Actions speak louder than words!
Big win for CSEA as “Mommy Bill” restores tier retirement credit

ALBANY — CSEA recently scored a major legislative victory with a new law that allows members who leave their civil service jobs to return to them without losing retirement benefits.

Under the new law, workers who return to government service can rejoin the retirement tier that was in effect when they first joined the retirement system instead of the retirement level in effect when they returned to work.

Previously, workers who had been hired under Tier 1 or Tier 2 were placed in the less desirable Tiers 3 or 4 after long breaks in service.

In addition, they had to make payments to the retirement system to receive credit for the time they had previously worked. The new law returns workers to their original tiers and refunds payments for service credit.

The law is known as the “Mommy Bill” because it particularly helps women who left their jobs in the 1970s and early 1980s to raise families.

“This is particularly meaningful for our members who have had to balance having a family with having the means to provide for that family,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

“I was brought up in the old-school: raise your kids and enjoy every minute, I just figured that my time in Tier 1 was lost,” said Mary Greenman, local president of the state Institute for Basic Research in New York City.

“I’m really excited about this. We’re going to go out and celebrate when we get the papers in our hands,” she added.

Members who have already purchased their past service credit will be reimbursed for that cost. However, members will not be reimbursed for Tier 3 and Tier 4 pension contributions made before December 17, 1999, the effective date of the law.

“This law will have a great impact on me because it allows me to retire in 10 years,” said Joanne Lopez-Stocker, a secretary at the state Institute for Basic Research.

Lopez-Stocker said she can now retire seven years earlier because of her 26 years of state service in Tier 1.

Co-worker Jo Ann Buttafuoco said she should not have her pension benefits penalized “for doing the right thing and raising my kids.”

“This is like a bank account,” Buttafuoco said about the new law. “We’ve paid into it for so many years, and now it’s there for us,” she added.

For information on the application procedure, call the New York State Retirement System at (518) 486-7925 if you have a touch-tone phone or (518) 474-7736 if you have a rotary telephone.
We came, we saw, we demonstrated:

**Power Surge**

ALBANY — Although 500 state troopers have retreated from the Capitol and 20,000 noisy union protesters have returned home, the gravity of one of Albany’s largest union rallies continues to shake the seat of power.

The sheer blunt force of tens of thousands of CSEA and Public Employees Federation (PEF) members demanding contract justice outside the Capitol last month continues to generate enormous membership momentum, union leaders said.

A caravan of more than 200 buses jammed downtown Albany before disgorging thousands of union members who formed a sea of workers as large as a small city.

It was a sterling day for a labor protest — the likes of which Albany hasn’t seen in a decade.

Deafening shouts of “We want contract justice now!” ricocheted across the marbled expanse outside the Capitol as police in riot gear, on horseback, and with batons formed an impenetrable barrier ringing the Capitol.

CSEA President Danny Donohue led the charge from the Pepsi Arena, packed with 12,000 protesters, to the Capitol a few blocks away.

“The governor keeps saying New York has the best workers anywhere, but he’s just giving us lip service because his statements don’t pay our bills or feed our children,” Donohue said.

CSEA members who work in local government, the private sector, AFSCME and other unions representing the full weight of the state AFL-CIO filled out the protest ranks.

The tidal wave of statewide interest that rocketed the rally numbers to the 20,000 mark struck fear in local and state officials, who concocted a last-minute ploy to scuttle the protest.

Fewer than 24 hours before the rally was to begin, Albany officials suddenly attempted to scuttle the event and throw it into confusion.

The action was described by Donohue as “cowardly.”

Union officials held their ground, although union leaders said the resulting “heavy-handed” police tactics were a stark contrast to the throng which was focused on being heard and making a point to the governor.

Above, 20,000 union members mass outside the State Capitol during Jan. 5 “We’ve Got The Power” rally. Below, a CSEA member gets fired up at the Pepsi Arena prior to the rally.

“We are out here, in mass, braving freezing temperatures to bring our message to the governor. WE WANT A CONTRACT WITH FAIR RAISES!”

— SUNY Old Westbury Local President Mary D’Antonio

“We have to make a big showing here,” said Peter Case, a canal structure operator from Central New York. “If we don’t stick together on this, they’re going to win.”

“\textbf{This rally is great!}” shouted Michelle Lester, a developmental aide at the Central New York Developmental Disabilities Service Office.

“I know our message will be heard.”

See related coverage on Page 4, 10, 11, 12 and 13.
In a word, it was “awesome.”

On January 5, you showed the governor and “official” New York that “We have the Power.”

The strength and solidarity of nearly 20,000 union members clearly demonstrated we will not be denied in our fight for fairness and respect.

The governor and his operatives tried to stop us. They tried throwing monkey wrenches into the planning. They tried to trample our rights to free speech and they tried confusing the issues.

When that didn’t work, the governor called out an unprecedented police force that was out of all proportion to the event to protect him from his own employees! He even had the gall to use his criminal justice coordinator to brief the media on the demonstration and tried to minimize its significance with ridiculously low crowd estimates.

But you, CSEA members, would not be denied.

You showed what CSEA is all about and member after member commented how proud they were and how empowered they felt by participating. I am especially proud of how many of our local government and private sector members turned out in support of their state brothers and sisters.

The photos and comments throughout this edition tell some of the story of what a great day it was. Your actions spoke louder than words and the governor cannot ignore that reality.

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 Danny Donohue

CSEA President
**Telling the public:**

**Inadequate staffing hurts patient care in county facilities**

KINGSTON/GOSHEN — Managers brought Marlene Shaver up on charges for talking to a newspaper reporter about recurring problems at the Ulster County Infirmary.

Fifty miles away in Goshen, the commissioner of the Orange County Infirmary accused CSEA members of involving patients in their contract struggle after the daughter of a resident complained when her mother slipped and fell at the facility.

Inadequate staffing, mandatory overtime, feeding two patients at once and waking patients at 4 a.m. to get them ready for breakfast are some of the problems CSEA members who work in both facilities have made public.

The state attorney general’s office is investigating the union’s charges at the Ulster facility.

LPN Marlene Shaver

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**Patient care suffers**

Shaver, a 20-year employee and a Licensed Practical Nurse, and some of her co-workers told reporters inadequate staffing is jeopardizing patient care at her facility.

In Orange County, the commissioner of the county infirmary accused the union of involving the patients in contract negotiations.

A class-action grievance based on the issue of mandatory overtime has been filed on behalf of the entire Orange County Infirmary nursing staff, said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Colleen Davies.

"The schedule is always coming up short and the per diem pool is always low," Davies said.

"They need to hire employees, not per diems. If you can hire per diems at $24 an hour, you can hire part-time employees," she said.

**Union seeks staffing legislation**

The problems at the Orange and Ulster County infirmaries are typical of staffing issues at nursing homes statewide.

In addition to seeking facility-by-facility improvements, CSEA is also taking a bolder step.

CSEA is seeking legislation that would define various nursing home positions and set standards for staffing levels based on the needs of each resident. The bill would set up a committee of labor and management representatives from across the state to resolve issues over staffing levels, such as the ratio of nurses to patients for day and night shifts.

The bill, S-4926, would benefit all CSEA members working in nursing homes, whether they are municipal, state or private institutions, by standardizing staffing levels and job titles.

— Anita Manley

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**STATE BUDGET FACTS**

What you should know about Gov. Pataki’s proposed state budget:

- Restates temporary moratorium on further OMH bed reductions while new community programs are implemented.
- At least 300 full-time positions proposed for OMRDD, most of them CSEA titles.
- Would permanently establish the Medicaid Managed Care program permanently.
- Money from tobacco settlement would be used to pay for Health Care Reform Act proposals.

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**Voices of the Work Force**

"Everybody here works together as a team and it puts everyone in a positive attitude. We all want to come back the next day to work. I love coming to work, and I couldn’t have picked a better group of people to work work with."

Fay Ellis, food service aide — Maplewood Manor, the Saratoga County nursing home
Probation officer’s dog helps make scents of searches

If you’re on probation in Schoharie County, better keep a drug-free house. Otherwise, Ava will sniff you out.

Ava is the K-9 companion of Probation Officer Pamela Howard, a CSEA member in the county unit.

Howard is the only probation officer in the state to be using a drug-sniffing dog when making her rounds to make sure those convicted of crimes and on probation are keeping clean, according to the national Probation Officers Association.

“IT takes a lot — the dog is with you 24 hours a day,” Howard said. A regular training schedule also demands time, although Howard said other law enforcement agencies offer their facilities and know-how, often for free.

Ava came to the department through community members who wanted to donate her and saw the need for her services. “It’s really a community-based initiative,” Howard said.

The circumstances for Ava’s arrival were a bit embarrassing, Howard said. “We went to get an absconder and he ended up escaping. The call went out over radio that we needed assistance and a person heard the call and offered Ava’s assistance,” Howard said.

When Howard makes unannounced calls to probationer’s homes, she first checks the house out to make sure there are no hazards — such as razor blades or broken glass — for Ava.

Then Ava goes to work, using her highly sensitive nose to sniff out contraband that would violate terms of probation.

“It doesn’t matter if things are a mess — drawers, piles of clothes — she’s trained to go up on things. She’s not afraid to step on piles of clothes and we’re usually done in less than five minutes. It’s a big time saver,” Howard said.

Ava and Howard also respond to calls for drug searches from other law enforcement agencies, who in turn help Howard when they can.

“Our primary objective isn’t to violate people’s homes and take them to jail but to help people and make sure they get the treatment they need. We tend to be a proactive county — we want to prevent problems,” she said.

“You’ve got to remember that the community needs to be safe — Ava’s another tool to help keep it that way,” Howard added.

— Lou Hmieleski

What you should know about Gov. Pataki’s recently proposed state budget:

* Would consolidate Corrections, Criminal Justice, Parole, DPCA, State Police, Crime Victims Board, Domestic Violence and Commission of Correction into Department of Justice.

$ New department would have 604 more positions than component agencies.

& Existing criminal justice agencies would operate in their current locations.

Voices of the Work Force

“My job is never dull. You can do the same thing 100 times and it’s different. There’s always a lot of crime. It’s getting worse, not better.”

Mira Anderson, deputy court clerk — Town of Fallsburg and a 20-year employee
Eagle-eyed members break trucker test cheat scam

Now there are two reasons for cheating truckers to stay out of New York City: traffic snarls and eagle-eyed CSEA members who work at the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in Brooklyn.

The keen eyes and quick thinking of union member Lakeisha Williams and her DMV co-workers recently broke an elaborate cheating ring designed to help potential truck drivers pass the state’s written Commercial Drivers License test.

As Williams worked at the desk adjacent the room where the truck driver’s test was being given, she noticed one test taker “kept looking too close to himself.”

“His paper was on the desk, but he kept looking at his hands,” Williams said.

Williams suspected the driver was cheating by writing the answers on his palms and inside wrists.

Williams brought her suspicions to Carole Ghee and her co-workers and they approached the test taker.

Watch tells more than time

No writing was found on his skin, but they noticed his watch was inscribed with a series of dots.

Department investigators determined the dots represented a pattern that contained the answers to the truck driver’s test.

Each line represented a different question, with one dot indicating the answer was “A,” two dots meaning the answer was “B,” and so on.

The answer-laden watches were sold to aspiring truckers for $200-$400, investigators said.

Workers at the Brooklyn DMV collected six watches the first day they broke the scam.

A memo was quickly sent to all other DMV offices in the region, and alert CSEA members at other sites quickly confiscated nearly two dozen watches.

— Ann Carroll

Voices of the Work Force

“I feel secure in my position. If it weren’t for the union, I wouldn’t be working the hours I’m working or getting the pay I’m getting or using the health insurance. For job security, you need a union.”

Lorey Wilkins, index clerk — 10-year employee of the Saratoga County Clerk’s Office
Workers in lockstep with quality to keep state Barge Canal system flowing

Three of the many CSEA members who help repair the state’s canal system are, from left, Maintenance Assistant Charles DeLuise, Ronald Hyatt and Alfredo Villalta, both welders.

Alfred Villalta autographs his day’s handiwork with a proud flourish of fluorescent orange spray paint.

"Built in Fonda" is streaked with a hiss of the aerosol can across a massive sheet of steel that will hold back millions of gallons of water at one lock in the state’s Barge Canal system.

Villalta, one of more than 400 CSEA members who work for the state Canal Corp. which operates the 524-mile archipelago of locks, is among a handful of craftsmen who repair the aging metal gates that hold the water and raise and lower boats.

As New York’s aging canal system needs rebuilding, Villalta and his co-workers are saving taxpayers millions of dollars annually by fabricating huge replacement parts and repairing the massive steel flood gates.

Best in the business

"An outside contractor looked at our operation and told us he couldn’t find a better product than what we produce here," said Supervisor Tim Dockerty of the Fonda operation.

"Making the lower gates in-house is cost effective, and we’re proud of our employees for the high-quality skills they have," Canal Corp. Engineer Don Bell said.

Union members have the skills to get the job done.

CSEA member Geardo "Premo" Oconitrillo, a native of Costa Rica who came to America in 1968 and joined the Canal Corp. in 1987, is a steel fabricator who makes the numerous parts needed to construct the gates.

With the modern day canal dating back to the early 1900s, the sources of replacement parts are long gone.

It’s the skills of the Canal Corp. workers that will keep this living museum moving in the new millennium.

"Premo knows how to make every part of the upper and lower gates" said Brian Swift, a maintenance supervisor.

Oconitrillo proudly points to a huge supply of pre-cut parts neatly stacked under his work table and to long pieces of steel precisely marked for careful cutting and welding that stretch deep into his work area.

Industrial ballet

The Fonda shop hosts a daily performance of industrial ballet by union members working with huge machines to make even bigger parts.

Each lower gate stands almost 13 feet, is 30 feet wide and weighs as much as 9 tons.

Building a lower gate takes about three weeks, not counting the time the crew spends crafting the hundreds of parts that go into the huge door.

CSEA member Ron Hyatt cut long pieces of channel steel into specific lengths.

Bob Lisco, a 10-year canal employee, carefully drilled holes into those steel lengths.

“This isn’t a job for a computer,” Lisco said. “It takes a different type of skill, one passed down from worker to worker.”

“We have control of the economics and the quality of the product — that’s our key to success,” engineer Bell said, emphasizing the value of the CSEA work force.

— Daniel X. Campbell

STATE BUDGET FACTS

What you should know about Gov. Pataki’s recently proposed state budget:

Would eliminate $34.9 million in CHIPS Operating and Maintenance aid to counties and NYC.

CHIPS capital and Marchiselli aid remain at 1999-2000 level.

Voices of the Work Force

“I like my job. I work on 50 different types of vehicles, police cars, trucks, 1-ton trucks, plows. It’s always something different, always different problems. I work on 20 or 30 a week. I don’t work on my own vehicles — I can’t stand it!”

Steve Gentile, automotive mechanic — Town of Fallsburg, 17-year-employee
Bill to unionize charter schools, help families, vetoed by Pataki

CSEA has blasted Gov. George Pataki for his recent veto of a bill that would allow non-instructional employees of large charter schools to unionize.

Union leaders said the move again illustrates the Pataki administration's "complete and utter disrespect for New York's working families."

The legislation would have required all employees in charter schools with more than 250 workers to be organized if the charter school's neighboring public school district was organized.

Pataki signed a bill last year authorizing charter schools, which essentially are private schools that can receive public funding.

The recently vetoed bill would have helped level the playing field for public school districts and their employees by requiring charter schools to play by the same rules.

Currently, only instructional employees in charter schools of more than 250 workers can unionize if the charter school is located in a school district that already has organized.

CSEA Statewide President Danny Donohue said Pataki's veto shows a further erosion of worker protections in New York State through the quasi-public private partnerships the governor fosters.

"This is yet another slap at working families from this administration," Donohue said.

"This governor, more than any other, seems intent on destroying the very foundations working men and women have built to bring job security and decent, respectful wages into the workplace," the president said.

Healthy school workshops to promote classroom wellness

CSEA is organizing workshops on Long Island and the mid-Hudson Valley the next several months to promote healthy and safe schools for students and employees.

"Every union and every union member should be involved in this program," said Mae Tyropolis, CSEA Unit president for the Yonkers School District which has a model school health and safety program.

"If employees and students are going to work effectively and efficiently, the state of their health is very important, as is the health of the building they are in," she added.

These initial healthy school programs are the outgrowth of a year-long public education campaign aimed at school administrators, employees and parents.

The union and other members of a statewide coalition have testified at legislative, Regents and state Education Department hearings about school health and safety, including the use of pesticides.

The programs are part of the Healthy Schools Network, a statewide project supported by CSEA and other organizations.

Simple, low-cost steps can be taken by school administrators to avoid unnecessary poison and pesticide exposures in schools, health and safety experts said.

Larger classes and the ebb and flow of students often make it difficult to clean and maintain classrooms, hallways, cafeterias and gymnasiums, workshop leaders added.

For information about arranging a workshop or briefing, contact John Phillips at CSEA headquarters at 800-342-4146 ext. 1452.

Voices of the Work Force

"I really like my job and my supervisors are very good. They are understanding and we work together. In 12 years I have no complaints except that I am a single woman trying to pay bills on one salary and I need a contract!"

Millie Thurston, keyboard specialist — CSEA Stony Brook Hospital Local treasurer, 12-year member
CSEA, joining forces with PEF, had an overwhelming success in shining the public spotlight on the governor's inability to treat state workers fairly by negotiating a respectable contract. At 20,000 strong, the rally showed that union members remain united and a force to be reckoned with.

"We put a face and a loud voice to the message our union has been sending to Albany!"
— Brian McAdoo
CSEA local president
Roswell Park Cancer Institute

Below left and right, Albany police in riot gear and mounted patrols provide a stark contrast to the members who showed up Jan. 5, such as the woman below. One newspaper columnist decried the governor's show of force as grossly out of proportion to the "legion of soccer moms and Little League dads ... somewhat self-consciously demonstrating for a pay raise."

Below, chanting throng swells outside the state Capitol.

Above, Statewide Treasurer Maureen Malone, left, and Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan encourage members to show the Governor who's got the power.
More than 500 state troopers who cordoned off the state Capitol where Gov. George Pataki was giving his annual State of the State speech created an imposing police presence at the rally.

No incidents were reported, however, and union leaders thanked the individual State Troopers and Albany Police officers for their professionalism in the very difficult situation the administration put them in.

Buses teeming with union members backed up traffic in downtown Albany and snaked onto the nearby interstates, delaying the arrival of thousands of protesters to the main rally.

The Pepsi Arena was jammed with more than 12,000 union activists who were whipped into action with videos, music and speeches by union leaders and rank-and-file members. The rally generated significant coverage in daily newspapers and on television and radio stations across the state.

“We sent the governor a message and it was important that he see thousands of members behind the negotiating team.”

— Alfredo Carlo
CSEA Local president
SUNY Stony Brook
"O.K. Governor, after we get you fitted for a hearing aid, then we'll have you read the eye chart over there."
The spirit of the season is reflected in CSEA members’ holiday charity

Across the state, CSEA members showed the true spirit of the holidays by reaching out to those less fortunate. Thousands of union members worked during the holidays, but they didn’t let their jobs prevent them from adopting needy families, performing good deeds for neighbors, donning Santa suits, serving food in soup kitchens, collecting toys for kids, and hosting holiday parties.

Charity abounds
In the Longwood School District on Long Island, custodian Neal Green suffered a massive shock when his house burned and he lost all his possessions while he was returning from burying his mother in North Carolina.

CSEA members joined teachers from the district and raised more than $5,000 for Green and his family.

CSEA Pilgrim Psychiatric Center Second Vice President Sarah Mableton spent time over the holidays visiting church members in the hospital and later helped host a holiday party for children.

“My children are grown and my grandson is blessed. I need to share what little I have with these other children,” Mableton said.

Hugs, love and quality time
CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte and his members donated “a truckload” of toys for less fortunate children.

Debbie O’Connell, a clerk at Nassau County Community College, worked at the Ronald McDonald House over the holidays.

“My family came to the house on Christmas day so we could all be together and even though you give up some holidays, it’s worth it because working here makes you feel really good,” O’Connell said.

In Brooklyn, the holiday spirit also took hold.

“Most clients don’t get visitors, so we make sure they have the best Christmas they can have,” said Thea Battle, a developmental aide at the Brooklyn Developmental Center.

CSEA members who work at the Shawangunk Correctional Facility in Ulster County donated gifts to local families as part of the “Tiny Hands in Need of Kindness” program.

Union members at the Montour Falls Fire Academy in Schuyler County raised almost $500 to buy clothing, blankets, food and toys for a needy local family.

A CSEA member dressed as Santa Claus rode a local fire truck and delivered the presents to the family with four children.

— Sheryl Jenks, Ann Carroll, Anita Manley and Mark Kotzin

Food Service Worker Crystal Banks, dressed as Santa, gets a gift package to deliver from CSEA “Elf” Teresa Letteer, a cleaner.

Her vacations are usually disasters...
Dutchess worker volunteers for Red Cross duty

POUGHKEEPSIE — Karen Anson’s last two vacations in Florida and North Carolina were both disasters.

Anson, a CSEA member and Red Cross volunteer, was helping people, many of whom had lost their homes and belongings to devastating floods caused by tropical storms and hurricanes.

A tax collection clerk for Dutchess County, Anson has been a Red Cross volunteer since 1991.

Most of her volunteer time is spent helping her neighbors in the Hudson Valley when their lives are disrupted by fires, gas explosions, weather-related disasters and evictions.

She also holds a part-time paid position with the Red Cross, working after hours to handle emergencies.

Meeting their needs
As a Red Cross volunteer, Anson distributes vouchers that are good for food, clothing and shelter.

Anson also teaches disaster training, family services and shelter operations courses and she co-chairs a county disaster team.

Two summers ago, Anson joined other volunteers from all over the country to help hurricane victims in the Florida Keys. She handed out vouchers, assessed damage and boosted the morale of thousands of victims.

The team also included nurses and mental health professionals.

“Some people are very private,” she said. “They don’t want your help. You meet all kinds.”

True volunteer spirit
In Florida, many of the victims were fishermen who lost their boats. Unfortunately, many of them lived on their boats, so they lost their homes also.

Anson’s trip last fall to North Carolina came after flooding from hurricanes Dennis and Floyd and tropical storm Irene — all within just a few weeks — badly damaged the area.

Anson remembered seeing areas where house trailers were under water and farm animals were stranded on rooftops.

Anson, whose father and brother are volunteer firefighters, said she’s been a volunteer since she was a teen.

“I’ve been a Candy Stripper, I worked at an information desk at the hospital, I’ve done work with hospice and worked with battered women,” she said.

“I guess it’s just been in me to do volunteer work. To me, that’s what it’s all about — helping your neighbor,” Anson said.

“My trip to North Carolina was a turning point for me,” she said. “I realized how lucky I am.”

— Anita Manley
Norton receives Rochester labor council award

ROCHESTER — Bruce Norton, a Monroe County CSEA activist and 28-year Town of Penfield employee, has been honored as activist of the year with the first Robert Flavin Award from the Rochester Labor Council.

“This is a real honor, and I appreciate it,” said Norton, who is the Political Action Committee (PAC) chairman for the Monroe County CSEA Local and vice president of the Penfield Unit.

“Especially since this award is named for someone I really admired, and who was the father of fellow CSEA activist Mike Flavin. And I was really honored that Mike sat at our table during the dinner and program,” Norton said.

The late Robert Flavin was a long-time member of the Rochester Labor Council and activist for the Communications Workers of America.

“Bruce is really deserving of an award for his work in behalf of union-endorsed candidates,” said Florence “Flo” Tripi, political action co-chair of CSEA’s Western Region and president and vice chair of the Monroe County Central Labor Council.

“He was everywhere this past political season, going door-to-door, passing out ‘Labor-to-Neighbor’ packets, distributing candidate literature, getting out the vote, working the phone banks. He is a fine representative of CSEA, and a good example for union members everywhere,” Tripi said.

“It’s something I believe in,” explained Norton. “Public employees have an opportunity to help elect or have a say in who our bosses will be, and it’s something we all should take a keen interest in.

“And our collective activism has other positive benefits, as well. I hope more of our members will take up political activism, wherever they happen to be,” Norton said.

— Ron Wofford  CSEA Monroe County activist Bruce Norton on the job in Penfield.

Farm workers’ minimum wage boosted; CSEA, other unions lobbied hard for law

By voting to increase the minimum wage, state lawmakers may have planted the seed that will end the disparate treatment long-endured by farm workers in the state.

A new law, which CSEA lobbied for, boosts New York’s minimum wage from $4.25 an hour to $5.15 an hour, tying it permanently to the national rate.

More importantly, the law for the first time gives farm workers the same minimum wage as other workers in the state.

For years, farm workers have been specifically excluded by state Labor Law from basic labor protections such as a day of rest, overtime pay, workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance, the right to bargain collectively, and a minimum wage. Recognizing the injustice these workers face, CSEA and other groups pressed lawmakers to give farm workers the same basic and fundamental rights enjoyed by other workers.

Union leaders said they hope this wage hike will pave the way for improvements in other areas.

Meanwhile, CSEA and other AFL-CIO affiliates have joined the United Farm Workers of America in its fight against federal legislation that would worsen the abysmal working conditions for farm workers.

The proposed “guest worker” legislation would allow employers to import immigrant workers who are willing to work for substandard wages and benefits, rather than recruit American workers by offering competitive wages and benefits.

— Ed Molitor

AMA votes to organize doctors

The union movement continues to grow as another professional organization has voted to unionize its members.

In an effort to level the playing field with health maintenance organizations and other managed-care providers, the American Medical Association voted recently to form a union for doctors.

The new union will represent physicians who are salaried employees and medical residents. Self-employed physicians are prohibited by law from bargaining collectively.

AMA officials said the union will improve patient care in today’s increasingly competitive health care market place.

Dr. George Bernstein, a CSEA member who works at Erie County Medical Center, said doctors can bring about change by affiliating with a union.

“There is strength in numbers and strength in unity,” Bernstein said. “Rather than acting individually where HMO’s can use a divide and conquer strategy, it’s better to find common ground,” he added. Bernstein also said belonging to CSEA makes doctors and other unionized staff at ECMC feel like a team.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which is CSEA’s international affiliate and represents thousands of doctors nationwide, has long recognized the value unionization holds for physicians and their patients.

“The AMA’s vote reflects a tidal wave of sentiment that doctors want representation, that they want a voice at the table, and that managed care has all too often tied their hands in terms of their ability to provide quality patient care,” AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee said.
May 15 is deadline for submitting proposed resolutions, changes to CSEA's Constitution & Bylaws

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws must be submitted no later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y., 12210-2303.

The 2000 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 25-29 in New York City.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

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 status 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.

Note, however, you must continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues-free or gratuitous membership allows members to continue their insurance coverage while out of work. It does not protect your right to run for or hold office.

You must notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146, Ext. 1297, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.

The CSEA WORKERS' COMPENSATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

covering Workers’ Compensation and Social Security Disability

If you are injured on the job or sustain a job-related illness, CSEA's Workers' Compensation Legal Assistance Program can help you navigate the maze known as Workers’ Compensation. If you become disabled, the program can help you obtain Social Security Disability benefits.

The Program Services Are Absolutely Free, And So Is The Call

• If you have a possible Workers’ Compensation or Social Security Disability case, SIMPLY CALL 1-800-342-4146 TOLL-FREE and select the proper menu options. Your call will be answered by the firm of Fine, Olin and Anderman, PC., through its statewide network of offices staffed by attorneys who specialize in Workers’ Compensation and Social Security Disability Law.

• Brochures describing the program in detail and intake forms to assist you in compiling correct and complete information before making the initial call will be available from CSEA Region Offices, CSEA Local and Unit Presidents and CSEA Labor Relations Specialists.

• All calls will be accepted, no cases will be turned down and there is no out-of-pocket cost to CSEA members and their dependents for the program services.

Thomas H. McDonough
Continuing Studies Scholarship winners

Six children of CSEA members, one from each of the union’s regions, have been named winners of the CSEA Thomas H. McDonough Continuing Studies Scholarships.

The winners were announced by CSEA President Danny Donohue and Lamont Wade, chair of CSEA’s Special Memorial Scholarship Committee.

The awards are $1,000 each and are given to help students pursue their college studies by supplementing the CSEA Irving Flaumenbaum scholarships which each of the recipients had previously won as graduating high school seniors.

The continuing studies scholarships are named in memory of the late Thomas H. McDonough, a longtime union activist who served as acting president and executive vice president of CSEA.

Winners of the 1999 CSEA Thomas H. McDonough Continuing Studies Scholarships are:

Long Island Region
Edward J. Scali, Jr. of Massapequa, is a student at St. Joseph’s College. His mother, Denise A. Scali, is a teacher aide at Nassau BOCES.

Metropolitan Region
Christina Yeung of New York City is a student at Cornell University. Her mother, Keng Yee Yeung, is a file clerk at the state Insurance Department.

Southern Region
Gabrielle Rizzuto is a student at Georgetown University. Her mother, Rosemary Rizzuto, is a stenographer at the Croton-Harmon School District.

Capital Region
Lauren M. Dillon is a student at Clarkson University. Her mother, Joanne Dillon, is a typist at the Saratoga Springs Central School District.

Central Region
Erika S. Moshier is a student at Oswego State University. Her mother, Janet Mosher, is an account clerk at Jefferson County Social Services.

Western Region
Kendra Lee Weis is a student at Ithaca College. Her mother, Sandra Lee Weis, is a typist at Wayne Central High School.

The McDonough scholarship recipients were selected on the basis of merit and need from a pool of previous winners of the Flaumenbaum scholarships.

In addition to Wade, the CSEA Memorial Scholarship Committee includes Kathy Martinez-Walsh, Anita Booker, Lorraine Johnson, Barbara DeSimone, Helen Fischedick, Sandra Delia, Bruce Norton and Jeanette Newman.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Blue Cross Hospital</th>
<th>Empire Plan Par-Provider</th>
<th>Non-Par Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provider/Specialty Office Visit</td>
<td>$5/visit</td>
<td>$5/visit (MPN)</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiropractic Treatment</td>
<td>$5/visit</td>
<td>$250 deductible</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50% of network allowance</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1500 maximum</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Testing (e.g., x-rays, labs)</td>
<td>$25/visit</td>
<td>$5/visit</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation/Chemotherapy</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pap Tests/Mammograms</td>
<td>$25/visit</td>
<td>$5/visit</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre and Post Natal Visits</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Room</td>
<td>$30/visit (waived if admitted)</td>
<td>$35 Copay</td>
<td>$35 Copay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>$35 Copay</td>
<td>$35 Copay</td>
<td>$35 Copay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient Mental Health</td>
<td>$2000 deductible</td>
<td>$2000 deductible</td>
<td>$2000 deductible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% of network</td>
<td>50% of network</td>
<td>50% of network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>allowance 30 days/year</td>
<td>allowance 30 days/year</td>
<td>allowance 30 days/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient Mental Health</td>
<td>$15/visit unlimited when medically necessary (Value Options)</td>
<td>$500 deductible</td>
<td>$500 deductible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50% of network allowance 30 visits/year</td>
<td>50% of network allowance 30 visits/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient Drug Rehabilitation/</td>
<td>No Cost; 3 stays per lifetime</td>
<td>$2000 deductible</td>
<td>$2000 deductible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient Alcohol Rehabilitation</td>
<td>more may be approved case by case (Value Options)</td>
<td>50% of network allowance 30 visits/year</td>
<td>50% of network allowance 30 visits/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durable Medical Equipment Diabetic Supplies In-Home Nursing</td>
<td>No Cost (HCAP)</td>
<td>Basic Medical or 50% of network allowance</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosthetics</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthotics</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitative Care:</td>
<td>$250 deductible</td>
<td>Physical or occupational therapy $5/visit</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% of network</td>
<td>$5/visit (MPN)</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>allowance $1500</td>
<td>Speech Therapy $5/visit</td>
<td>Basic Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maximum</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospice</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1999 Empire Plan Claims Deadlines**

**Empire plan enrollees:** March 31, 2000 (90 days after the end of the calendar year) is your last day to submit your 1999 claims to:

**United Health Care:** For the Empire Plan Basic Medical Program and for non-network physical medicine services.

United Health Care Service Corp. (Administrator for MetLife)
P.O. Box 1600
Kingston, N.Y. 12402-1600

**ValueOptions:** For non-network mental health and substance abuse services.

ValueOptions
P.O. Box 778
Troy, N.Y. 12181-0778

Please be certain to have your doctor or other provider fill-in 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.

**Express Scripts (formerly ValueRx):** For prescriptions filled in 1999 at non-participating pharmacies or without using your New York Government Employee Benefit Card.

Express Scripts
P.O. Box 1180
Troy, N.Y. 12181-0778

Claim forms may be obtained from your agency's personnel office or from United Health Care (1-800-942-4640), ValueOptions (1-800-446-3995) or Express Scripts (1-800-964-1888). Make sure you complete the requested subscriber information and don't forget to sign the claim form.
Elections for statewide officers, region officers, statewide Board of Directors, as well as for AFSCME delegates, are being held at the same time.

All eligible voters will receive a ballot containing candidate choices for the statewide election.

Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 ballots will include their region election where there is a race. The current Region 5 officers were unopposed and are deemed elected.

Statewide Officers:
President, Executive Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer

Region Officers:
Region 1: Executive VP, 2nd VP, 3rd VP, Secretary, Treasurer [*President, *1st VP]
Region 2: Executive VP, 2nd VP [*President, *1st VP, *Secretary, *Treasurer]
Region 4: President, Executive VP, 1st VP, 2nd VP, 3rd VP, Secretary, Treasurer
Region 6: President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, 3rd VP, Secretary, Treasurer
*Unopposed/Elected

Statewide Board of Directors:
Twenty-nine representatives of the State Executive Committee and 45 representatives of the Local Government Executive Committee were unopposed and are deemed elected.

For the Board of Directors election, there are only 14 contested elections.

If your board seat was not contested or there were no eligible candidates, your ballot will not reflect a board election.

AFSCME Delegates to be elected:
• LONG ISLAND REGION 1 — 40 delegates
• METROPOLITAN REGION 2 — 14 delegates
• WESTERN REGION 6 — 40 delegates
For Regions 3, 4, and 5, the AFSCME delegate nominations were unopposed and those candidates are deemed elected.

Elected delegates will attend the AFSCME Convention scheduled June 26-30, 2000 in Philadelphia, PA.

CSEA Election Schedule for Statewide Officers, Region Officers, Statewide Board of Directors, AFSCME Delegates
Feb. 8: Deadline for receipt of ballots (8 a.m.). Ballots counted. 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 March 2000 edition of *The Work Force.*

Terms for CSEA Statewide President, Executive Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer

The statewide president, executive vice president, secretary, and treasurer terms will start July 1, 2000 and shall be for a single term of three and three-quarter years, ending March 1, 2004.

Officers for CSEA’s Six Regions
With the election year 2000, region officers will serve four-year terms, commencing March 1, 2000.

Check the CSEA bulletin boards at your workplace for more election details.

Special election to fill vacant seats on CSEA’s Statewide Board of Directors
CSEA will hold a special election to fill Board seats where no candidate has previously qualified to run. One vacancy exists in each of the following areas: Chenango County, Franklin County, Lewis County, Ontario County, Rockland County, Schoharie County, Schuyler County, Sullivan County, Tompkins County, Washington County, Reg. 5 Local Government Educational. Please Note: There will only be this one special election for vacant Board seats. Any seat not filled by this election cycle will remain vacant.

The election schedule for the special election appears below. Election results will be published in the May, 2000 edition of *The Work Force.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 14, 2000</td>
<td>Start of petitioning period: Nominating petitions available from Region offices (Southern, Capital, Central &amp; Western) and CSEA Headquarters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 3, 2000</td>
<td>Deadline for receipt of nominating petitions at CSEA Headquarters by 5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 30, 2000</td>
<td>Ballots mailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 6, 2000</td>
<td>Replacement ballots may be requested if original not received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 20, 2000</td>
<td>Deadline for receipt of ballots by 8 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2000</td>
<td>Election results published in <em>The Work Force</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statewide Board of Directors
The board of directors terms will begin July 1, 2000 and will run for a single term of three and three-quarter years, ending March 1, 2004.

Election Process
The election process will be overseen by the union’s Statewide Election Committee. The ballot count will be conducted by True Ballot, Inc. at the Desmond, 660 Albany-Shaker Road, Albany, New York.

Any CSEA member may obtain information about the election process by calling the Election Committee at CSEA headquarters 1-800-342-4146 ext. 1477
Activist on and off the job:
Carolyn Lee shares many talents with CSEA, CBTU

BUFFALO — For Carolyn Lee, her job as a child protective worker for Erie County, her union activism and her participation in the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) are an outgrowth of her natural motivation toward helping others.

"I like interacting with people," said Lee, a 12-year employee of the county's social services department in Buffalo.

"I've taught in the Head Start program and the Educational Opportunity Program before I worked for the county. As a child protective worker, Lee interviews children and family members during the investigation of child abuse allegations, and she provides referrals. She also works with police and doctors and testifies in court when needed.

As a wife and mother, she is raising a 15-year-old son, and also helped raise two other now-grown children.

"I'm sort of new to union activism, compared to some of my fellow members," said Lee.

Active at all levels

"And I attribute my activism to my union mentor, Sylvia Thomas (also a county worker and CSEA activist), who urged me to get involved. We first worked together on the CSEA local’s women’s committee, and that led to my involvement with CBTU."

Lee said her CBTU activities address a broad spectrum of service to the black community and also reflect her personal concerns for community improvement.

"I'll be working on our Buffalo CBTU chapter's annual conference in February, specifically the Women’s Luncheon,” said Lee.

"This year we’re doing something different from the normal routine of having a guest speaker. We're going to have an acting company act out a message about domestic violence, followed by a dialog with the actors," Lee said.

"We think and hope it will add to the message that there is another way to deal with family problems, and that victims do have options.

— Ron Wofford

CONLEY ELECTED VP TO LABOR COUNCIL

— Westchester County Local 860 President Gary Conley has been elected Vice President of the Westchester/Putnam Labor Council. He was sworn in by AFL-CIO President Denis Hughes. Conley said the Council’s priorities are legislative and political action and mobilization of members on such issues of concern as health care, workers’ compensation issues, contract negotiations, organizing or community ... PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE recruiter for the month of December is Rutha Bush of Local 430 on Long Island. Bush has recruited 29 new PEOPLE members. PEOPLE is AFSCME’s political action program aimed at getting friends of working families elected to Congress ...

"LEFTY" MACCARO PASSES AWAY — CSEA mourns the loss of CSEA retiree Bill "Lefty” Maccaro. Bill died at age 65 in his sleep at his home in Commack. Bill worked in the Town of Smithtown for more than 20 years. In that time he was the Town of Smithtown Unit President for nine years and the CSEA Suffolk Locals President for six years. Bill also served as a trustee on the Employee Benefit Fund. Bill’s son, Billy, works for the Town of Smithtown Traffic Department. Maccaro is also survived by his wife, Evelyn, and two daughters ...

LAMORTE FETED BY HOFSTRA — CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte was honored by the Hofstra Alumni Association who presented him with its distinguished Service Award for 28 years of community service ... ISLAND TREES OKS PACT — The Island Trees School District unit voted nearly unanimously to ratify a new, three-year pact ...

AFL-CIO New York State President Denis Hughes greets Coalition of Black Trade Unionists members at a community gathering in Albany to commemorate the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The Albany event brought together labor and community activists — including many from CSEA — for an afternoon of food, entertainment and speakers. Above, Hughes meets CBTU and CSEA activists.

Hughes was also on hand Jan. 5 to kick off the “We’ve Got The Power” rally, where he helped whip up the crowd of thousands in the Pepsi Arena and pledged the full strength of the NYS AFL-CIO to the state contract fight.