CSEA PRESIDENT DANNY DONOHUE expresses his strong opposition to plans to close Kingsboro Psychiatric Center in Brooklyn. Donohue and others addressed a rally on the steps of Brooklyn’s Borough Hall. PEF President Jim Sheedy is behind Donohue. At upper right is CSEA Kingsboro Local 402 President Bob Nurse.

State budget cuts are ‘Too rapid, too radical!’

— see pages 3, 6, 9-11 & 13
CSEA's Disability Income Insurance Plan gets New York Life as new underwriter; members get new and improved benefits

CSEA, working with Jardine Group Services Corporation as the plan administrator, has changed insurance carriers for its sponsored voluntary Disability Income Insurance Plan. Effective March 1, 1996, New York Life Insurance Company will serve as the policy's underwriter.

This new plan features increased accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefits, new survivor and vocational rehabilitation benefits. Approved by the CSEA Board of Directors on Jan. 11, 1996, this results in an improved plan with new benefit provisions and a two-year rate guarantee. Insured members now receive more AD&D coverage at no additional cost. The Basic Principal Sum has been increased from $1,000 ($2,500 at the end of the first year of coverage) to $5,000, at no extra cost to members. In addition, there are four choices for the Optional Principal Sums: $10,000, $25,000, $50,000, and $100,000 worth of AD&D coverage. Also, these rates are no longer determined by age; they are now determined by class.

A Vocational Rehabilitation Benefit has been added to the plan. Insured members approved by New York Life for vocational rehabilitation benefits may participate in a New York Life funded vocational rehabilitation program for up to 24 months. With this program, members may be retrained and provided with new job skills. A Survivor Benefit has also been added. If the insured member dies from a disability which lasted longer than 30 days, while receiving benefits for a total disability, the surviving family members receive two additional monthly benefit payments.

Another new part of the plan is a Work Stoppage Benefit. With this benefit, premiums are waived in the event of a union-sanctioned work action which results in the insured not receiving a paycheck. “We made the decision to change carriers because the benefits with New York Life Insurance Company as the underwriter better meet the changing needs of our members,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “We’ve worked with New York Life before and I’m confident this change will benefit everyone who is involved.”

In addition to new benefits, insured members will still receive:

* Economical premiums as a result of CSEA’s group purchasing power;
* Premiums payable through convenient payroll deduction;
* Reduced premiums for a 30-day waiting period option;
* Premium waiver for covered periods of total disability;
* A CSEA and New York Life mailing with complete plan details including your new Certificate of Insurance and personalized Schedule Page will be mailed to the insured members’ homes during the first week of March. For further information on this change or how you can join the thousands of disability income insured members, call 1-800-607-CSEA toll free. Or for faster, accurate answers to your individual disability claims questions, call the new CSEA disability claims hotline at 1-800-230-2422.

Deadline for submitting proposed changes to CSEA’s Constitution & By-Laws is June 28

Proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & By-Laws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union’s 1996 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by June 28, 1996.

Delegates to the 1995 Annual Delegates Meeting voted to change the submission deadline to an earlier date. However, for the convenience of members during the transition to an earlier deadline, proposed amendments to the Constitution & By-Laws will be accepted this year until June 28. Beginning in 1997, the deadline for submitting proposed changes will be May 15 each year.

Proposed amendments must be submitted no later than June 28 to Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210-2303.

The 1996 Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 30 through Oct. 4 in New York City.

Always protect your membership status

A break in union membership status can have long-term future implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:

- seeking or holding union office;
- signing nominating petitions for potential candidates;
- voting in union elections, and
- voting on collective bargaining contracts.

Only members “in good standing” can participate in these activities. To be in “good standing,” your dues cannot be delinquent.

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year. You must notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146, Ext. 327, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.
CSEA is turning up the heat in the fight to save mental health services from drastic reductions in the Governor's proposed state budget. Those cuts will further erode care in state facilities and dump greater burden onto local governments. The results will mean fewer available services, more mentally ill individuals on the streets and higher local property taxes to offset the state’s irresponsibility.

"Nobody voted for changes that put more mentally ill individuals on the streets without available help." CSEA President Danny Donohue said at a recent rally protesting Pataki's budget cuts. "Nobody voted for changes that make the mental health work force expendable and devastate the communities where they live and work."

CSEA is disturbed when Kingsboro Psychiatric Center patient James Colbert stepped to the microphone to call the Governor and their state legislators to express disapproval of the reckless plan.

CSEA is disturbed because the expedited consolidation may put people at risk without saving the state much money at all. At the same time, the state plans significant reductions in the number of patients served on Long Island.

In Brooklyn, Donohue joined with Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio and a who's who of elected officials and community leaders for a Borough Hall rally in support of Kingsboro Psychiatric Center hosted by Borough President Howard Golden.

Led by Assembly Mental Health Committee Chair Jim Brennan and Assembly member Clarence Norman, nearly all of the Brooklyn legislative delegation turned out to express their strong opposition to the Kingsboro closure plan.

PEF President James Sheedy, CSEA Kingsboro Local 402 President Bob Nurse, CSEA Board of Directors mental hygiene representative Jimmy Gripper and representatives of the Friends and Advocates of the Mentally Ill, the Labor and Religion Coalition and other community groups also participated.

"The proposal is the latest example of OMH policy that is doomed to fail," Nurse said. "That policy is to shut down state facilities and then forget about the patients as soon as the doors hit them on the way out," he testified. "Not a thought is given to the impact on patients, their families, employees and their families or the community as a whole."

STONY BROOK — A chronic psychiatric patient released from Kings Park Psychiatric Center recently raped a 26-year-old nurse assistant at Stony Brook University Hospital.

According to CSEA Stony Brook Hospital Local 614 President Grace Roy, the woman, a CSEA member, was attacked and raped while she was working a recent night shift. Her attacker, a former patient at Kings Park Psychiatric Center, was a patient at Stony Brook University Hospital for medical reasons at the time of the rape.

The perpetrator was arrested in 1984 when he committed another crime after escaping from KPPC. "This is another case of the state rushing releases of psychiatric patients and another innocent person getting hurt," CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said.

— Sheryl C. Jenks
Westchester County Executive

O’Rourke wants a raise

WHITE PLAINS — Outraged that the idea could even come up, much less be a formal proposal, CSEA Westchester County Unit President Cheryl Melton is urging defeat of a proposal for salary hikes for high level county officials. Melton is urging county legislators to reject County Executive Andrew O’Rourke’s proposal for the 19.5 percent raises for himself and the county clerk, and raises for commissioners and managers. 

... after layoffs, privatizing and demands for givebacks

O’Rourke’s proposal came just a few days after he told a state Senate committee that he was concerned that the county would be $17 million short in state aid for the 1996 fiscal year. Melton reminded county legislators in a letter that the union conducted a vigorous anti-privatization campaign after O’Rourke began privatizing many county departments last summer. “These proposed raises are a slap in the face, especially to those county employees who lost their jobs or are working for the private contractors at half of what they were earning as county employees,” she said.

Meanwhile, we are in the midst of contract negotiations with the county and one of their demands is for givebacks in health insurance.”

CSEA Southern Region President Maryjane MacNair had her own advice for O’Rourke in a letter she sent to Westchester newspapers. “Share the pain, Andy,” she said. “A good boss wouldn’t ask his employees to do anything he wouldn’t do, so I suggest that you and your county clerk set an example by cutting your salaries in half and giving up your health benefits and all the rest of the perks just like some of the former county employees. Try it for just a month.”

— Anita Manley

And now, a golf course

WHITE PLAINS — Now Westchester County Executive Andrew O’Rourke wants to build a new golf course.

He has proposed buying 174 acres in northern Westchester County from IBM.

After paying $3.7 million for the land, O’Rourke plans to spend another $5.4 million to turn it into a golf course.

O’Rourke’s proposal comes on the heels of his recent request for pay hikes for himself and other high level county administrators (see adjacent story).

Both proposals followed layoffs of county employees and the privatization of departments, ostensibly to save taxpayer dollars.

Justifying his land purchase proposal, O’Rourke told the media that golf courses in the county are overcrowded.

“Just when I think I’ve heard it all, Mr. O’Rourke pulls another rabbit out of his hat,” CSEA Unit President Cheryl Melton said. “If he wants to see overcrowded, he should check out the unemployment office or the social services offices in Westchester County,” she said. “Maybe he’ll run into some former county employees who might have time to play golf now that they’re out of work.”

CSEA Southern Region President Maryjane MacNair said she found it ironic that the land O’Rourke wants to buy is owned by IBM.

“This is the same conglomerate that owns the buildings in Ulster County that our Republican Public Works Commissioner Richard Rapp wants to buy,” she said. “Does IBM bailout sound familiar?”

— Anita Manley

CSEA wins $100,000 for Poughkeepsie mechanic

POUGHKEEPSIE — Town of Poughkeepsie Maintenance Mechanic Jeff Glinka is back to work and eligible for more than $100,000 in back pay and benefits, thanks to CSEA and a large dose of patience.

After all, it took more than four years to win his case.

Glinka was brought up on charges, including one that he took unauthorized leave.

“I had requested sick leave, and the doctor had written the wrong dates,” he said. “When I wrote in the correct dates, I was accused of forging the dates.”

Glinka lost his first hearing and was fired. CSEA took the case to court, where all but one charge was dismissed, but Glinka was fired again.

The town brought more charges, which were thrown out by the state’s Supreme Court, and he was finally reinstated with back pay and benefits after more than four-and-a-half years of legal wrangling.

Glinka, a member of CSEA Dutchess County Local 814, had nothing but praise for his union and his attorney. “This union is stronger than people realize,” he said. “If wasn’t for the union, I wouldn’t have my job back.”

“Four years is a long time,” CSEA attorney Bill Burke said. “It just didn’t happen to happen this way. Town residents shouldn’t have to pay for this.”

— Anita Manley

SUFFOLK COUNTY

Smithtown unit wants contract

SMITHTOWN — CSEA members in Smithtown are protesting political grandstanding by town board members. Hundreds of workers protested in bitter cold prior to two town board meetings. The 450 members have been without a contract for 13 months.

CSEA Unit President Doug Keltner said two board members object to the medical plan because it covers vasectomies, tubal ligation and pregnancy termination; board members have the same health care package.

“These are not issues at the table, and these men are remiss in their responsibility to vote for a fair contract,” Keltner said.

— Sheryl C. Jenks

ERIE COUNTY

Clarence workers join CSEA

CLARENCE — Town of Clarence employees are among CSEA’s newest members.

The new Town of Clarence Unit includes senior clerks, clerk typists, senior clerk typists, water district clerk, building & zoning clerk, building inspector, assessment clerk, second deputy receiver of taxes, animal control officer, assistant animal control officer, computer operator, real property appraiser and custodian.

CAYUGA COUNTY

Murder conviction upheld

AUBURN — The state Court of Appeals recently upheld the murder conviction of a man who killed a CSEA Cayuga County social services worker two years ago.

Roy Brown was convicted and sentenced to 25 years to life for the brutal murder of CSEA member Sabina Kulakowski, who was county day care program coordinator.

Brown had threatened county social service workers after his eight-year-old daughter had been placed in foster care.

ALBANY COUNTY

Three promoted retroactively

ALBANY — An arbitrator has ordered Albany County to appoint three public works department employees to equipment operator positions with full pay and benefits retroactive to Dec. 29, 1994.

CSEA took the case to binding arbitration on behalf of John Slaver, Barry Waldron and Randy Loucks after county Public Works Commissioner Richard Rapp violated the union contract by promoting three other workers over the more senior employees.

CSEA Attorney William A. Herbert, who handled the cases, said the commissioner promoted the other employees based on how much voluntary overtime they worked, which is not a criteria for promotion.
Port Jervis workers battle to save city from flood damage

PORT JERVIS — First it was the Blizzard of '96, then it was the Flood of '96. Which was worse? It's a toss-up, say Port Jervis Department of Public Works employees, members of CSEA Orange County Local 836.

The more than two feet of snow was bad, but when you have a city bordered by the Delaware River and add a 50-degree-January thaw and a day of record heavy rain, you have the formula for potential disaster.

Luckily, that formula included some hard-working CSEA members who got very little sleep that wet weekend. Thanks to their efforts, the city avoided major damage.

"Most of us worked all that Friday, went home for an hour, and came back and worked all night and through the next day," unit member Vern Kalin said.

"We made sandbags to stop the flooding, but we did get some water at the lowest points, and there were a lot of basements and streets flooded."

Other areas in the Hudson Valley were not so lucky. Some homes sustained serious damage, including collapsed basements and roofs already burdened by heavy snow. Many vehicles were stranded in high water. Some roads were closed because of mud and rock slides.

Two Port Jervis employees, brothers Jack and Joe Farr, were monitoring the river and running pumps trying to keep an underpass from flooding when a 92-year-old man drove the wrong way on a one-way street and ended up in a flooded underpass (see photo, page 20).

"The water was up to his dashboard when we got him out of the car," Jack Farr said. "The guy thought there was a little ice on the road and he could just drive through it."

— Anita Manley

CSEA helps community send message to Legislature

PLATTSBURGH — "Don't dump our landfill" is the message the Clinton County Unit of CSEA Local 810 is helping residents deliver to the county legislature.

Clinton County politicians decided to sell its new multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art landfill, CSEA Unit President Joe Musso said.

"But the politicians forgot that the taxpayers who had been footing the bill for the design, construction and operations of the landfill with a nearly 25-year life expectancy wanted a say in any decision concerning the future of their landfill."

With 48 CSEA members whose jobs could disappear, "CSEA is concerned as a representative of those employees and as a responsible member of the community," CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Charlie Scott said.

"The CSEA unit, with communications assistance from the CSEA Capital Region office, has launched an effective media campaign to get out the union's message. 'That message, 'Don't DUMP Our Landfill,' is out and hopefully being heard by the county legislature,' " Scott said.

— Daniel X. Campbell

BRIEFS

FULTON COUNTY

Board blinks under pressure

JOHNSTOWN — When management pleaded that Fulton County was in financial difficulties, CSEA members put the need of the county above their own and agreed to a multi-year contract with modest increases.

That's why CSEA and its members became irate when members of the county Board of Supervisors proposed raising their own salaries by as much as 38 percent.

CSEA mounted a public campaign against the raises, which gathered support from county taxpayer organizations and WENT, an area radio station.

Obviously feeling the intense pressure generated by the CSEA-led campaign, Board members ultimately voted themselves a 5 percent pay hike, some 33 percent below their initial plans.

— Daniel X. Campbell

CHENANGO COUNTY

Welcome aboard, Norwich

NORWICH — Senior account clerk typists, senior typists and planner trainees employed by the city of Norwich in Chenango County recently became the newest CSEA members in CSEA's Central Region.

The state Public Employment Relations Board certified CSEA as the exclusive bargaining representative for the Norwich workers.

NASSAU COUNTY

"Salute to Labor Awards"

CSEA Nassau County Local 830 president Tony Giustino, second from right, presented plaques in recognition of outstanding labor relations efforts during a Salute to Labor Awards ceremony. Recipients are, from left, Nassau County Director of Labor Relations Tony Russo, former Local 830 President Rita Wallace and CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte.

— Daniel X. Campbell

CSEA Work Force

We didn't vote for THESE changes

THE PROPOSED STATE BUDGET WILL DEVASTATE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ALSO! (See pages 9-11 for more information)

Use the toll-free number below to call your state senator, assembly member and the Governor.

Tell them 'We didn't vote for these changes!'

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— Daniel X. Campbell
Mental Hygiene: A system in disarray

Stress, danger, injuries and death constant companions of workers in state's mental hygiene institutions

ROCKLAND PSYCHIATRIC CENTER  A hazardous place to work

ORANGEBURG — Even the brutal 1987 murder of a Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) therapy aide by a patient apparently didn’t teach New York officials any lasting lessons about understaffing in the state’s mental hygiene facilities.

Employees of RPC say their facility is still a hazardous place to work and proposed state budget cuts will only add to the already serious problems.

Dot Roscoe agrees.

After five months on leave, Roscoe, a therapy aide, is still on “light duty” while she recovers from injuries she received from an angry patient. The incident, she said, was a nightmare. “I was in the nurses’ station,” she recounted. “The patient was angry because she was told she couldn’t go out. She came at me with her fists and hit me in the head over and over...When I came to, the nurse was taking my vital signs. I found out that a therapy aide and a social worker restrained the patient and they took me out on a stretcher.” “I felt so alone,” she said.

Roscoe and her co-workers say the assaults on staff are symptomatic of a system in disarray. State budget cuts mean it can only get worse.

Mario Alexander works on an admissions ward where new patients are screened. “Many of the patients have criminal backgrounds,” he said. “They’re younger and stronger and most are drug abusers.”

“Sometimes there are just two therapy aides assigned to a ward of more than 30 patients,” said Therapy Aide Matthew Kuriakose. “If one therapy aide is assigned to observe one or two particular patients, the other is left to care for the rest.

“Sometimes these patients are strong and clever,” said Kuriakose. “If a therapy aide is restraining a patient, he or she may be attacked by another patient.”

The recent Blizzard of ’96 only served to remind therapy aides how patients are being forced to work on the secure care ward. That’s the work of the grade 9s and it endangers not just the staff, but the patients also.”

George Rhea is a hazardous place to work

Stress, danger, injuries and death constant companions of workers in state’s mental hygiene institutions

9 employees are being forced to work on the secure care ward in the children’s ward.

“The grade 9s are not appropriately trained to work the secure care ward. That’s the work of the grade 11s and it endangers not just the staff, but the patients also.”

Patients are not getting the care they need, employees say. “They can’t possibly get the care they need,” Roscoe said. “They put the patients out before they’re ready.” — Anita Manley

CSEA Local 413 fights back

WARD’S ISLAND — Faced with 230 layoffs by April 3, CSEA Manhattan Psychiatric Center Local 406 president Caroline Sikoryak invited 40 New York City metropolitan legislators to visit the Local 406 union office on March 1 to meet with rank and file members affected by Gov. Pataki’s proposed mental health budget cuts. She labels Pataki’s cuts “a monstrosity.” Creedmoor is faced with 206 possible layoffs and a large influx of new patients with the closing of Kingsboro Psychiatric Center.

“We don’t have enough staff to care for the patients at Creedmoor now,” Sikoryak said. “Secondly, they have no business closing Kingsboro Psychiatric Center, a facility that serves 2.5 million people in Brooklyn, and shifting clients here.”

— Lilly Giola

CSEA Creedmoor Psychiatric Center Local 406 president says facility understaffed, calls cuts ‘a monstrosity’
IBM deal on a seesaw: opponents try to halt it; supporters pushing forward

ALBANY — At press time it was being left up to state Comptroller H. Carl McCall to determine whether the on-again off-again state plan to lease-purchase IBM buildings near Kingston and Binghamton can proceed. State Attorney General Dennis Vacco, a Republican, approved the plan recently, leaving the fate of the plan in the hands of Democrat McCall. Both must approve the project before it could move forward.

Also, a taxpayer suit instituted by a Washington County activist opposing the near Kingston and Binghamton can proceed. State Comptroller H. Carl McCall to Washington County activist opposing the state plan to lease-purchase IBM buildings leaving the fate of the plan in the hands of Democrat McCall. Both must approve the project before it could move forward.

Gov. George Pataki wants to shift 850 state computer jobs from Albany to the Kingston IBM facilities and 1,350 state computer jobs and support positions from New York City to the Binghamton site. Fleet Financial Group, which processes personal state income tax returns, would move 3,150 of its jobs from Albany to the Kingston site also. Fleet Financial Group wants the deal sealed by early March.

Pataki claims the deal would save state taxpayers $52 million a year, but Democrat legislators, CSEA and other unions dispute that and believe the move would actually cost money, not save it. “This may not be a good deal for anyone except IBM,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “The state has not been forthcoming with details so we don’t know if this plan would provide an economic benefit to the state. We do believe it would unnecessarily disrupt the lives of thousands of families.”

The controversial purchase plan involves buying the IBM buildings for $12 million, renovating them for $37 million and somehow saving taxpayers $52 million in computer operation costs.

1995 Empire Plan claims must be filed by March 31, 1996

All 1995 Empire Plan Basic Medical claims must be submitted by March 31, 1996, to: MetraHealth Service Corp. Administrator for MetLife P.O. Box 1600 Kingston, NY 12401-0600

Good news for CSEA state members in ASU, ISU, OSU & DMNA

Your CSEA Employee Benefit Fund dental benefits improved again on March 1. See page 15 for details

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- MetraHealth Service Corp.
- Administrator for MetLife
- P.O. Box 1600
- Kingston, NY 12401-0600

Basic medical claim forms may be obtained from your agency’s personnel office or from MetraHealth. Make sure you complete the requested subscriber information and, if applicable, dependent student information. Don’t forget to sign the claim form.

Please be certain to have your doctor or other provider fill out all the information asked for on the claim form. If the claim form is not filled out by the provider, original bills must include all medical/diagnostic information asked for on the claim form. Missing information will delay the processing of your claim.

If you have any questions concerning your claim, you may contact MetraHealth directly at 1-800-942-4640.

We Didn’t Vote for THESE Changes

Gov. Pataki’s proposed 1996 state budget would have potentially devastating effects on many state and local government programs. (See pages 9-11 for more information).

JOIN THE FIGHT!

Use the toll-free number below to call your state senator, assembly member and the Governor.

Tell them ‘We didn’t vote for these changes!’

Call 1-800-SOS-6336

Suspended attendance rules for severe January storm

State workers who were unable to come to work to certain state facilities on Jan. 8 and 9 because of a severe snowstorm will receive leave with pay without charge to accruals.

The state Civil Service Commission approved leave with pay without charge to accruals for full-day absences on Jan. 8 for state workers whose work locations are in Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Ulster and Westchester counties. The Commission also approved leave with pay without charge to accruals for full-day absences on Jan. 8 and 9 for state employees whose work locations are in Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond counties.

Gov. George Pataki declared a disaster emergency in those counties and in Sullivan and Columbia counties on Jan. 7. Absences of volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance squad members during the emergency period may be excused without charge to leave. Also, on Jan. 8 Gov. Pataki directed an early departure for employees in affected counties. Employees who reported to work on Jan. 8 but departed early should not be required to charge leave credits.

UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM

Senior office typist exam alert

The Unified Court System announced that filing for senior office typist exams will be suspended indefinitely effective March 29, 1996. Applications must be filed by March 29 for the last scheduled examination for this title to be held on Saturday, June 8. The test was first administered on April 1, 1995. Candidates who failed either the written or typing portion of this exam, or both, may request to retake those portions which they failed by writing Linda Carlsson, Examination Unit, Office of Court Administration, Room 1209, 270 Broadway, New York, NY 10007, no later than March 29.

PEOPLE.

Gene Townsend earns PEOPLE recruiter honors

Gene Townsend of CSEA Pilgrim Psychiatric Center Local 418 on Long Island earned Recruiter of the Month honors for January by recruiting the most new members for the PEOPLE Program. PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) is the CSEA-AFSCME lobbying program that operates at the federal level.

Townsend recruited 55 new members for PEOPLE during January.
In touch with you

A message from CSEA President Danny Donohue

Mental health cuts hurt people and local communities, not just state facilities

CSEA members, like all New Yorkers, want better government. But nobody voted for the kind of changes we're seeing in the proposed state budget.

One of the areas of greatest concern are cuts in mental health. The issue affects all our members and their communities, not just state OMH facilities.

The proposed mental health plan would dramatically downsize the state psychiatric system and eliminate nearly 4,000 state jobs while also walking away from the responsibility to ensure the development of alternative care. Under the radical "reform," more responsibility for mental health services would be shifted to the local government level, but funding for community-based care would also be cut. There would also be no obligation for localities to provide minimum standards of care.

Too often in the past we have heard words and phrases presented as if they were miracle cures for the deficiencies of the mental health system. To terms such as "deinstitutionalization" and "alternative care," the Office of Mental Health is now adding "managed care" and "integrated delivery system."

By any other measure they still mean dumping.

Put another way, OMH is suggesting that we don't need psychiatric centers because seriously mentally ill individuals can be treated by health maintenance organizations (HMOs).

The state's irresponsibility would be bad enough if just the mentally ill were at risk, but even now, some individuals falling between the cracks of the system are public safety risks. Not a week goes by without tragic examples.

Where was the "alternative care" for these individuals before they hurt innocent people? What confidence can we have that visits to HMOs will help seriously mentally ill people, especially those who pose a risk to all of us?

And what of the moral obligation to state mental health workers, let alone the taxpayers' investment in this skilled and experienced work force?

If state's managers can't work with us to effectively redeploy dedicated and capable state employees, how can they possibly expect to move people off social services?

CSEA intends to hold state officials accountable for these issues.
Jim Roarke, CSEA Town of Brunswick unit president, makes his point while making a call to his state lawmaker using the toll-free number 1-800-SOS-6336. "Budget cuts are going to cause cuts in local government budgets, counties, cities, towns, right on down the line," Roarke said. "We all have to fight back by making our own calls to the SOS number and getting our members and all of their families to make those calls. We're all in this together. Call NOW!"
WE DIDN’T VOTE FOR THESE CHANGES

Join the fight!

CSEA has been leading a grassroots campaign to convince state lawmakers and the Governor that the proposed state budget will hurt all New York state residents through reduced services and increased property and sales taxes. Children, the elderly, the disabled and the poor will particularly suffer under a budget that is simply too radical. And working people will find it even harder to make ends meet.

The rallying cry of this campaign is “We didn’t vote for these changes!” CSEA members are being encouraged to include family members, friends and co-workers in the effort to fight the budget proposal.

In record numbers, CSEA members are writing letters and calling the 1-800-SOS-6336 number to reach their lawmakers (see story page 11).

Join the fight! Below is a schedule for the campaign. If you need more information, call the CSEA Political Action Department at headquarters or call your region office.

March 4-6: Write to the editor of your local newspaper.
March 9: Literature drop — get a few friends and co-workers, pick an area and drop fliers at houses.
March 11-13: Write a letter to the Governor.
March 18: Call Sen. Joe Bruno’s office.
March 19: Call Speaker Silver’s office.
March 20: Call your county executive.
March 21: Call the Governor’s office.
March 25-29: Call your legislator’s office to ask if any progress has been made.

Local Government members at risk, too

CSEA members in local government need to fight the proposed state budget just as hard as state employees.

Local governments stand to lose nearly $900 million in state aid. For Albany County, that means a loss of $8.7 million, for Nassau County $73.3 million, for Westchester County, $38.4 million, for Erie County, $23.5 million, and for Onondaga County, $2.1 million.

That means service cuts, layoffs and higher taxes are all serious possibilities.

“We all have to work together in this budget battle,” CSEA Albany County Social Services Unit President Hannah Venduro said. “Call your legislators now and tell them we didn’t vote for these changes.”
WE DIDN’T VOTE FOR THESE CHANGES

WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER — CSEA President Danny Donohue and other CSEA members join the members of New York Municipal Hospital Workers Union Local 420 of AFSCME District Council 37 in a sunrise protest at the state Capitol. “All of us have to work together to fight this budget,” Donohue said. “It carries real pain for everyone. We must tell the Governor: We didn’t vote for these changes.”

CSEA Metropolitan Region Mental Hygiene Board Representative Jimmy Gripper, above, points to a sign publicizing the toll-free number CSEA members can use to call their state legislators to protest the proposed state budget. At right, Wenda Finch of Niagara County Department of Motor Vehicles uses the number to call her state lawmaker to say: “We didn’t vote for these changes!”

CSEA is encouraging all members to use the 800 number to let their legislators and the Governor know: “We didn’t vote for these changes!”

When you call, a recording will tell you to say “one” if you want the Governor’s office, “two” if you want the Senate and “three” if you want the Assembly. You will then speak to an operator who can switch you to your lawmaker. If you don’t know who your lawmaker is, ask for the Senate or Assembly information. Give the operator your zip code, and she or he will connect you to your legislator.

Remember, your calls are important.

1-800-SOS-6336

MAKING A STAND — Members of CSEA Buffalo Psychiatric Center Local 403 rally during a snowstorm outside the center outpatient clinic to protest Office of Mental Health cuts in the proposed state budget.

Keep informed about the latest state budget developments by calling the CSEA Current Issues Update on a touchtone phone

1-800-342-4146

then dial 15
Contracting in vs. privatization

Wappingers District privatizes budget process

BEACON — Despite the contractor’s dismal record and the protests of parents, taxpayers and employees, the Wappingers Board of Education hired Education Alternatives Inc. to write the school district’s budget.

The move came after months of secret meetings and outright dishonesty by the school board. The board voted to pay the Minnesota company $100,000 to write a budget.

They are paying the for-profit contractor despite a budget proposal prepared — for free — by a committee of taxpayers and parents. The board refused to even consider the report.

CSEA has led the fight against hiring EAI. The company has had repeated problems with public school districts because of inefficiencies and cost overruns.

POUGHKEEPSIE — A local contractor that Hudson River Psychiatric Center officials are paying nearly $50,000 to plow snow walked off the job during the worst blizzard of the winter. Local 410 President Judy Watts-Devine, who said state officials hired the local company instead of repairing or replacing old snow removal equipment, foresaw problems.

"They would go speeding around the grounds running people off the road," she said. "They don't even own big plows. They use small pick-up trucks with plows attached."

During the big blizzard, Watts-Devine said, the crew suddenly quit, leaving impassable roads and unshoveled walks.

Facility employees spent hours removing snow with shovels and snow plows attached. "In the end, it was state employees who came together and did the job," Watts-Devine said. "It just proves once again that if you want quality work, you have state employees do the job. If you want garbage, subcontract."

— Anita Manley

March is Women’s History Month

Member fights for tuition loans

Editor’s Note: CSEA women make history every day. Here’s the story of one member, a mother who takes her responsibility to her daughter’s future — and the futures of other young women — seriously enough to take on the U.S. Congress.

WARD’S ISLAND — "Women today must have an education if they are going to get ahead and be history-makers," says Cheryl Neptune, the proud mother of CSEA scholarship winner Nakia Watson.

Recipient of a $500 CSEA Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarship, Nakia Watson is on her way to achieving her dream of becoming an engineer. She is a freshman at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Nakia graduated with the second highest grade in her Canarsie High School class and was salutatorian at her graduation ceremony," Neptune said.

But Neptune’s pride is overshadowed by concerns about Congressional plans to cut education loans. A senior stenographer at Manhattan Psychiatric Center for 23 years, she fears the doors of opportunity are slamming shut on Nakia and other young women who could not continue their education without loans.

"One year of Nakia’s tuition is almost as much as I make in a whole year," Neptune said. So she’s been writing to Washington to halt the cuts in tuition loans.

New York State has already lost 33,000 Pell Grants. Neptune believes these cuts and more promised by the Republicans are devastating to the dreams of her daughter and thousands of other deserving students.

"It’s hard work," Neptune admitted, "but we have to fight back for our children’s future. I used to read The Public Sector and see these kids getting scholarships and hope that one day my daughter would win.

"Now my daughter’s job is to do well in college," she said, adding that mothers back home also have a job.

That job is to fight against education cuts that can bash dreams and keep thousands of young women from becoming history-makers in our day.

— Lilly Giola

CSEA College Scholarships

18 Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarships
in memory of the late Long Island Region President Irving Flaumenbaum
(Three $500 Scholarships in each of CSEA’s six Regions)

1 Jardine Award
in memory of the late CSEA activist Charles Foster
(One $2,500 award to a high school student entering SUNY System)

1 Travelers Award
in memory of the late CSEA Executive Director Joseph D. Lochner
(One $2,500 award not limited to a student entering SUNY)

for children of CSEA-represented employees in New York State who are graduating high school seniors

Applications available through your Local President
One application includes all scholarships

Filing Deadline is April 15th

Winners will be announced in June
Workers’ Compensation under attack

STATEN ISLAND — In April 1992, a CSEA therapy aide working at Staten Island Developmental Center seriously injured her back, making her one of thousands of New Yorkers who depend upon Workers’ Compensation to survive financially while unable to work. Four years later and still suffering, she’s had her benefits reduced to zero. The insurance company doctor maintains she has no disability and should receive no further compensation. Unable to work, she lost her home, was forced onto welfare and life in a homeless shelter. She has a ray of hope, however. Both the CSEA member’s own physician and the Compensation Board doctor agree that this woman does have a permanent partial disability from her 1992 back injury.

Because the Compensation Board doctor backs up the finding of her doctor, there is hope her benefit will be restored at an April review. She’ll make it under the wire. Others may not be so lucky if Gov. George Pataki’s plan to fire all impartial state Compensation Board doctors — whose reports greatly influence settlements — succeeds.

Thousands of others in the future may not have the benefit of an impartial state Compensation Board doctors’ review. What about those who can’t afford to pay for an impartial medical evaluation? By refusing to fund the impartial physicians of the Compensation Board Medical Department, the Pataki administration is clearly stacking the deck against thousands of injured workers in favor of employers and insurance companies, warns CSEA President Danny Donohue.

In a letter to Gov. Pataki, Donohue called the loss of the impartial medical doctors “counterproductive,” warning that without them, “the time needed to process compensation claims would increase, generating more costs and delays in the system.” Although New York’s compensation law provides benefits that are among the lowest in the country, it is under attack by the powerful Business Council and insurance companies who are calling for a 26 percent reduction in benefits. So intent on cutting benefits is the New York Compensation Action Network, the political action arm of the Business Council, that they have hired seven lobbyists to promote so-called “compensation reforms” that will give big breaks to employers. Fortunately, state Sen. Carl Kruger and Assembly Member Gregory Meeks have introduced a bill to require the Workers’ Compensation Board to employ qualified physicians to examine injured workers at the request of an employee, the employer, a Compensation Board member or a compensation hearing referee. The Medical Department’s 70-year record of using its own physicians “Has benefited both

Budget would eliminate safety and health training grants

While one battle is won, another is raging as CSEA tries to protect a valuable safety education tool for New York’s working people.

When the state Department of Labor withheld already-approved funds for the Occupational Safety and Health Training and Education Grant Program, CSEA went into action. Thanks to the union’s work, the money committed for programs through June will be released.

But now the entire program could be gutted. The valuable grant program is used by employers, unions and regional Committees on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) to improve workplace safety.

CSEA uses grants for the research and writing of its many safety and health manuals. Now those grants are in jeopardy.

The proposed state budget has the Training and Education Grant money going directly to offset agency budget cuts. That means the money will no longer be available to fund innovative programs to protect workers from occupational injury and disease.

The money once used for training will now be used by the state Department of Labor to conduct legally required inspections because its budget is cut by 22 percent.

It’s time to take action. While CSEA lobbyists are working to convince state legislators that ending the grants program is a mistake, the best influence comes from voters themselves — That’s YOU! The CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Department is asking CSEA members to write letters that will be sent to the legislative labor committees and one that will go to the state Commissioner of Labor.

Write to support independent doctors

CSEA members who want to see the Kruger/Meeks bill passed and fight other changes proposed by the New York State Business Council should write to Gov. Pataki, Executive Chambers, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Assembly Labor Committee Chairperson Catherine Nolan, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Senate Labor Committee Chair Nicholas Spano at Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248.

Write to support independent doctors

Chairperson Catherine Nolan,
Speaker Sheldon Silver, and Assembly Labor Committee
Chairperson Catherine Nolan,
Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Senate Labor
Committee Chair Nicholas Spano at Legislative Office
Building, Albany, NY 12248.

Join the fight to save important training grants

“Dear Legislator” and “Dear Commissioner Sweeney” to CSEA Headquarters. We will make copies for each member of the Legislature’s labor committees, the Ways and Means Committee and Labor Commissioner John Sweeney. Be sure to sign your letter and include your home address.

Your efforts are crucial to help save this extremely important program. If the Governor has his way, our booklets will stop. Other unions efforts to educate their members of work hazards will stop and the COSH groups will shrink out of business.

Please contact anyone in the OSH Department in headquarters or your region office for assistance.

Send your letters to:
Janet Foley, OSH Department
143 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210
After 20 years as a reporter, Pulitzer Prize winner is on strike

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**Detroit newspaper strike: a personal view**

Eric Freedman, Pulitzer-Prize-winning reporter for the Detroit News, is on strike.

Unions working for the News and The Detroit Free Press have been on strike since July (see story below).

No stranger to CSEA, Freedman was a reporter for the now-defunct Albany Knickerbocker News from 1976 to 1984. He covered the state Capitol at a time when the newspaper printed labor stories every day.

Since 1984, he has covered the state Legislature in Lansing, Mich., for the News. In 1994 he won a Pulitzer Prize for coverage of a legislative corruption scandal. He’s won many other reporting awards.

The author of four books, Freedman has increased his freelance writing assignments since the strike. His work has appeared in more than 100 publications in the U.S., Canada and overseas.

Freedman has reported on legal issues, public affairs and government, journalism, outdoor recreation, business and travel.

A native of Milton, Mass., Freedman graduated from New York University Law school. He’s spent the last 12 years of his award-winning career at the Detroit News.

Here’s his story.

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**History of the Detroit newspaper strike**

DEtroIT — Since July, workers at the competing Detroit News and Detroit Free Press have been on strike.

The strike resulted from management’s demands for job cuts, givebacks, shifting of some full-time work to part time with no benefits and elimination of 1,600 news carriers.

The papers, owned by Gannett Co., Inc. and Knight-Ridder, have lost millions in revenue as the community rallies around the 2,600 striking workers, members of the Teamsters, the Newspaper Guild, two Graphics Communications International Union locals and the Communications Workers of America.

The strikers are putting out the Detroit Sunday Journal to compete with the other papers. Its circulation tops 300,000.

To contribute to the strike fund, send donations to:

**Detroit Newspaper Association Striker Relief Fund Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO**

2550 West Grand Blvd.

Detroit, Mich. 48208

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**POLICE AGGRESSION** against Detroit newspaper strikers has been well documented. Strikers have been injured by management’s hired security and by scab truck drivers plowing through picket lines.

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**Eric Freedman**

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PICKETING for the Detroit News and Free Press unions is a family affair.

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Virtually all of us have at least one friend, neighbor or relative who was laid off as the economy shifted, plants closed and public or private employers downsized. We all know at least one college graduate burdened with student loans and no job to repay them with.

No job. No health insurance. Car payments due. Mortgage or rent overdue. Credit cards maxed out. Pay the dentist or the electric company? Stay home and forget Cozumel. Our newspapers publish plenty of stories about people in this situation.

Now we are among them.
Dental benefits increase for CSEA state employee members

CSEA’s Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) has been helping eligible CSEA members and their dependents with their dental expenses since the plan was introduced about 17 years ago. The plan has increased, according to EBF Chairman Danny Donohue. Effective March 1, 1996, the annual maximum increased by 50 percent and payments for more than 30 dental procedures also increased, according to EBF Chairman Danny Donohue. The dental improvements cover CSEA state employee members and their dependents. Increased payments also mean reduced out-of-pocket expenses when a dentist is used who is not on our panel.”

You can help your dentist become a CSEA EBF participating provider

If your dentist is not a CSEA Employee Benefit Fund participating dentist and you would like him or her to consider participating, simply fill out the request for information form below and return it to the EBF.

Your dentist will be provided with information about the plan and an application to become an EBF participant.

The CSEA EBF has expanded its dental provider panel to a listing of more than 1,100 dentists.

Request for Information Form for dentists interested in participating in the CSEA EBF DENTAL PROVIDER PANEL

Name of Dentist
Address
City
State
ZIP
County
Telephone

Please return form to:
Marketing Department
CSEA Employee Benefit Fund
1 Lear Jet Lane
Latham, New York 12110

LYONS — An article in the February edition of The Public Sector detailing a successful effort by CSEA staff and activists to avert the privatization of about 15 county jobs in Wayne County was accurate — but only up to a point.

The article accurately indicated that Wayne County was considering privatizing about 15 CSEA members’ accounting jobs and that CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Pat Domaratz, CSEA Employee Unit President Bill Guitschow and other activists spearheaded a successful campaign to persuade the county administrator and Board of Supervisors to drop the privatization effort.

Unfortunately the article inaccurately reported the privatization effort was aimed at accounting jobs at the Wayne County Nursing Home. That drew an angry letter from County Social Services Commissioner Rita B. Otterbein pointing out there are only one comptroller and three account clerks at the nursing home and denying any plans to privatize those jobs.

In actuality, the county had been considering privatizing about 15 accounting jobs at the Wayne County Health Department, not at the Wayne County Nursing Home. The Public Sector regrets the inaccuracy and any confusion or undue concern the original article may have caused.

Correction...Correction

Privatization averted at Wayne County Health Dept., not Nursing Home
Notice of nomination and election

OFFICERS FOR CSEA’S SIX REGIONS

Petitioning period for region officers positions begins March 4

Election of CSEA region officers for three-year terms will be conducted in 1996 under a schedule of elections approved by the union’s statewide Board of Directors.

Under the union’s open election procedures, any member in good standing can have his or her name placed on a ballot by obtaining signatures of a minimum of 500 CSEA members on official petition forms. All signatures must be from the region where the person is seeking office. Members who sign the petition must be eligible to vote in the election.

In order to be eligible to seek office, a candidate must be at least 18 years of age; a member in good standing of the region since June 1, 1995; shall not have been a member of a competing labor association or union since June 1995; and shall not currently be serving a disciplinary penalty imposed by the Judicial Board of CSEA. To be eligible to vote in the election a member must be in good standing as of April 1, 1996.

Request forms for nominating petitions for the election of region officers have been available at CSEA headquarters and region offices since February. While the request forms may be filled out and returned ahead of time, actual nominating petitions will not be released until March 4, the first day of the petitioning period.

Deadline for submitting proposed resolutions is May 15, 1996

Proposed resolutions for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union’s 1996 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 1996.

Delegates to the 1995 Annual Delegates Meeting voted to change the deadline for submitting proposed resolutions to the earlier date effective in 1996. Previously resolutions had to be submitted not less than 90 days before the union’s Annual Delegates Meeting. Beginning in 1997, the deadline for submitting proposed changes to CSEA’s Constitution and By-Laws will also be May 15 each year (see notice on page 2 for deadline information for submitting proposed amendments this year).

Proposed resolutions must be submitted not later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210-2303.

The 1996 Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 30 through Oct. 4 in New York City.

Region officers election schedule

The Board of Directors approved the following election schedule for CSEA region officers:

March 4 — Start of petitioning period. Nominating petitions available from region offices and CSEA headquarters.

April 4 — Deadline for receipt of nominating petitions at CSEA headquarters (5 p.m.).

April 15 — Deadline for declinations of nomination (8 a.m.).

April 15 — Drawing for positions on the ballot, CSEA headquarters conference room. Candidates (or proxies) may attend as observers.

April 15 — Deadline for receipt of campaign articles and photos by The Public Sector.

April 15 — Address labels available to candidates for mailing campaign literature. Deadline for receipt of campaign literature by CSEA headquarters for distribution (5 p.m.).

April 15 — Membership list available for inspection by candidates (headquarters).

May 15 — Ballots delivered to post office for mailing (5 p.m.).

June 5 — Deadline for receipt of ballots (8 a.m.).

Election results will be announced after the ballot count. Candidates will be notified by mail of the results. Election results will be published in the July edition of The Public Sector.

Jardine expands operational hours of CSEA Personal Lines hotlines

Jardine Group Services Corporation, in a continuing effort to provide CSEA members with the highest quality customer service, has expanded the hours of its Personal Lines customer center.

To accommodate the needs of members, Jardine hotlines are now open between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturdays.

The special Jardine CSEA hotline telephone numbers are:

- New business: 1-800-833-4657
- Payroll deduction questions: 1-800-760-3848
- Customer service/policy changes: 1-800-833-9041

Remember, when you need to know, call the CSEA Current Issues Update on a touchtone phone 1-800-342-4146, then dial 15
Ballots in mail
March 25 to elect
AFSCME delegates

Ballots to elect CSEA delegates to AFSCME’s 1996 Convention are scheduled to be mailed to eligible members on March 25. The deadline for return of ballots is 8 a.m. April 16.

Meetings were held in all six CSEA regions on Feb. 17 to nominate CSEA delegates to the 1996 AFSCME Convention, scheduled for June 17-21 in Chicago.

CSEA delegates will be elected by region. Each CSEA region will elect the number of delegates to which it is entitled based on membership strength, in accordance with the AFSCME and CSEA constitutions. Expenses for transportation, room and board at the AFSCME Convention will be paid by CSEA.

Many candidates were nominated as members of a slate, running together under particular designations. Candidates nominated by slate will appear on the ballot in the order in which they were nominated. The ballot will allow slate candidates to be elected as part of a slate or individually, separate from the slate.

The Board of Directors approved the following election schedule for CSEA delegates to the 1996 AFSCME Convention:

- **March 8**: Deadline for declination of nomination (8 a.m.).
- **March 8**: Deadline for receipt of campaign literature by CSEA headquarters for distribution (5 p.m.).
- **March 25**: Ballots delivered to post office for mailing (5 p.m.).
- **April 4**: Replacement ballot may be requested if original is not received.
- **April 16**: Deadline for receipt of ballots (8 a.m.).

**Election results will be announced after the ballot count. Candidates will be notified by mail of the results.**

Election results will be published in the May edition of *The Public Sector*.

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**NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE 1996 AFSCME CONVENTION**

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CSEA-REPRESENTED STATE EMPLOYEES**

**CSEA students speak, keep LEAP as is**

A majority of CSEA members who participate in the CSEA Labor Education Action Program (LEAP) say they like the program the way it is.

LEAP is a program negotiated by CSEA that enables CSEA-represented state employees to enroll in tuition-free courses at two- and four-year public and private colleges, BOCES and various state facilities across New York State.

Many more people apply for LEAP assistance each semester than are able to be accepted because of limited available funding. LEAP recently asked CSEA members who used LEAP to further their education in the last two semesters which of three different voucher options the members prefer.

Under current policy, LEAP pays full tuition for one course with a $548 maximum per semester. But, due to limited funds, only 55 to 65 percent of applicants can be accepted. Other options would have reduced the maximum dollar amount allowable per semester thereby increasing the number of applicants accepted.

More than half (55 percent) of the survey respondents preferred the current system of 100 percent tuition funding for a single course even though they could not be sure of receiving a voucher each semester.

Twenty-nine percent chose an option limiting the maximum to $411 per semester while increasing the acceptance rate to 75 to 80 percent, and only 16 percent of respondents selected an option guaranteeing that all applicants would be accepted by reducing the maximum to $300 per year.

The survey results indicate that LEAP students rely heavily on LEAP to be able to advance their educational goals. There are many costs of education beyond the basic tuition cost. Sometimes fees, books, child care and transportation can cost more than tuition. If the value of the voucher is reduced too much, then many members would not be able to use the benefit to improve their job skills or advance in their state careers.

If members do not receive a voucher, they are not likely to pay for a course themselves or find other funding. Sixty-three percent of the respondents said that they would not take a course without a LEAP voucher. Only 37 percent said that they would still take a course without LEAP.

**Improvements Planned**

While the funding policy won’t change, the LEAP staff is working to make the voucher program more flexible.

One change, designed to make the program more flexible, is the “raincheck” concept. If a member gets a voucher and then cannot use it one semester, they can ask for a raincheck that would guarantee them a voucher the following semester. LEAP is also planning to change the voucher application form, so that members can select a specific subject area rather than naming a specific course. This will make the application process much easier for students attending schools that do not publish a course listing until after the application period has expired.

**Other Financial Assistance**

LEAP has developed a financial guide for students enrolled in degree programs who are seeking other forms of financial aid. The guide will make it easier for students to determine what other financial resources may be available to them. LEAP students may call the LEAPline to ask for a financial aid guide or to get financial advisement over the phone. Usually, phone advisement will require discussing some specifics about your financial resources, but each caller’s confidentiality is assured.

**Expanded advisement services**

New expanded advisement services on the LEAPline include:

- Academic Advisement
- Basic Skills Services and GED Preparation
- Career Advisement
- Career Information
- Financial Aid

To access any of these services, just call the LEAPline at 1-800-253-4332.
**Tax cuts for wealthy hurt working people**

ALBANY — If spending is on a downward spiral, why is New York state facing a $3.9 million deficit? Because of tax cuts it can’t afford.

That’s what the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) concluded after its review of the proposed 1996-97 state budget.

Tax reductions are being paid for with cuts in services, says FPI Executive Director Frank Mauro.

And the people paying for those tax reductions are the working people and the poor of the state, who face cuts in services at the state and local levels.

Meanwhile, local and school property taxes and sales taxes are going up as well.

Those taxes also hit working people and the needy hard. It’s now more difficult for middle class New York state residents to make ends meet.

"It’s their politically motivated tax cuts that are hurting the people of this state. Not us. Not public employees!"

"FPI’s study shows New York state cannot afford tax cuts for the wealthy," CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

"It’s getting harder to make ends meet for working people, and yet they are the ones who will bear the brunt of property and sales tax increases that are a direct result of state budget cuts."

Working people are also suffering from cuts in state and local government services. Children, the elderly and the poor will suffer even more from service cuts, he said.

"Elected leaders at all levels are blaming the high cost of government for every problem under the sun," Donohue said. They ought to start listening to FPI, it’s their politically motivated tax cuts that are hurting the people of this state. Not us. Not public employees!"

**State budget threatens private sector members, too**

CSEA’s private sector members should be just as concerned about the proposed state budget as members in state, local government and school district locals.

Many of CSEA’s private sector members work for non-profit agencies that depend on state funds, and cuts could mean problems for them as well, said CSEA Private Sector Director Michael Richardson.

For example, special schools such as St. Mary’s School for the Deaf face serious funding problems if the state’s plan to require the schools to bill school districts directly is approved. (See story below.)

School districts aren’t going to be able to pay the full cost and will demand lower tuition rates or stop sending special needs students to the schools, Richardson said. Either way, there will be less money for raises, increments or longevity payments.

Private sector members who work in nursing homes such as the Columbia-Greene Long-Term Care Facility will also suffer under proposed state block grants which will freeze their reimbursements. If the nursing homes receive no increases, there is little money for employees, Richardson said.

Proposed federal block grants could mean even further cuts.

Foster care programs such as the CSEA-represented Plus XII face similar difficulties with social services block grants that would be frozen at last year’s level, which was determined by the number of children in the program. That means the facility will have to make cuts in other areas to pay for any more children who come into the home, Richardson said.

“Private sector members need to fight this proposed budget, like the members at St. Mary’s,” he said.

**National Voter Registration Act makes a CSEA priority the law**

The National Voter Registration Act was passed to make registering to vote a simple process.

The law requires many public offices to offer voter registration forms to the people they serve.

In New York state, however, the Board of Elections discovered disturbing evidence that voter registration seems to be receiving less priority if the people being served are of lower income levels.

Voter registration is a high priority for CSEA, which has its own voter registration projects.

"Any program that registers voters is important to CSEA, and any CSEA member who can assist is doing every resident of this state a favor," CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

"The National Voter Registration Act is important to all of us. If voter registration is part of your agency’s responsibility, carry it out proudly," he said. "And make it a priority. It’s the law!"

State and local government agencies that must provide voter registration forms are:

- Advocates for Persons with Disabilities;
- Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services;
- Commission for the Blind;
- Department of Health - WIC;
- Department of Social Services;
- Department of State;
- Military Recruiting Offices;
- Department of Motor Vehicles;
- Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities;
- Office of Mental Health;
- Office for the Aging;
- Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities;
- Veterans Affairs; and
- Workers Compensation.

**Members fighting to stop budget plan**

BUFFALO — At St. Mary’s School for the Deaf, 140 deaf children learn in an environment designed to meet their needs.

CSEA Local 891 members help create that environment, and they are committed to continuing it.

The 70 members are writing and lobbying state legislators to stop a state budget plan that would eliminate payments to special schools, forcing them to charge school districts and social services departments directly for the cost of educating the special needs children.

School districts will be less likely to send children to special schools because the cost would fall to taxpayers. Yet few public schools can provide the education the students need.

"Most of the 55 school districts we serve in nine counties can’t assume the cost of busing deaf children to St. Mary’s and giving them the focused programming they require," Local 891 President Michael Richardson said.

School districts aren’t going to be able to pay the full cost and will demand lower tuition rates or stop sending special needs students to the schools, Richardson said. Either way, there will be less money for raises, increments or longevity payments.

Private sector members who work in nursing homes such as the Columbia-Greene Long-Term Care Facility will also suffer under proposed state block grants which will freeze their reimbursements. If the nursing homes receive no increases, there is little money for employees, Richardson said.

Proposed federal block grants could mean even further cuts.

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"Private sector members need to fight this proposed budget, like the members at St. Mary’s," he said.

**Watch for Inside Albany on PBS**

Watch Inside Albany, the highly acclaimed show that presents a critical look at state government. CSEA is a prime underwriter of the program that airs on public television stations across the state.

Inside Albany is seen on the following public broadcast stations:

- Binghamton: WSKG, Channel 46 6:30 p.m. Saturday
- Buffalo: WNED, Channel 17 6:30 p.m. Saturday
- Long Island: WLIW, Channel 21 11 a.m. Sunday
- New York City: WNET, Channel 13 3 p.m. Sunday
- Rochester: WXXI, Channel 21 6:30 p.m. Saturday
- Syracuse: WCNY, Channel 24 4:30 p.m. Saturday
- Plattsburgh: WCFC, Channel 57 6:30 p.m. Saturday
- Watertown: WNPE, Channel 30 2 p.m. Saturday
- Schenectady: WMHT, Channel 17 7:30 p.m. Saturday
- Schenectady: WWMQ, Channel 45 11 p.m. Sunday
Organized labor is the barrier against those who would exploit, diminish workers

Organized labor has always been the defiant hurdle standing in the way of those who would exploit workers. And for public workers at all levels in New York state, that force protecting workers has long been CSEA and its international affiliate, AFSCME. Together they form one of the most effective unions in the entire AFL-CIO.

Today's modern labor unions touch the lives of working people in so many ways, on and off the job, making the return on your union dues a truly great bargain. The bulk of your dues dollar supports the work of CSEA on your behalf here in New York state. A portion also goes to AFSCME to help our international union carry on much of the national effort to protect your interest.

In addition to AFSCME's high profile political involvements, the international represents your interests in Washington on such important subjects as the economy, privatization, the staggering public debt, pension improvement and protection, health care, enactment of decent fair tax laws, the elderly, civil rights, housing, education, children and family issues, health and safety standards, crime and closing the wage gap between men and women.

AFSCME also returns a portion of your dues back to CSEA in the form of grants that support a wide variety of training and education projects and other programs that directly benefit CSEA members.

Members who object to AFSCME expending a portion of their dues for partisan political or ideological purposes may request a refund of that portion of their dues from AFSCME.

Under AFSCME's rebate procedure, reimbursement requests must be made individually in writing between April 1 and April 16. Requests must be typed or legibly printed and include the member's name, Social Security number, home address, AFSCME local and council number.

The individual request must be signed by the member and sent by registered or certified mail by the member to:

International Secretary-Treasurer, AFSCME International Headquarters, 1625 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

The International Secretary-Treasurer calculates the per capita payment equivalent that was used for partisan political or ideological purposes during the fiscal year and refunds that amount.

Requests to AFSCME must be renewed in writing every year.

Valentines for Vets - CSEA Tax and Finance Local 690 President T.J. O'Donnell and Pat Finn, Local 690 project coordinator, present state Sen. Michael Hoblock, right, with nearly 1,100 valentines made by children of members and other children for sending to US soldiers on duty in Bosnia.

Hoblock helped coordinate delivery of the valentines.

You've got the
CSEA ADVANTAGE
DISCOUNTED CELLULAR
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- FREE ACTIVATION March 1 - 31, 1996 ($25 value)!

Service now available in the following counties in Area Codes 716 and 315: Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, Wyoming, Genesee, Allegany, Chautauqua, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Livingston, Orleans, Onondaga, Madison, Oswego, Oneida and Herkimer.

For information, call:

In Buffalo (716): Maureen Ziemb (716) 686-4315
In Rochester (716): Mark Miller (716) 777-2903
In Syracuse, Utica-Rome (315): Fran Catanzarite (315) 449-5505
In Jamestown, Olean (716): Maureen Ziemb 1-800-686-9639

- Rates contingent upon a one year service agreement with Frontier Cellular and to CSEA members in good standing.
- Product discount available with new service activation only.
- Existing cellular service may be converted to program. Some restrictions may apply.
- Equipment pricing subject to change and depends upon availability.
- Network access charges, roaming, long distance, taxes and surcharges not included.

A special benefit for CSEA members

CSEA's official travel service, Plaza Travel Center Inc. in Latham, has announced "A Special CSEA Cruise at a Special Price" for CSEA members for next November.

Just one catch — you must sign up by April 30 with a $100 deposit per person to secure the special rates of just $699 per person for inside cabins and $759 per person for outside cabins for the cruise scheduled for Nov. 11-15, 1996.

This special price includes round trip airfare from all major cities in New York state, transfers, all meals and entertainment, port charges and taxes and a "Bon Voyage" cocktail party on board.

The ship Nordic Empress will sail out of Miami from Monday to Friday Nov. 11-15 and visit Freeport, Nassau and Coco Cay.

For details on the November CSEA cruise, call Plaza Travel Center at 1-800-866-3404.

NOTICE: CSEA is honoring a national AFL-CIO boycott of Bell Atlantic NYNEX Mobile cellular phone service. CSEA's endorsement of discounted cellular service offered by Bell Atlantic NYNEX Mobile in other parts of New York state and northern New Jersey is suspended.

A special benefit for CSEA members
Dependability

It's what taxpayers and citizens know they can count on from public employees.

When the worst flooding damage in decades savaged much of New York state recently, thousands of CSEA members went above and beyond to perform their duties at the highest level when their communities needed them most. They were dependable.

People like Denise Pangman, a CSEA member and an emergency public assistance/HEAP worker for the Schoharie County Department of Social Services. Pangman voluntarily worked 32 consecutive hours in the county's emergency management office during the flooding. Her neighbors could depend on her and her co-workers.

Or the Farr brothers, Jack and Joe, CSEA members who work for the City of Port Jervis Department of Public Works. While working to protect their community from the flooding Delaware River, they waded into a flooded underpass to rescue a 92-year-old motorist from his car as water rose above the dashboard.

Value

It's what taxpayers get from public employees for their tax dollars. Real value in terms of services that enhance and improve the standard of living. Service people have come to expect, delivered so regularly and effectively that it is often taken for granted. Until it's needed most.

Reliability

When disasters strike, public employees are the front line of defense. Communities depend upon public workers to protect them, and the work force always responds with absolute reliability.