



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ June 6 – June 10, 2016

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VSEA Announces 2016 Endorsements!

This week, VSEA learned the results of a recent straw poll conducted to determine which candidates in certain statewide races members preferred, and the poll results were shared shortly afterwards with your union's Legislative Committee, Board of Trustees and Council. Poll results are now posted on VSEA's website, in the "members-only" section, [meaning accessible only to full-fledged members](#). The poll results were factored in to a broader discussion this week about 2016 endorsements by the VSEA members who serve on your union's Legislative Committee, Board of Trustees' or as a Council member. These discussions—and in some cases healthy debates—led to several formal endorsements being made not only for candidates in races featured in the straw poll, but also for candidates in numerous local races for House and Senate seats, including several VSEA members! VSEA issued a press release on the endorsements and you can [read it here](#), and we've posted a printable list of endorsements, and you can [download it here](#).

VSEA Live Streams Gubernatorial Forums

VSEA's Legislative Committee recently worked with headquarters Legislative/Political team to coordinate two successful gubernatorial forums, where the candidates addressed a host of issues important to frontline VSEA members. It's just one piece of your union's campaign 2016 effort to provide every VSEA member with as much information about candidates' positions on the topics state employees are talking about in worksites across Vermont. Candidates also provided answers to a VSEA questionnaire, and their answers can be found [here](#).

[View the Montpelier forum here](#)

[View the Burlington forum here](#)

Judiciary Docket Clerks Prepared To Elevate Campaign For Improved Wages

Last week, members of the VSEA Judiciary Unit Executive Committee penned an open letter to Court Administrator Pat Gabel, calling on her (again) to do what is necessary to procure more money to increase pay for Vermont Docket Clerks; many of whom are "turning to charity or various forms of public assistance to make ends meet, or who are working multiple jobs." The letter also emphasizes that Docket Clerks believe the low-pay issue is "fundamentally an issue of gender pay equity," and the workers include a report by Gerald Freidman, Ph.D, to supplement their point (read the Freidman Report Here: <http://bit.ly/1U8LG0D>). Read the Executive Committee's full letter [here](#).

With the open letter now public, VSEA Docket Clerks and all Judiciary Unit members are strategizing about next steps and preparing to elevate their campaign to educate Vermonters about this issue. Just this week, VSEA Judiciary Unit leader Bill Capasso used his lunch break to appear live on WDEV's Equal Time radio show, talking about the issue of low pay for Docket Clerks and elaborating on many of the open letter's points. You can listen to a podcast of Capasso's appearance [here](#).

Vermont State Colleges Ratification Ballots Due June 24!

Hopefully, VSEA VSC members have received your contract ratification ballot in the U.S. Mail. **A reminder that your ballot is due at VSEA headquarters by Friday, June 24.**

If you did not receive a ballot, please contact your Campus Chair. If you have a question(s) about the tentative agreement, please contact a member of your Bargaining Team, listed here:

Billie Langlois, Castleton Campus Chair

Deb Ballantine, Castleton Negotiator

Sandy Noyes, JSC Campus Chair and Unit Vice Chair

Ken Moore, JSC Negotiator

Janis Henderson, Unit Chair

Jay Bona, LSC Negotiator

Monique Prive, Unit Secretary

Travis Allen, VTC Negotiator

Karen Tetreault, VTC Campus Chair and Unit Treasurer

***VPR* Reports: Lack Of Financial Support For State Colleges Taking Its Toll**

For years, frontline VSEA Vermont State Colleges' members have been sounding an alarm about the toll a consistent lack of funding for the system is having on students, staff and faculty. Members of this Unit's Bargaining Team heard about the problem again this year from State negotiators in contract negotiations, and, as *VPR* reports on June 6, Chancellor Jeb Spaulding is joining VSEA members to call for more funding for the beleaguered system; this after being the official charged with reviewing the funding for years in his role as Secretary of the Administration.

"Vermont has very low overall state support for higher education. And that low state support translates into high tuition," Spaulding tells *VPR*.

Also featured in the piece is longtime VSEA VSC Bargaining Unit Vice Chair Sandy Noyes, who explains how hard it's been to watch the decline of a once proud State Colleges' system and how difficult it has become to work a system depleted of funds.

"And now we've been cut down to even trying to make sure we don't buy too many pens or pencils, or too much paper," Noyes tells *VPR*.

Hear the whole story [here](#).

Council Members Urged To Complete Meeting Survey

VSEA First Vice President and Council Chair Aimee Towne is asking all Council members to please complete a short survey about the June 7 meeting at Castleton. You can find the survey [here](#).

S. 154 Signed Into Law! [pic and cap]

A successful campaign throughout the 2016 legislative session by frontline VSEA DCF Family Services Division workers to enhance safety for all DCF workers culminated on June 2 with the official signing of S.154 into law. Pictured here holding the bill's signing pen is VSEA member Trissie Casanova, who testified for passage of the bill many times at the State House. Congratulations to all who helped with this effort!

VSEA Surveying Members About Forming Legal Defense Fund

VSEA sent a survey to members this week to solicit opinions on developing a program to provide legal defense to members who face criminal charges or other civil or administrative challenges arising from actions taken in the course of their employment. The survey email explained that VSEA is reviewing several options, including one that would cover the unlimited costs to defend you in the event of a criminal prosecution or some civil prosecutions arising in the course of your work. The benefit would cost you an additional \$4.70 per month, on top of your regular dues.

If you might be interested in such a program, please complete the following survey, which can be found [here](#). Your answers will help VSEA design a program to best meet VSEA members' needs.

VSEA Awards 2016 Scholarships To Seven Lucky Recipients!

At the June 7 VSEA Council meeting at Castleton University, the union's Awards and Scholarships Committee announced the seven winners of a 2016 VSEA scholarship award. Two of the winners attended a special ceremony at the meeting and they are pictured above holding their award, which was presented to them by retiring Awards & Scholarship Committee Chair Janis Henderson.

Here are the winners, in alphabetical order:

- Alexis Benoit is the daughter of VSEA member Tom Benoit; an Environmental Analyst with the Department of Environmental Conservation in Montpelier. Alexis told VSEA her career goal is to work with animals after earning an undergraduate degree in animal science, which she will study at UVM, the University of Maine, University of New Hampshire or the University of New England. Alexis told VSEA that working with animals after school at her local town's vet has taught her that every little bit counts, every second counts and to be forever grateful for the opportunities she will be presented in life;
- Elizabeth Clark is an active VSEA member who works as a Financial Aid Specialist at Vermont Technical College, where she graduated from in 2010. Elizabeth told VSEA she wants to further her education and enhance her job skills, so she will be attending Johnson State College to complete an external degree program in accounting or business. Elizabeth's post-degree goal is modest, writing that she plans to keep working hard at Vermont Tech and be the best employee she can be;
- Michaela Columbia. Michaela is the daughter of VSEA member Erin Columbia; a Social Worker with the Department for Children and Families in Newport. Right now, Michaela is choosing between several schools, including UVM, Champlain College, the University of New Hampshire and Castleton State. Once she decides, she told VSEA she will be pursuing a degree in psychology, counseling or social work;
- Katherine Legacy is the daughter of VSEA member Cecilia Legacy, who is a maintenance worker at Vermont Technical College in Randolph. Katherine has already been accepted to Johnson State College, and she will be pursuing degrees in early and special education. Katherine told VSEA that being a student with special needs has caused her to want to help other students with special needs, which is why she chose to pursue the degree she is;
- Maya Mullen is the daughter of VSEA member Kathleen Martin; a Reach-Up Case Manager with the Economic Services Division in St. Albans. Maya has already been accepted to the University of Vermont, where she will be pursuing a degree in nutrition and food science. Maya told VSEA that she has worked very hard to get to where she is, and she wants to ensure her dreams won't be crushed because she can't afford college;
- Timothy McCants is an active VSEA member who works as an Associate Mental Health Specialist at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital in Berlin. Timothy has been accepted to the Community College of Vermont, where he will pursue a degree in Pre-Med/Pre-Health. Timothy told VSEA that he wants to eventually become a physician's assistant, and he will be continuing to work the night shift in order to pursue his goal during the day; and

- Winter Morse is the daughter of VSEA member And Morse, a Civil Rights Program Specialist with the AOT in Montpelier. Winter is currently deciding between several schools, including UVM, VTC, Castleton State and Colby Sawyer. She wants to pursue a degree in nursing, which is an interest she developed after being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at age 16, writing that she's excited to become a registered nurse and then hopefully a diabetes educator.

VSEA congratulates all the winners!

Submit Your 2016 VSEA Annual Meeting Award Nominations Online Today!

It's time again to submit your nominations for a 2016 VSEA Outstanding Performance Award in the following categories:

- 1) VSEA Chapter of the Year;
- 2) VSEA Steward of the Year;
- 3) The Mazza Award — For Outstanding Service to VSEA;
- 4) The Macaig Award — For Outstanding Public Service; and
- 5) The Linda Coan Memorial Award — Outstanding VSEA Staff Member

Submit your nominations online [here](#).

Winners announced at Annual Meeting banquet on September 9.

VSEA Labor Educator Announces Summer Trainings – Four Open To All

VSEA Labor Educator Tim Lenoach asked WIA to announce a new round of trainings he has scheduled throughout the summer 2016. If you are interested in registering to attend one or more trainings, you can do so [by clicking here](#). Please direct your training questions to Tim at tlenoch@vsea.org.

There are four trainings **open to all members**, please invite folks who may be interested:

Stewards and Labor Management Committees

Friday, July 15

[Register For This Training](#)

Protecting Bargaining Unit Work

Friday, August 5

[Register For This Training](#)

Health and Safety Issues in the Workplace

Friday, August 12

[Register For This Training](#)

The “Hostile Work Environment”

Friday, August 19

[Register For This Training](#)

Go [here](#) to view the full schedule of summer trainings.

Rights & Democracy Hosting Gubernatorial Candidates Panel On Sunday

When: Sunday, June 12, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Where: St. Paul's United Methodist Church (11 Church St., St Albans, VT)

RSVP [here](#) or on [Facebook](#)

Pose questions to the candidates [here](#)

The Candidates Panel is hosted by Rights & Democracy, a new statewide grassroots organization geared to bring people together to take action to build healthy communities and make the values of our communities guide the policies of our government. R&D works in partnership with community groups, progressive unions, faith communities, organizations fighting for human and civil rights, and environmental and climate action groups. Co-sponsors include Main Street Alliance, Voices for Vermont's Children, and the Vermont Center for Independent Living.

Deadline To Submit Board Of Trustees' District Seat Ballots Is August 1!

Ballots have been mailed to VSEA members eligible to vote for candidates running for one of three VSEA District Board seats:

District 1 - Barre & Central Vermont

District 2 - Waterbury & Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital

District 5 - Rutland & Bennington

The deadline to return your ballot is 4:30 p.m., Monday, August 1, 2016!

Time Is Now To Self-Nominate For Seat On Corrections Bargaining Team

VSEA members working in Corrections should have received a letter in the mail recently, informing you about the self-nominating process for a seat on your Unit's Bargaining Team.

Any Corrections Bargaining Unit VSEA member can self-nominate for a seat, and you can also nominate a Unit co-worker(s)* for a seat. In either case, the nominee must work at the specific facility/office in order to represent the seat.

Your form must be received at VSEA no later than 4:00 p.m. on June 30, 2016. Elections, if necessary, will take place in July 2016. Go [here](#) to find a form.

Submit the form to: VSEA ERN Committee, 155 State Street VT. 05602

If you have questions, please email ERN Chair Rubin Jennings at RJennings@vsea.org or Ray Stout at Rstout@vsea.org.

*To save time, please check with the individual(s) being nominated to ensure their approval.

VSEA History Lesson – 1965

One of the items being prepared for members attending this year's VSEA Annual Meeting in Killington is a reprint of a 1984 document titled "A Brief Chronology of the VSEA 1944 – 1984," which was created in 1984 by the VSEA History Committee. In the coming weeks, *WIA* will be sharing snippets from the book with members.

Here's the entry in the booklet from 1965:

VSEA achieves a "2 pay scale salary increase for all State employees except Department Heads and the Governor and elimination of the Social Security offset provision of the Retirement System with improved "widows benefits" for employees with 22 or more years of State service; the office moves out of State

office space to 79 Main Street in Montpelier; “the full time field man” is hired; formation of the Retirees’ Chapter is planned; and a more efficient procedure will be developed and established whereby the investigation and evaluation of employee grievances will continue to protect the rights of the State employee.”

Deadline To Submit Ballots For Three Board Of Trustees' District Seats Is August 1!

Ballots have been mailed to VSEA members eligible to vote for candidates running for one of three VSEA District Board seats:

District 1 - Barre & Central Vermont

District 2 - Waterbury & Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital

District 5 - Rutland & Bennington

The deadline to return your ballot is 4:30 p.m., Monday, August 1, 2016!

VSEA First Vice President Looking To Fill Vacant Council Seats

VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne asked *WIA* to remind members about several open seats on the VSEA Council.

You can find a self-nominating form by [clicking here](#). (opens/ downloads as a PDF)

With more than 120 VSEA members, the VSEA Council is one of your union's primary governing bodies and its largest and most diverse, with departmental representatives from across state government. The Council meets quarterly and retains a right to override decisions made by the VSEA Board of Trustees.

Questions? Please contact VSEA Administrative Assistant Ayla Hudson at 802-223-5247, or by email at ahudson@vsea.org.

Important Notice! VSEA Union Representative Territories Have Changed!

New Approach To Pair Union Reps With Specific Agencies/Departments

VSEA Organizing Director Vinnie O’Connor and Field Services Director Gretchen Naylor announced last week, via email to all members, that, beginning Monday, May 23, VSEA’s six Union Representatives were reassigned to specific state agencies and departments, as opposed to regions and territories, which has been the practice.

Here is a list of the new Union Representative assignments:

Rachael Fields

Health Access Eligibility Unit

Department of Aging & Independent Living

Department of Health

Department of Mental Health

Department of Vermont Health Access

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital

Vermont Veterans’ Home

Brian Morse

Judiciary Unit
State Colleges' Unit
Supervisory Unit (except AOT)

Mike O'Day

Department of Corrections (North)
Department of Public Safety (North) – Civilian
Military Department
Sworn Law Enforcement (North)
Williston 911 Dispatch

Bob South

Buildings & General Services
Criminal Justice Training Center
Department of Corrections (South)
Department of Liquor Control
Department of Liquor Control Warehouse
Department of Public Safety (South)
Emergency 911 Board
Rockingham 911 Dispatch
Sworn Law Enforcement (South)

Nikolas Stein

Agency of the Administration
Agency of Agriculture
Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Agency of Education
Agency of Human Services (Central)
Agency of Natural Resources
Department for Children & Families
Department of Financial Regulation
Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (Civilian)
Department of Innovation & Information
Department of Labor
Department of Libraries
Department of Taxes
Green Mountain Care Board
Public Service Board
Secretary of State's Office
Treasurer's Office
Vermont Lottery

Dave Van Deusen

Agency of Transportation
Agency of Transportation Supervisors
Department of Motor Vehicles (Except Sworn Law Enforcement)
Office of the Defender General
Vermont State Housing Authority

VSEA Awards & Scholarships Committee Wants YOU!

This week, two VSEA members and one retiree met to review more than 40 applications submitted for one of seven scholarship awards VSEA will be awarding at the June Council meeting. It's a lot of work, and the Committee could use some help, especially from members with an interest in helping your union promote and advance its popular awards and scholarship program.

Some of the Committee's primary duties include:

- Promoting the VSEA Awards and Scholarship programs to the VSEA membership;
- Annually reviewing the criteria for awards and scholarships to work with objective criteria; and
- Recommending ideas for new awards, as appropriate, to the VSEA Board of Trustees.

If you would be interested in joining this Committee, or learning more about it, please contact the Committee's staff liaison Kris Lizzari, who can be reached by email at klizzari@vsea.org, or by phone at 223-5247.

Threatened While On The Job? VSEA Wants To Know.

VSEA President Dave Bellini is asking all state employees who are threatened while performing your job duties to provide an account of the threat not only to your supervisor or the State, but also to VSEA.

"VSEA wants to begin to compile its own record of threats against frontline state employees, no matter your occupation," explains Bellini. "I'm asking all employees who are threatened, especially those working in AHS, to take a few minutes to fill out an online form VSEA made to collect your report. The information will help us provide a firsthand account of the number of threats being made and where they are being made, in addition to some other things."

If you are a state employee who is threatened on the job, please click here to find the online report form, **which will remain confidential**, unless otherwise approved by you.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

June 12

Rights & Democracy Gubernatorial Candidate Forum
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
11 Church Street
St. Albans
2:00 p.m.

June 14

Lamoille Valley Chapter Meeting
State Office Building
AHS Conference Room
63 Professional Dr.
Morrisville
12:00 p.m.