



"A Garland For May Day" (1895)

International Workers' Day: May 1 was designated "International Workers' Day" to commemorate the 1886 Haymarket "Affair" in Chicago. On May 1, 1886, workers conducted a general strike for an eight-hour workday. On May 4, Chicago police began dispersing a public assembly in support of the strike when an unidentified person threw a bomb. The police responded by firing on the striking workers. Several workers and supporters died in the melee.

Strength In Numbers! A reminder that your union's 2019 membership-recruitment drive is underway. Rewards for recruiting new members between now and September 1!

- 2 new members - Dunkin Donuts gift card;
- 5 new members - VSEA insulated coffee mug;
- 10 new members - \$50 VISA gift card!

Bonus! Recruit a new member and receive an entry in a drawing to win one of four \$300 prizes to be awarded at VSEA's 2019 Annual Meeting! Each new recruit earns you an additional entry! Just be sure to have your recruits add your name in the "Recruited By" line of the VSEA Membership Application.

**Call Your Senator(s)!
Message: Don't Cut DCF
ESD Positions!**

VSEA's legislative team, joined by VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne, were working the halls of the State House late this week to try and put the brakes on an ill-advised proposal to cut 25 DCF Economic Services Division positions to achieve the savings needed to preserve private, non-profit Parent Child Centers across Vermont.

If you haven't already contacted your Senator(s) to oppose the ESD cuts, please take a few minutes and let them know as soon as possible.

Here is an excerpt from an email DCF member and VSEA leader Aimee Towne sent last night to ESD members statewide:

I wanted to touch base with you, from the State House, to give a little background information regarding the Action Alert email you all received earlier, as this news, I'm sure, has taken most of you by surprise.

Yes, unfortunately, there is a potential proposal floating around to eliminate 25 ESD positions as a way to recoup \$1.6 million to fund the PCC's.

I'm reaching out to you today, not only as the Vice President of VSEA but also as your fellow ESD co-worker. Please understand that the VSEA and Administration are working together to try to stop this proposal, and both parties were surprised by this last-minute money grab by the Senate.



And here is the Action Alert text Aimee references in her email:

For decades, Vermont DCF Economic Services Division (ESD) workers have been helping eligible parents gain job skills and find work so they can support their minor, dependent children. But this week, VSEA's legislative team sounded an alarm upon learning that some Senators are proposing to save money by eliminating many DCF ESD positions, threatening this critical service and putting Vermont families-in-need and their kids at risk.

VSEA is asking members and retirees to please take a few minutes to call the Sergeant at Arms to leave a message for your Senator(s)!

802-828-2228

Message: "Protect a vital lifeline for Vermont families-in-need and their children. No cuts to Economic Services Division staff."

Note: Please do this from your own phone on break time!

Help Spread The Word! Please share this information with your co-workers!

Monday Conference Call Scheduled For ESD Workers!

VSEA First VP and ESD member Aimee Towne is being joined by some VSEA staff members on Monday to conduct a conference call with interested ESD workers talk about the proposed position cuts, the current status of the proposal, what comes next and what members can do to help now.

Stop The ESD Position Cuts Conference Call
Monday, April 29
12:00 p.m.

Important! To protect the integrity of this important call, WIA is not publishing the call-in number and host code here. ESD members were emailed this information on Friday afternoon, April 26. Please refer to the email to participate in the call. Thanks. Or contact Aimee Towne by email at: atowne@vsea.org.

Senate Committee Moves VSEA Arbitration Bill. VSEA's Full-Court Press To Pass Bill Continues

As the 2019 legislative session begins to wind down, VSEA's legislative team and members are keeping a watchful eye on S. 156 as it progresses through the Senate. This is a VSEA-drafted bill that seeks to resolve contract-negotiation disputes, using an arbitrator mutually selected by VSEA and the State. This week, the Senate's Government Operations Committee took additional testimony in support of the bill, hearing from VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne and VSEA Executive Director Steve Howard. Days later, the Committee voted the bill out, 4 to 1. According to post to the VSEA Council's Facebook page last night, S. 156 is now headed to the Senate floor and is being attached to H.16 on the House side.

Why This Bill Needs To Pass

Currently, if VSEA and the State cannot reach contract agreement at the table, with the assistance of the mediator and the fact-finder's report, the parties then proceed to the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) for a process known as "last-best-offer" (LBO), where each party submits its LBO to the VLRB for consideration. The VLRB will impose either parties last best offer, or the fact-finder's report recommendation's (based on the evidence presented to the by the fact-finder). It's a process that has worked for decades, with both parties seeking to avoid the risk of a contract

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imposed by a third party; contracts were usually reached at the negotiating table, after the fact-finding process. But then the State decided in 2018 that it wanted to upend this process, which had worked successfully for decades, and, sadly, it worked to the State's advantage. This is why VSEA is lobbying her for passage of S. 156.

VSEA's bill initially sought to amend the existing contract impasse procedure for state employees by transferring the ultimate decision-making power from the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) to an independent, professional arbitrator who is mutually selected by the State and VSEA, or chosen by the VLRB if the parties cannot agree. Senate Committee members, however, recently changed the language to read that the VLRB would hear the "last-best-contract-offer" on the table, unless either party objects, in which case a mutually selected arbitrator would rule on the matter. The Committee added that in the event the two sides could not agree upon an arbitrator, the American Association of Arbitrators would select one. VSEA's legislative team says the changes do not diminish the bill.

In the coming days and weeks, VSEA may be reaching out (again) to members and retirees to contact lawmakers to urge their support for S. 156. Understand that this is one of the most important pieces of legislation VSEA has introduced in years and if fairness is to be restored to the bargaining process, it must pass.

Note: WIA will keep members updated on S. 156 developments.

VT's Public Assets Institute Post Reminds That Federal Tax Cuts Made State's Wealthiest Even Wealthier

Vermont Public Assets Analyst Stephanie Yu posted a piece to the organization's website this

week, titled "Invest in Vermont," where she lays out a strong case for Vermont lawmakers to ask our state's wealthiest to invest more, especially given the new federal tax breaks they are enjoying.

Here's an excerpt:

Unlike most Vermonters, the richest Vermonters probably enjoyed filing their taxes this month. According to the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, the top one percent of Vermonters (with incomes starting at \$487,500) saw an average tax break of over \$30,000, a state total of nearly \$100 million. The top five percent (incomes over \$210,600) saw a total of over \$200 million in savings. Even half of that would go a long way to addressing the state's most urgent needs.

The House-passed revenue bill, H. 541, raises just under \$8 million and even that meager amount is under scrutiny in the Senate. There are bits and pieces of revenue being proposed in other bills too, but taken together they're not going to make much of a dent. The \$8 million proposed for child care is just the first step in what could be a \$200 million investment. Reach Up benefits haven't been updated since at least 2004, and even if the additional money for weatherization passes this year, Vermont will be far short of its goal of 80,000 homes weatherized by 2020.

Our policy makers need to think bigger. The Trump tax cuts may not be popular to many, but they provide an opportunity to invest in Vermont hundreds of millions of dollars that are no longer being sent to Washington.

VSEA 2019 Election Materials Being Mailed Next Week!

On May 1, VSEA's Elections, Rules & Nominating Committee is sending a mailing to all eligible VSEA members, detailing this year's important



leadership elections and explaining the process to become a candidate, which includes submitting a petition that will be included with the mailing.

The following union leadership posts are up for election in 2019:

- VSEA President
- VSEA First Vice President
- VSEA Second Vice President
- VSEA Treasurer
- VSEA Clerk
- District 1 Board Seat (Central Vermont, Barre)
- District 2 Board Seat (Waterbury, VPCH)
- District 5 Board Seat (Rutland, Bennington)

Keep your eyes on VSEA's website, Facebook page and future WIA's for more information about the elections and the upcoming membership mailing.

The winners of each election will be announced at this year's VSEA Annual Meeting in Okemo.

Sunday Is Workers' Memorial Day Nationwide

On April 28, workers across the globe will observe "Workers' Memorial Day"; a day to pause to remember those who have been injured or killed on the job and renew the fight for strong worker safety and health protections.

Four decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Since then, unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality in Vermont and across the country—winning protections that have made jobs safer, saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of workplace injuries and illnesses.

From a national AFL-CIO flyer about Workers' Memorial Day:

"On April 28, unions nationwide will observe Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe workplaces. This year, we will come together to call for good jobs in this country that are safe and healthy. We will seek stronger safeguards to prevent injuries and save lives. We will stand for the right of all workers to raise job safety concerns without fear of retaliation, and for the freedom to form unions and speak out and bargain for respect and a better future. Please join us and make your voice heard."

VSEA Past President (Now Rep.) Has His First Bill Signed Into Law--And It's Noteworthy

VSEA Past President, now Representative, Bob Hooper (beard) posted this photo and the following caption this week to his state representative Facebook page:

"On the occasion of my first bill being signed into law, effective upon signature, that allows the cremation remains of VERMONT veterans to be transported from the garages and basements of mortuaries, and placed in the custody of the Vermont Veterans cemetery for final rest."

"One vet has waited twenty years for his final honors-way to long. I invited the Governor to join us at the cemetery for his ceremony."

"Great thanks to my friend Tom Giffin who called attention and worked on this issue. A job well done!"

Note: Tom Giffin is also a past VSEA elected official and leader.



Happy Administrative Professionals Day 2019!

VSEA posted the image above to its Facebook page on April 24, which was Administrative Professionals Day nationwide. VSEA thanks every administrative professional working today in Vermont state government for your service.

It Is Now Open Enrollment For VSEA's Popular Delta Dental Supplemental Plan

For VSEA members who are not currently enrolled in your union's Northeast Delta Dental Supplemental Program, now is the time to join, during the open enrollment period for the 2019-2020 plan year. The VSEA supplemental program is designed to enhance your current State-provided dental insurance benefit.

The enrollment period is also when members already in the program can amend their number of dependents also using the program, if this number has changed in the past year.

All enrollment forms will be due back on May 17, 2019.

Note: If you are already taking advantage of this benefit, and you have no changes this year to your coverage, you do not need to send back a new form, as you will be automatically renewed.

Learn More About VSEA's Insurance Benefits on VSEA.org

Reserve Your Room Now For VSEA's 2019 Annual Meeting At Okemo

You can reserve a room now through a special link created by Okemo. VSEA members will need

QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

"We have too many children and young parents to serve them with the staff we have now. Find the cuts elsewhere."

VSEA ESD member Robert Brickey in a message he sent yesterday to his Senator, opposing a Senate proposal to cut 25 ESD positions.

to use a special rate code for the event, which is: **CM2VSEA**. Reserve Room Now Online Here: <https://www.okemo.com/groups/group-promo-package/>

Room types available:

- **Inn Room** (occupancy 2-4)
1 to 2 nights = \$159 per night
3 nights = \$144.54
- **Studio** (occupancy 2-4)
1 to 2 nights = \$173 per night
3 nights = \$157.27
- **One-Bedroom** (occupancy 2-6)
1 to 2 nights = \$195 per night
3 nights = \$177.63
- **Two-Bedroom** (occupancy 4-6)
1 to 2 nights = \$235 per night
3 nights = \$213.63

2019 VSEA Scholarship Application Due May 8!

The VSEA Awards/ Scholarship Committee is currently soliciting applications from students seeking financial assistance in the pursuit of post-secondary educational goals. The Committee will announce the recipients of the scholarships at the June Council Meeting.

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Deadline: Completed applications and all accompanying data must be received at VSEA Headquarters no later than 4:30 p.m. on May 8. Download an application on VSEA.org.

TALKING POINTS:

Vermont's Retail & Construction Industries Suffer Some Of Nation's Steepest Hiring Declines

A couple of stories recently popped up that should alarm State officials and lawmakers. According to two new studies:

- Vermont had the nation's third-steepest decline in retail trade employment between February 2007 and February 2019; and
- The biggest construction job losses through February 2019 were seen in Maine, Vermont, Louisiana and South Carolina.

Stop & Shop Strike Over! Workers Proclaim Victory

Numerous media outlets reported Monday that five UFCW local unions had reached tentative agreement with Stop & Shop management on a new contract, ending an 11-day strike by 31,000 employees.

"We are incredibly grateful to our customers and everyone who proudly stood together with us every day for a contract that invests in the communities we serve and makes Stop & Shop a better place to work and a better place to shop," Stop & Shop says in a statement.

UFCW called the agreement a "victory" for the employees who were on strike.

"Under this proposed contract, our members will be able to focus on continuing to help customers

in our communities enjoy the best shopping experience possible and to keep Stop & Shop the number one grocery store in New England," the union's statement reads.

Note: Congratulations and thanks to all the VSEA members who supported the striking S&S employees by boycotting an S&S store somewhere in New England or one of the chain's sister stores, Hannaford's, here in Vermont.

Washington Post Commentary On How Women Are Transforming Organized Labor

The Washington Post featured a commentary this week by Kim Kelly, titled "How Women are Transforming Organized Labor."

Here's an excerpt:

Today, public support for unions is at a record high, the feared fallout of the Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* failed to materialize, and fast-growing sectors like digital media and fast-food service have added thousands of members to union rolls.

This renewed energy is coming disproportionately from women. In fact, women — and particularly women of color — remain on the front lines of worker-organizing in a variety of industries, including those our patriarchal society has long coded as "women's work." Workers in a slew of traditionally feminized labor sectors — from education and domestic work to food service and sex work — have driven some of the movement's most important victories. That is critically important both because they now make up the majority of the working class and because their involvement is helping to reshape the priorities of organized labor.



Illinois Opens Simulation Center To Train DCFS Employees

Chicago ABC network affiliate WLS aired a story this week about the opening of a new Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Simulation Center that is part of a new training program for case workers and investigators.

From the story:

Part of [the new DCFS) training involves aspiring case workers going through multiple scenarios

with trained actors to help prep them for field work.

“This is all part of an effort by DCFS and by my administration to upgrade the training and make sure that we’re bringing the best case workers, the best-trained case workers and investigators, to the forefront to operate going forward,” IL Gov. JB Pritzker said after truing the Center.

Fired KY State Employee Sues Governor Over Free Speech

Several Kentucky media outlets are reporting this week on a lawsuit brought against the Governor by a fired state employee.

From an *Associated Press* story:

An ex-state employee is suing Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, claiming she was fired due to her ties to a group that supported teacher sickouts that shut down school districts to protest GOP-backed legislation.

The federal suit filed Wednesday alleges Charissa “Chris” Cooke’s First Amendment rights were violated.

“Cooke’s termination appears to be part of the defendants’ efforts to punish and intimidate individuals who oppose their policy positions,”

Cooke’s suit says. It seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages as well as reinstatement to her job as a paralegal for an administrative law judge who oversees cases involving workers’ compensation claims.

Getting Ready To Retire? Retired Already? Join The VSEA Retired Members’ Chapter!

Long-time VSEA activist and leader Terry Lefebvre asked Council members getting ready to retire to join the VSEA Retirees’ Chapter to continue to be an active and engaged union member, even in retirement. Lefebvre also appealed to Council members to talk up the Chapter to co-workers they know who might be preparing to retire. If you already belong to the Retired Members’ Chapter, a big thanks to you.

Learn More Online:
<https://www.vsea.org/retirees>

What is the VSEA Advantage Discount Program?

Did you know? The average VSEA member can save hundreds of dollars a year by taking advantage of some of the Members Only benefits offered through their union!

Learn More On [VSEA.org](https://www.vsea.org)

VSEA Insurance Benefits

Offering members-only rates for disability coverage, family life insurance, family accident, cancer coverage and more. You must be a member paying full dues to be eligible for this VSEA benefit. Learn more or request an appointment here: <https://www.vsea.org/vsea-insurance>



VSEA CALENDAR:

April 27

Drug Take Back Day

April 28

Workers' Memorial Day

April 30

Know Your Rights Training - Morrisville

State Office Building

63 Professional Drive

Morrisville

12:00 p.m.

May 1

International Workers' Day

May 1

Deadline To Submit Bylaw Change
Proposal(s)

May 1

Central Vermont Chapter Meeting

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

5:00 p.m.

May 3

OCS Labor / Management Committee
Meeting

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

9:00 a.m.

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