



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ May 29 – June 2, 2017

Your union's weekly newsletter, *Week In Action*, is emailed every Friday afternoon. *Week In Action* is the best way to stay up to date with weekly VSEA news!

➤ Subscribe to *Week In Action* Online: www.vsea.org/wia

VSEA Members Urged To Rally With Teachers On June 7

On Wednesday, June 7, Vermont National Education Association (VTNEA) members and supporters are holding rallies in various locations statewide to urge public support for their right to collectively bargain. Supporters from unions across Vermont will be rallying in solidarity with the teachers.

VSEA is urging members who live or work in any of the following towns to please attend a VTNEA June 7 rally if you are able:

Barre

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Park

Bellows Falls

4:30 p.m.
Arch Bridge
Downtown

Bennington

4:30 p.m.
Four Corners
Main Street

Brattleboro

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Pliny Park
High & Main Streets

Middlebury

5:00 p.m.
Middlebury Green

Montpelier

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Shaw's Intersection
Main Street & River St.

Morrisville

4:30 p.m.
Four Corners

Rutland

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Route 4 & West Street

Shelburne

7:30 p.m.
Shelburne Green

South Burlington

4:30 p.m.
Staples Plaza
861 Williston Road

Waterbury

4:30 p.m.
Waterbury Green

Winooski

4:30 p.m.
The Rotary

Once Again, Senator Pollina Steps Up To Defend Vermont Workers Under Attack

In response to the State's threat to veto the budget because teachers are justifiably refusing to give up their right to collectively bargain their health care benefits, Senator Anthony Pollina (P-Washington) penned an op-ed this week, titled "Eliminating Local Bargaining Is A Big Deal."

Here's a excerpt:

"There is more money for child care, our state colleges and mental health workers; support for small rural towns, commercial loggers and foresters; and a major investment in much-needed affordable housing. And, it got there without raising taxes, just like the [State] asked. It passed the Senate unanimously and in the House got all but one vote.

So why the veto?"

[Read Full Op-Ed](#)

Looking Again To Fill Open Combined Unit Seat On VSEA Board Of Trustees

The VSEA Board of Trustees is once again casting a net to find members interested in filling the body's Combined Unit seat. **This seat is open to VSEA members**

working in the Defender General's Office and at the State Housing Authority.

All full-fledged VSEA members who work for the Defender General's Office and State Housing Authority are eligible and are encouraged to submit a petition.

The process is easy:

[Download and print a petition here](#)

Collect the names and original signatures of 25 full-fledged VSEA members on your petition and submit your completed petition to VSEA by **4:00 p.m., Thursday, June 22.**

National AFL-CIO Releases List Of 13 Ways The Proposed Federal Budget Cuts Would Hurt Workers

The national AFL-CIO this week posted an article to its website that lists the 13 ways the new administration's proposed federal budget cuts would hurt working Americans. They are:

1. Jobs

It will kill nearly 2 million jobs by 2020 through huge budget cuts.

2. Tax Cuts

It will waste trillions of dollars on tax cuts for big corporations and the wealthiest 1% and increase the tax incentive for global corporations to send jobs overseas.

3. Medicaid

It will cause millions of people to lose Medicaid coverage because of its \$1.6 trillion in cuts to the program.

4. Social Security

It will cut Social Security's earned benefits by \$64 billion, and some workers will be hit with an average of \$7,000 in cuts to their initial disability benefits.

5. Medicare

It will cut \$59 billion in Medicare and undermine financing of the Medicare program.

6. Education

It will devastate public schools, eliminate after-school programs and much-needed training for teachers, and make it harder for young people to go to college by cutting student loan funding by \$143 billion over 10 years.

7. Workers' Rights

It will threaten workers' freedoms by decimating the National Labor Relations Board while increasing funding for union audits and undermining workers' pension plans.

8. Safety and Health for Working People

It will eliminate the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's worker safety and health-training program, gut job safety research, wipe out investigations of chemical accident, and weaken OSHA's ability to inspect workplaces, leading to more workers being injured and killed on the job.

9. Training for Working People

It will deny training and employment services for nearly 7.7 million adults, displaced workers, seniors, young people and farm workers.

10. Working Women

It will harm working women, especially working mothers, by cutting funding for Medicaid, food stamps, and child care assistance and eliminating the only federal agency mandated to represent the needs of wage-earning women.

11. Federal Employees

It will cut federal employees' retirement benefits by \$117 billion and cut their pay by 6% by forcing them to pay more toward their retirement.

12. Infrastructure

Despite its proposed \$200 billion infrastructure initiative, it will continue to neglect crumbling infrastructure by cutting \$206 billion in existing federal infrastructure programs, including Amtrak, rail, transit, superfund cleanup, public housing repair, water and other programs.

13. Immigrant Working People

Immigrant workers, who are a positive part of our communities, and unions face attacks because of increases in funding for programs to arrest, detain and deport them.

VSEA Board Endorses Member Participation In 2017 "Vermont LGBTQIA Solidarity March"

At its meeting this morning in Montpelier, the VSEA Board of Trustees voted to endorse VSEA member participation in the 2017 "Vermont LGBTQIA Solidarity March" in Montpelier. The Montpelier march is just one of many being held across the nation on Saturday, June 10, to coincide with a main rally and march in Washington D.C.

Montpelier marchers are meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Department of Labor, located at 5 Green Mountain Drive. The march begins from there at 10:30 a.m., and there is a rally on the State House steps, beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Small Corrections To Supervisory Unit Bargaining Team Contact Info

Earlier this week, the VSEA Supervisory Bargaining Team sent an email to Unit members, soliciting ideas from them to include in upcoming negotiations and listing current contact information for each Team member. The email listing contained a couple of errors, and Supervisory Unit members are urged to amend with the following correct information:

- Change Barbara Zonay's email address to: Barbara.Zonay@vermont.gov; and
- Change Sheila Manchester's phone contact information to: 802-479-1135 (W), 802-249-8877 (H) and 802-223-7404 (C)

Newport Chapter Holding Employee Appreciation Day Event On June 9

The VSEA Newport Chapter is hosting an Employee Appreciation Day event on Friday, June 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Room 250 of the Emory Hebard Building at 100 Main Street in Newport. Stop by during your lunch break for treats and VSEA giveaway items. VSEA staff and member leaders will be on hand to provide Newport Chapter members with updates on the issues and challenges facing state employees and learn more from you about how your service is functioning and what your needs are. Come share your ideas about how to build a stronger VSEA and also hear what your colleagues think. Bring your lunch, your co-workers, and your concerns.

Right-To-Work Is Wronging Workers

The June 1 *Harvard Political Review* includes a story titled "[Right-to-Work is Wronging Workers](#)" that takes a comprehensive look at the adverse impact so-called right-to-work laws are, or will, have on America's workers. The story educates about all that is wrong with legislation introduced at the federal level to make the entire nation right to work. It also warns about the U.S. Supreme Court taking up the issue of agency fee again now that the U.S. Supreme Court is fully constituted. VSEA members will remember that the Court was unable to break a 4-4 tie on a previous agency-fee lawsuit after Justice Scalia passed away unexpectedly.

The story ends ominously with a quote from one of the story's authors, saying, "There needs to be a broad recognition amongst the public of what's at stake. This is not just an attack on unions but an attack on democracy itself."

VSEA Officer Candidate Petitions Due July 11!

The deadline to submit a petition to run for one of four VSEA Officer posts is 4:30

p.m., Tuesday, June 1. Members simply [download a petition](#), collect the required signatures and then submit their petition to VSEA to place their name into nomination for one of the five union officer positions up for election in 2017. The positions are:

President
First Vice President
Second Vice President
Clerk
Treasurer

Note: VSEA candidates for all positions are required to submit a petition bearing no fewer than 25 VSEA members' names, signatures and employee number.

Register Today For A Future VSEA "Steward Summit"

In an effort to better educate frontline worksite Stewards about their role in VSEA, as well as provide them with enhancements to their existing skill set, VSEA's Field Department is hosting a series of "Steward Summits" across Vermont this year.

VSEA Stewards are learning the latest developments relating to contract enforcement and receiving an overview of the budget, safety and health and other challenges that lie ahead for state employees. Stewards attending are being asked to immediately help out by taking some of what they learn back to the worksite to educate their colleagues.

Three, six-hour trainings remain, and every current VSEA Steward is required to attend one session.

Future Steward Summits (all 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) are scheduled for:

August 18 – Best Western, 45 Blush Hill Road, Waterbury

October 20 – Hotel Coolidge, 39 South Main St., White River Junction

November 3 – Holiday Inn, 476 Holiday Drive, Rutland

[Click Here To Register For Steward Summit](#)

If Searching For Child Care, Don't Forget This Important Resource For State Employees

Longtime VSEA member, now retiree, Dave Clark has served on VSEA's Child and Elder Care Committee for many years, and he recently asked *WIA* to remind state employees about an important child-care resource that is currently available to them.

"The Committee has noticed a recent decline in employees' usage of the valuable child-care resources available to them, so we asked *WIA* to help us remind VSEA members about what is available," explains Clark.

VSEA members can click [here](#) to learn more about the Committee's "Child-Care Referral Service" and other child-care resources for state employees, including possible child-care reimbursement to qualifying employees.

Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank Teetering On Bankruptcy! VSEA Members Urged To Contribute

Donations Being Accepted April 1 To June 30

VSEA member Dawn Carrillo staffs the Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank, and she is again asking *WIA* to sound the alarm that the bank is nearly depleted of hours. She is also announcing that NMU members can donate a few hours to your Unit's sick leave bank from **April 1 to June 30, 2017**.

"Just donating an hour of your time can mean the world to a fellow employee," reads a new flyer DHR is circulating. It also informs state employees that they can **donate any amount of annual- or personal-leave time** to the NMU Sick Leave Bank. "Know that you are performing a wonderful service by helping your friends and fellow employees, who, along with their families, are struggling due to serious health issues," the flyer concludes.

[VSEA members interested in donating some much-needed time to the NMU, Corrections and Supervisory Sick Leave Banks can find a donation form here.](#)

"I want to thank every member for considering a donation to your Unit sick leave bank," says VSEA President Dave Bellini. "Even if you only donate one hour to the bank, these one-hour donations add up. It's so worthwhile because your donation is going to help a fellow state employee who is battling a serious illness."

Reminder: VSEA Membership Recruitment Committee Sponsoring 2017 Recruitment Drive. Prizes Being Awarded!

Last fall, VSEA's Membership Recruitment Committee launched a "Membership Engagement and Recruitment Initiative" to grow the union's ranks. The Committee asked members to talk with current agency-fee payers about the benefits of full-fledged membership and why the member should make the switch. If the member decides to upgrade their membership, the recruiting member will have the satisfaction of knowing they helped their union become stronger, but, in addition, the Membership Recruitment Committee will be awarding different levels of prizes to members, based on the number of new VSEA members recruited.

Here are the guidelines to participate and be eligible for a prize:

- Whether submitting your recruited member(s) name(s) on a physical recruitment card or online, **you must include your name as the recruiter**;
- Every member who recruits a new member will have his or her name entered into a drawing for the Grand Prize. The winner's name will be drawn at VSEA's Annual Meeting in September 2017, and the winner must be present to claim the prize;

- Team entries are being accepted. Please register with Membership Recruitment Committee Chair Katelyn Chase by emailing her at kchase@vsea.org.
- Members who recruit a new member, who then agrees to join your union's political awareness committee (VTPAC) will receive an additional chance to win the Grand Prize, and
- The cut-off date for this competition is **August 30, 2017**.

Here are the different prize levels:

75 prizes awarded - \$10 gift card and a VSEA water bottle

40 prizes awarded - \$25 gift card and a VSEA hat

15 prizes awarded - \$50 gift card and a VSEA tote bag|

8 prizes awarded - \$100 and a VSEA vest

1 Grand Prize - \$1200

Note: WIA is periodically reminding members about this effort until its culmination in August 2017.

VSEA Organizer's Upcoming Worksite Meetings

VSEA Organizers are conducting informational meetings in set workplaces on set days in four locations. They say the purpose of the meetings is to provide members with an opportunity to "join with their colleagues and VSEA staff for updates and discussion on the issues and challenges facing state employees and the impact on your working conditions and the services they provide." They add that members are welcome to "come share their ideas and hear from co-workers on how to build a stronger union and improve public services."

Snacks and refreshments are provided.

Brattleboro

Room 148
State Office Building
232 Main Street

June 9

White River Junction

Room 170
State Office Building
118 Prospect Street

June 20

Springfield,

First Floor Conference Room
State Office Building
100 Mineral Street

June 21

Lamoille (Morrisville)

AHS Conference Room
State Office Building
63 Professional Dr.

June 15

Subscribe To VSEA Today!

VSEA's Communications Department is happy to disseminate any and all communications the leadership, Chapters, Units, and others request, however, the lists the Department currently pull from are provided to the union by the State of Vermont. VSEA's Communications Department has found the lists to be dated, incomplete and sometimes lacking key information that was entered by a VSEA staff person but later overwritten or deleted during a State data dump.

To help VSEA more effectively reach active members—and really all those members who want to know what's going on in their union—VSEA will be working hard in the coming months to collect members' emails on its own and begin to build contact lists that cannot be altered by a State download.

You can help us get started by visiting, VSEA.org/subscribe and signing up for the VSEA communications you are interested in receiving.

Thank you in advance for subscribing. Please urge your colleagues to do the same.

Quote Of The Week!

"So, obviously, that would have a huge impact if you didn't have someone facilitating that and you don't have your child with you. It's a real consequence for real people."

[Alaskan state worker Alicia Hughes-Skandjjs, telling KTVA](#) the impact a July 1 government shutdown would have on her clients, who are mainly parents seeking to reunite with their child. Lawmakers are locked in a budget stalemate, so the State of Alaska began sending 18,000 layoff notices to workers this week.

Important! VSEA Moving To Electronic Balloting

When VSEA conducts its next membership vote; all members will be able to vote electronically for the first time in your union's history. **Members can still receive a ballot by U.S. Mail, but you will need to let VSEA know that this is your preference as soon as possible!** Failure to inform VSEA that you would prefer your ballot via the U.S. Mail could result in you not being able to cast a vote on important decisions that impact the VSEA membership at large.

If you want to continue to cast your vote via U.S. Mail, please send an email to vsea@vsea.org or letter to VSEA headquarters, attention "My Voting Preference",

155 State Street, Montpelier, 05602.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important notice.

What's VSEA Done For Vermont State Employees? See For Yourself

A lot has happened since the VSEA was officially recognized in 1944 as the voice for Vermont's state employee workforce, and VSEA's Communications Department has now compiled many of your union's notable victories and achievements in a new online chronological history of the VSEA.

"Thankfully, VSEA formed a special committee in the mid-eighties to put together a historical synopsis of what had happened within the union from 1944 to then, and it was a great piece for us to build from," explains VSEA Communications Director Doug Gibson. "This up-to-date history will hopefully help educate more VSEA members about the fights and campaigns of past state employees, reminding them how long it actually took for workers to get to where they are today, in terms of wages, benefits and working conditions. We hope it will be a good resource and tool for members."

View VSEA's new online history timeline at VSEA.org

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 9

Newport Chapter Employee Appreciation Day Event

Hebard State Office Building

100 Main St.

Room 250

Newport

11:30 a.m.

June 9

Organizer's Monthly Meeting - Brattleboro
State Office Building
232 Main St.
Room 148
Brattleboro
12:00 p.m.

June 10

LGBTQIA Solidarity March
Department of Labor Parking Lot
5 Green Mountain Drive
Montpelier
10:00 a.m. – Congregate
10:30 a.m. – March