogged; food stamps piled up, undelivered to hungry children; court houses closed

and locked; forced shifts in courthouses, in correctional facilities; public safety compromised.

That's not all. You see state clerical workers trying to do the work of many who retired and were not replaced. You see school custodians struggling to keep twice as many classrooms clean and sanitary with half the supplies...

You see the threat of thousands of teachers and paraprofessionals cut—a massive and dangerous disinvestment in Connecticut's future. Library hours cut, furloughs and zeros and layoffs. Meanwhile, the need for food and fuel assistance is sky high. Unemployment benefits have to be extended. Emergency rooms are full.

The howling against public service workers and their unions has become the dominant theme in mainstream commentary on budget issues. But we know better than to let the target on our backs overwhelm the dedication in our hearts.

We don't need angry tea parties or pilots flying into government buildings (which happened in January in Colorado). We need jobs for working families.

We don't need Wall Street financiers and corporate CEOs hoarding our money. We need to put money in the hands of working people so they can spend it in their local communities.

We don't need small government. We need government big enough to put people back to work, and prevent more layoffs and more cuts in public services.

More than 200 years ago, we created something special: We created a democracy of the people, by the people and for the people. We created a government. Let's keep that government and make it work for everyone.

In solidarity,

Sal Luciano

Sal Luciano

Executive Director

Ridgefield School Custodial & Maintenance Workers Join Council 4 Union Family

Congratulations to the members of the Ridgefield Custodial and Maintenance Association (RCMA), whose members voted to join Council 4 in a union representation election earlier this year. RCMA members work in the Ridgefield public school system. They're also part of a promising national trend as AFSCME led the labor movement in membership growth for 2009, according to a recent report by the AFL-CIO. "We're proud that public service workers are choosing to join with AFSCME to have a voice on the job and to improve the vital services they provide around the country," AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee said.



Welcome to the Ridgefield Custodial and Maintenance Association. Front row, l-r: Al Hulse, Mike Wlasuk, Randy Cimmino and Mike Kilcran. Back row, l-r: Council 4's Kevin Murphy, Rick Ferreira, Dave Bergeron and Council 4's Bob Parziale.

Pfizer whistleblower keynotes Workers Memorial Day

That was the message union members and safety advocates delivered April 28 at Council 4's annual Workers Memorial Day ceremony in front of our union's Workers Memorial Monument.

Every April 28, the AFL-CIO and its member unions observe Workers Memorial Day. Unions pay tribute to workers killed or injured on the job, while members renew their pledge to fight for safe workplaces. April 28 is the anniversary of the enactment in 1970 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

This year we honored the memory of Council 4 members who died on the job in 2009: Theresa Foss (Plainfield Local 818); Bryan Madore (Waterbury Local 353); Donald Nygard (Wallingford Local 1183); and Steven O'Brien (Waterbury Local 353).

Guest speakers included Steven Schrag, co-chair of the Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety and Health; and former Pfizer, Inc. molecular biologist Becky McClain, who blew the whistle on the pharmaceutical giant.



L-R: Local 1716 President Clarke King, former Pfizer biologist Becky McClain and Local 1186's Jim Baker, whose wife Kathryn, also a Local 1186 member, died on the job in 2007.



Don Nygard, Jr. and Paul Len take time out to remember Don's father, Don Nygard, Sr., who died on the job. Len is a member of Local 1183.

McClain, who acquired an illness caused by work-related exposure to a genetically engineered virus, said the biotech industry offers little protection for workers. A 23-year career molecular biologist, McClain was terminated in 2004 shortly after requesting Pfizer to provide viral exposure information necessary for her healthcare.

"Biologists have no legal rights to have safety issues addressed at work, even if it's a public concern. Biotech workers exposed to infectious agents have no health care rights and no legal remedy for subsequent illness," she said.

On April 1, 2010 after six years of legal battles McClain won her federal lawsuit against Pfizer in violation of her whistleblower rights and her free speech for public health and safety. The jury awarded McClain \$1.37 million in damages and found that she was entitled to punitive damages for Pfizer's violation of her free speech rights.

Although McClain has won her free speech and whistleblower claims, she remains disappointed that she has no legal remedy regarding Pfizer's failure to provide her with the appropriate exposure records necessary for her healthcare.

"Coddled?" continued from p. 1

sector. Indeed, the study documents how public compensation has lagged private sector for twenty years. But it does throw the resurgent right-wing campaign to demonize public employees and their unions sharply into question. In this recession, public employees have been laid off, furloughed, and seen their wages frozen."

Traub concludes, "At a time when public budgets are strained by falling tax revenue, these are among the difficult choices cities and states have made. But that's no reason to imagine that 'greedy' [public sector] workers somehow caused the crisis or deserve to lose their jobs or to see their pay cut any more than private sector employees. Those looking for a 'coddled class' should look to the Wall Street bonus pool, not the Parks Department."

Go to <http://www.slge.org/> to read the report, "Out of Balance? Comparing Public and Private Sector Compensation Over 20 Years."

"Tyrone Douglas" continued from p. 1

his duties as a West Haven city employee .

"I could have taken a Social Security disability retirement, sat home and collected a check," Douglas said. "But that's not who I am. I want to be a productive, tax-paying member of society. I never wanted to stay home and vegetate."

Douglas believes he never would have gotten his job without the efforts of Local 681 and Council 4.

"My union stood by me and fought for my rights. I am grateful to Lynn (Jaqua) and (Council 4) Staff Representative Len LaLuna for representing me every step of the way," Douglas said.

Holding candidates accountable

On March 20, approximately 400 members and retirees from the 13 unions in the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) turned out to meet Connecticut's 2010 gubernatorial candidates. All the major party candidates were invited, and five Democrats and one Republican came to West Hartford to share their vision for Connecticut and to answer questions from public service workers about their plan to create more jobs and brighten the state's economic forecast.

SEBAC leaders extended an invitation to all of the major party candidates for governor and the six who agreed to participate were (in alphabetical order): Juan Figueroa; Mary Glassman; Ned Lamont; Dan Malloy; Rudy Marconi; and Tom Marsh

Be sure to watch the video online at www.council4.org to see how the candidates responded to some of your concerns and learn about their approaches to solving the state's economic crisis.



L-R: xxx (Local 391), Joyce Evoy (Council 4) and Beverly Bosse and Mary Beth Kaczynski-Hill (Local 2663).



Candidate Dan Malloy leads a breakout discussion on health care and education. Standing L-R: Peter Thor (Council 4), Jim Tedford (Local 1471), Darius Bartolomei and his father Jay Bartolomei (Local 714).



Candidate Mary Glassman addresses our members. Glassman has since withdrawn to run for Lt. Gov.



Republican Tom Marsh, left, the First Selectman of Chester, talks with Council 4's Kevin Murphy and Bonnie Liedtke.



Candidate Juan Figueroa discusses health care.



After the forum, SEBAC representatives, including Council 4's Matthew Brokman (2nd from left) donated fresh lunches to the McKinney Homeless Shelter in Hartford.



Godfrey Ferguson of Local 2663 listens intently to the candidates.



Ned Lamont answers a question posed by Roberta Marien of Local 610, seated right. Seated in the middle is SEBAC chief negotiator Daniel Livingston.



Members of Council 4's Retiree Chapter were among the 400 people who packed the Webster Hill School auditorium to listen to the candidates.

Time for the Red Cross to honor Its history



Local 3145 member Sarah Emmons, a registered nurse at the Red Cross, speaks to Channel 8 News after members voted 161-13 to authorize joining a national strike by Red Cross workers.

For over a year, AFSCME Local 3145 members employed by the American Red Cross (ARC) in Connecticut have been working without a contract. Who would have thought that an organization with the ARC's history would treat its workers so poorly?

And yet, the problem faced by our AFSCME brothers and sisters – nurses, laboratory technicians, phlebotomists, drivers and others employed at the organization's offices in Farmington, Conn. – is only the latest in a series of unfair labor practices involving the organization.

According to a recent statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council:

“ARC's most aggressive anti-worker policies have been directed at more than 3,000 employees who are represented by unions. Between 1996 and 2007, more than 200 unfair labor practice charges were filed against ARC with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

ARC has also exhibited a troubling pattern of understaffing blood drives and downgrading its staff by eliminating the most experienced, licensed medical personnel. This has fostered high turnover and increased the risk of blood safety errors on the job.

The consequences of these practices speak for themselves: Since 2003, the Federal Food and Drug Administration has fined ARC nearly \$21 million for repeated safety failures.”

AFSCME members know this too well.

“There are blood drives that go out without licensed medical personnel,” Local 3145 president Christine Holschlag, a phlebotomist, told the New Britain Herald.

This is why Local 3145 members have formed a national coalition of unionized Red Cross employees, community groups and blood safety organizations to fight for better

working conditions and ensure the safety of donors. Within the last month, Local 3145 members voted to reject management's last, best and final offer; to authorize an unfair labor practice (ULP) strike — a strike forced by the employer's violation of law. Our union members also voted to join a national strike with several other Red Cross local unions nationwide that have expired contracts.

Local 3145 members are not wavering in their fight to gain respect. To help raise awareness of the ARC's anti-worker, anti-safety stance, they've held numerous public actions throughout Connecticut and in Washington, DC. They also worked with Council 4 to pursue state legislation that would require a licensed, trained nurse to oversee blood drives.

It's time for the Red Cross to honor its history and start protecting donors, keeping blood safe and respecting workers.

Learn more at <http://www.blooddrivesafety.com>.

Laura Johnson: AFSCME scholarship winner



Laura Johnson (l) and Maria Johnson.

Congratulations to Laura Johnson, who has been awarded a 2010 AFSCME Family Scholarship is the daughter of Maria Johnson, a paraprofessional at Chippens Hill School in Bristol and a proud member of AFSCME Local 2267.

Laura is a senior at St. Paul High School in Bristol and plans to attend Fairfield University in the fall. As one of 10 winners nationwide, Laura will receive \$2,000 for each year of school up to four years. Laura's winning essay, *What AFSCME Has Meant to My Family*, is on our website. But check out this excerpt:

“Affordable health care and a pension are getting harder and harder to come by in today's world, and without the new reforms and policies under the contract recently won by AFSCME and the acceptance with which my mother was hired, neither of them would be possible for my family. If AFSCME was not as strong and active a union as it is and didn't assert itself in the matters that have won it the most advancements in providing for its workers, the lives of many people would be drastically changed for the worse, especially that of my family.”

Read Laura's full essay at www.council4.org.

Hamden Library Workers Provide Vital Services in Tough Times

Members of AFSCME Local 1303-115, who work for the Hamden Public Library, marked National Library Week (April 10-17) with a combination of grit and grace as they reminded the community that libraries are an increasingly valuable resource in tough economic times. Hamden library workers joined with patrons to voice their concern about Mayor Scott Jackson's proposed 2010-2011 budget, which recommended eliminating six library positions – an approximately 15% cut in staff to an already lean organization.

"The Hamden library system is busier than ever. We've seen a noticeable increase in patrons and demand for our services," noted Nancy McLaughlin, head children's librarian and co-president of AFSCME Local 1303-115.

"The Hamden library positively affects everyone who lives here, from toddlers to senior citizens," said Hamden resident Thomas Bardakian. "I'm a firm believer that the library is one of the crown jewels of the community. Our library doesn't get the recognition it deserves."



Local 1303-115 members and library patrons pressed the Mayor's Office and the Hamden Legislative Council to restore the positions slated for elimination, joining with members of AFSCME Local 2863 and town residents at a recent public hearing to express their concern about the impact of service cuts across the local community.

Perseverance paid off for Hamden library employees. Local 1303-115 members on May 6 unanimously ratified an agreement with the town that averted layoffs and service cuts, with members agreeing to five furlough days each and the town agreeing to restore full- and part-time positions slated for elimination.

"A strong public library is central to any town's economic vitality," noted Sandy Bartell, Branch Librarian at Brundage Community Branch and co-president of AFSCME Local 1303-115. "That's why we stepped up to the plate and made this sacrifice."

South Windsor Public Works Union Contributes To Food Bank

A FSCME Local 1303-28, the union representing South Windsor Department of Public Works employees, donated \$500 to the South Windsor Food and Fuel Bank.

"We are grateful for the generosity of the AFSCME public works union," said Irene Murray, Coordinator of Adult and Senior Services for the Town of South Windsor. "We're helping 35 to 40 families a month and we always run out of gift cards. This contribution will be put to immediate and good use to help our residents in these challenging economic times."

The union's donation came in the form of \$10 gift cards for use at Geissler's Supermarket in South Windsor. Geissler's provided an additional 5% discount, bringing the total value of gift cards to \$525.

According to AFSCME Local 1303-28 President Alec Arnold, "Charity starts at home. Our union members felt strongly about keeping our donation in town so it would directly benefit the people we serve every day."

Union Steward Michael Spielman added, "South Windsor's Human Services Department does an amazing job helping residents in our own community. We just want to do our part to help our friends and neighbors."



L-R: AFSCME Local 1303-28 members Danny Jacobsen and Alec Arnold; Adult and Senior Citizen Services Coordinator Irene Murray; AFSCME Local 1303-28's Michael Spielmann; and Human Services Director Dennis Sheridan.

Council 4 Recognizes Members



Council 4's annual Conference and Convention took place April 9-11 in Stamford. As part of the conference, we recognized union members who have gone above and beyond in representing their union members on the job and in our communities. They are (in alphabetical order):

- Deidre Anspach**, Local 465
- Marjorie Bertram**, Local 1303-186
- Gil Bironi**, Local 184
- Darlene B. Brown**, Local 478
- Michele Clark**, Local 884
- Linda Costanzo**, Local 2930
- Carla Fontanez**, Local 1522
- Christine Holschlag**, Local 3145
- Barbara Jurczynszak**, Local 1303-276
- Jordan Jones**, Local 478
- Levey Kardulis**, Local 566
- Clarke King**, Local 1716
- Augie Lopedota**, Local 391
- Doreen Rhodes**, Local 884
- Clint White**, Local 391
- Sandra Stafford**, Local 233
- Lillian Sewell**, Retirees
- Joel Wendrow**, Local 1303-332
- Margaret Wilson**, Local 538

Congratulations to this year's Council 4 Recognition Award winners. Thanks for helping make our union stronger and better in these challenging times.

**WE'RE JUST
A CLICK AWAY:
WWW.COUNCIL4.ORG**



Hartford Custodians Remember Haitian Earthquake Victims

A FSCME Local 566, representing Hartford Board of Education Custodians, Maintainers, Food Service and Skilled Trades Employees, has donated \$2,000 to AmeriCares in support of continuing earthquake relief efforts in Haiti.

"The earthquake that devastated Haiti in January may seem like a long time ago, but Haitian citizens are still suffering and still in need of our help," said Local 566 President Levey Kardulis. "We should not let attention to the plight of every day Haitians start to wane."

According to a recent AmeriCares press release, "As the health care situation in Haiti transitions from emergency medicine to addressing acute and chronic medical conditions, AmeriCares, the global health and disaster relief organization, is increasing its commitment to the people of Haiti by pledging to deliver \$50 million in aid to help rebuild the country's health care system."

Since a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti on January 12, causing massive death and destruction, union members have steadily poured money, relief goods and medical supplies into the already-struggling nation.

AFSCME International made an initial donation of \$25,000 to Haitian relief efforts. Council 4 and many of our local unions have contributed to agencies including AmeriCares, Doctors Without Borders and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center.

"Dr. Martin Luther King said, 'An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity,'" Kardulis noted. "The continuing struggles of the Haitian people speak to the need to honor his words."



L-R: AFSCME Local 566 members Vito Santaserio, Levey Kardulis, Kevin Conneely, Richard Deschenes, John Oullett, Gene Marek and Council 4 Field Representative Heather Longo.

Middletown Local 466 Helps Families of Kleen Energy Tragedy



L-R: Middletown School Custodians Jeff Turro, John Giuliano, Louis Aresco and Vincenzo Russo of Local 466 worked around the clock to get Middletown High School ready for the Kleen Energy Family Fundraiser.

Members of AFSCME Local 466, Middletown Board of Education and City Employees, are playing a key role in the Middletown Union Coalition's effort to support the families of the six workers who lost their lives in the tragic Kleen Energy Plant explosion Feb. 7.

An April 17 dinner and raffle at Middletown High School raised more than \$80,000 for a special fund to benefit the surviving families. There will be a June 26 "Fight Night" at the Hartford Convention Center, during which the Lion's Den of Middletown, a local boxing and martial arts center, will raffle a 2011 Harley Sportster. Go to our website at www.council4.org to learn more.



AFSCME Local 466 President Jeff Daniels and AFSCME Local 538 Vice President Cheryl Drolet at the Kleen Energy fundraiser.

You can also help by making a donation to the Families of Kleen Energy Tragedy c/o MiddConn Federal Credit Union, 213 Court Street, Middletown, CT 06457.

ORGANIZED LABOR NIGHT

Join us on Saturday, June 26, 2010 for the 2nd Annual Organized Labor Night at New Britain Stadium.

For information and complimentary tickets contact Scott Soares at 860-612-3858 or email ssoares@council4.org AFTER June 1.

Events of the night include:

-  On field ceremony honoring union members.
-  Pre-game food and drink specials.
-  Pre-game ceremony honoring the Helmets to Hardhats program.
-  Post-game Launch-A-Ball fundraiser to benefit Helmets to Hardhats Program.
-  Giveaways from Council 4 and the Rock Cats.

Stay tuned for updates on www.council4.org



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