



## Mid-WEEK IN ACTION!

November 20 – November 25, 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](http://www.vsea.org/wia)

### Happy Thanksgiving VSEA!

VSEA President Dave Bellini and the Board of Trustees want to wish every VSEA member and your family a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

Thanks to the efforts of generations of VSEA members—and the efforts of today's VSEA leaders and activists—here are just a few of the workplace and livelihood victories Vermont state employees can be thankful for this Thanksgiving:

- Fair wages;
- Health Care;
- Comprehensive Dental Care;
- Retirement Security;
- A Grievance Procedure To Resolve Workplace Disputes;
- Safe & Healthy Worksites;
- Layoff (RIF) Rights;
- Paid Leave; and
- Paid Holidays (like Thanksgiving).

### Lawmakers' Survey Looks For Vermonters' Input On State Budget

With Vermont lawmakers returning to the State House in January, having to address yet another new multi-million-dollar budget deficit, a survey has posted online where Vermonters can share their thoughts with lawmakers about Vermont's current budgeting process, the services important to you and how Vermont taxpayer dollars should be allocated.

VSEA is urging every state employee to log on and take this important survey because no voices are more important in this upcoming budget debate than those of the frontline state workers who provide many of the services that are sure to be scrutinized when push comes to shove at the State House.

[Take Budget Survey Here!](#)

*Note: One lawmaker is already apologizing to his constituents for the survey's failure to include services for aging Vermonters.*

## **Reminder: VSEA Negotiations Are (Again) Headed To Fact Finding**

*WIA is re-running the following bargaining update by VSEA Labor Relations Director Gary Hoadley, which first published last week:*

"Once again, the VSEA must present its case before a neutral, third party fact finder to seek fair, reasonable contracts for the Non-Management, Corrections, and Supervisory Units; contracts that will become effective on July 1, 2018.

The State of Vermont and VSEA have been engaged in negotiations since early August for successor collective bargaining agreements and after several months of direct negotiations with the Administration, bargaining impasse was declared. The Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) appointed a federal mediator and the VSEA Bargaining Teams participated in mediation but were unable to reach a tentative settlement with the State and the parties remain at impasse.

The State Employees Labor Relations Act (SELRA) provides for dispute resolution processes of mediation, fact finding, and selection of last best offers by the VLRB to resolve negotiation impasses. The VLRB recently appointed Richard Boulanger, Esq. to serve as the neutral, third party fact finder. Mr. Boulanger will conduct fact-finding hearings on December 15, 2017, and December 18, 2017, to hear testimony and review evidence relevant to the issues remaining in dispute. The State and VSEA will then receive a fact-finding report from Mr. Boulanger with written findings and recommendations.

You may recall that in early 2016, WIA reported on fact-finding hearings in the previous round of bargaining, when the Shumlin Administration showed little interest in reaching a fair, negotiated settlement. At that time, the State rebuffed the recommendations of the fact finder and VSEA was forced to take its case to last best offer at the VLRB for a binding decision. **VSEA encourages Non-Management, Corrections, and Supervisory Unit employees to stay informed about the issues and [contact Your Bargaining Team members](#) for specific details or with your questions."**

## **Brattleboro Chapter Will Meet On November 29**

VSEA's Brattleboro Chapter will meet next on Wednesday, November 29, beginning at 12:00 p.m. at the State Office Building's First-Floor Conference Room in Brattleboro. Food and beverages are being provided.

To RSVP, or ask a question in advance, please contact Brattleboro Chapter President Robin Rieske via email: [robin.rieske@vermont.gov](mailto:robin.rieske@vermont.gov).

Meet VSEA's new Organizer, Carmen Scoles, and hear about a piece of legislation being advanced this session by VSEA's Parole and Probation members.

## **Next Waterbury Chapter Meeting Is November 30**

VSEA's Waterbury Chapter will meet next on Thursday, November 30, beginning at 12:00 p.m. in the Waterbury State Office Complex's Ash Conference Room. Pizza and beverages are being provided.

If you have any questions in advance, please feel free to contact Waterbury Chapter President John Mangione via email: [mangione@comcast.net](mailto:mangione@comcast.net).

***Note: The Chapter will be raffling off a gas card to some lucky Waterbury Chapter member attending the November 30 meeting!***

## **Next Franklin / Grand Isle Chapter Meeting Is December 5**

VSEA's Franklin / Grand Isle Chapter will meet next on Tuesday, December 5, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at Mimmo's Restaurant in St. Albans. Food and beverages are being provided.

If you have any questions in advance, please feel free to contact Franklin / Grand Isle Chapter President Janine Cary via email: [janine.cary@vermont.gov](mailto:janine.cary@vermont.gov).

***Note: The Chapter is requesting that members attending please bring a non-perishable food item(s) to donate to the area food shelf.***

## **VSEA Probation & Parole Members Need Your Help!**

*Note: The following message was submitted to WIA for publication by VSEA's Probation and Parole members:*

"Your fellow VSEA members working in Probation and Parole (P&P) need your help!

Every day, P&P members are out in communities across Vermont, working to rehabilitate criminal offenders. Much of a P&P worker's job is performed in an offender's home or somewhere right in the community, and we want you to know that our jobs are becoming more and more dangerous. According to the latest FBI crime data, violent crime in Vermont recently spiked by 15%, and this statistic isn't lost on P&P officers, especially since more and more of us are finding ourselves in situations that are increasingly threatening, dangerous and unpredictable.

It's for this reason that VSEA's P&P members are collectively lobbying Vermont officials and lawmakers to allow us to join the 34 other states that already allow P&P Officers to be trained to carry defensive weapons on the job. We've made tremendous progress so far, and we're happy to report that our bill to allow this important change has already been supported by 30 lawmakers on both sides of the aisle at the State House.

We feel like we're in the homestretch now, which is why VSEA's P&P members need every member to join with us in solidarity to get this important language passed and implemented.

**What can you do to help? Please take 30 seconds right now to sign our digital "support card," which you can [link to here](#). Your signature and support will help ensure that VSEA's P&P members have the tools we need to be safe on the job. Thanks in advance for your help!"**

## **Have You Voted Yet In VSEA Treasurer Election? Online Ballot Link Was Emailed To Members On November 14!**

VSEA's Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee sent eligible members a link to their official online VSEA Treasurer-election ballot on November 14. If you requested a paper ballot, it was mailed to you last week.

**Very important!** Your electronic ballot was sent to the primary email address that VSEA currently has on file for you. **If you did not receive an email from [vote@simplyvoting.com](mailto:vote@simplyvoting.com) in your inbox on November 14, please look in your "Other" or "Spam" folders before contacting headquarters to request that your ballot be reissued.**

Role of the Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall oversee the receipt and disbursement of all funds of the VSEA and its various sub-entities. S/he shall keep or cause to be kept a true record of all receipts and disbursements. S/he shall disburse funds only when directed to do so by the Board of Trustees and then only when the disbursement is approved by the President or by the President's authorized representative; provided however, that s/he shall reimburse any member of VSEA for necessary expenses in connection with the performance of his/her duties when so authorized by the Board of Trustees or the President.

The Treasurer shall keep all corporate funds in accounts under the name of the Corporation and shall submit all books and accounts to the auditor within thirty (30) calendar days following the close of the fiscal year or any other time when so directed by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall furnish a bond in such amount as the Board of Trustees may require, the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

In the absence of the President, the First Vice-President, and the Second Vice-President, the Treasurer shall preside at Council Meeting.

Below is a full list of candidates for this office:

### **Candidates for VSEA Treasurer:**

(Click a candidates name to read their candidate statement, *opens a PDF*)

[Jacklyn "Jackie" Hickerson, Tax Department](#)

[Robert "Bob" Stone, Department of Public Safety](#)

[Michele Webster, Department for Children and Families](#)

**Just 11 Seats Remain For VSEA Boston Bruins Bus Trip!**

*VSEA's Membership Recruitment Committee had a great response to this week's email solicitation for an upcoming Bruins' bus trip, and they want VSEA members to know that **just 10 tickets now remain** for:*

Boston Bruins vs. Toronto Maple Leafs  
Saturday, February 3, 2018  
7:00 p.m.  
TD Garden ([Section: Balcony 321](#))  
Boston

Based on the popularity of the first few member bus trips sponsored by VSEA, your union's Membership Recruitment Committee (a small group of rank-and-file state employees who coordinate and host VSEA's outings) recently polled members to find out what kinds of bus trips members want the Committee to pursue in the future. Coming up number one was a trip to Boston for a Bruins game, so the Committee has scheduled this trip.

\$170 Per Person - Includes a bus ride to and from the park, as well as a ticket to the game.

To reserve a seat(s) on the bus, contact VSEA Union Representative Bob South. You can reach Bob by email at [bsouth@vsea.org](mailto:bsouth@vsea.org) or by phone at 223-5247.

*Important! VSEA will be taking the names down of those interested, as members contact VSEA, but you will not be officially on the bus until full payment is received at headquarters. Please make checks payable to VSEA.*

## **This Thanksgiving, Please Consider Giving Some Time To The Non-Management Unit's Sick Leave Bank!**

### ***Donations Being Accepted October 1 To December 31***

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 really needs your donated hours. NMU members can donate a few hours to your Unit's sick leave bank from **now until December 31, 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."

## **Illinois DCF Workers Fear For Safety**

While Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) employees continue to work with management and the State to address well-documented, on-the-job personal and child safety issues, their counterparts in Illinois are just now starting to call for action after a DCF Investigator was left in a coma after being severely beaten in late September by a boy's mother. [The Chicago Tribune published a story on the assault on November 20](#), and, according to research the paper conducted for the story, "At least a dozen [IL DCF] workers have been attacked or seriously threatened as they entered homes to protect children or investigate mistreatment allegations since 2013." The IL DCF workers are represented by AFSCME, and the union will be introducing legislative proposals this session to address the workers' safety concerns.

From the *Tribune* story:

"A bill introduced earlier this month by state Rep. Brian Stewart, R-Freeport, would give DCFS workers the same protections as police officers, firemen and peace officers by making it a Class 1 felony to batter a DCFS worker performing his or her official duties. Perpetrators would face more severe penalties upon sentencing.

A dozen central Illinois lawmakers, 11 Republicans and 1 Democrat, have signed as co-sponsors.

"It's unfortunate an act of violence was inflicted on a DCFS worker in order for legislation to be proposed," said co-sponsor state Rep. Tony McCombie, R-Savanna. "This bill will give DCFS workers the additional legal protections they deserve."

## **Actors Depicting Pilgrims At Plimoth Plantation Using Thanksgiving Holiday To Inform Public About Contract Fight**

*The National Post* reports on November 21 (<http://bit.ly/2zo1vCI>) that workers who depict pilgrims at Plimoth Plantation in Massachusetts will be using the Thanksgiving holiday to educate the public about their contract fight with their employer. The workers organized a year ago and have been fighting for a fair, first contract ever since.

*Note: Maybe management believes it's still 1620?*

## **UPS Aircraft Mechanics Threaten Holiday-Season Strike**

A strong possibility exists that there could be a delay in how quickly Americans receive their online purchases this holiday season.

[Business Insider posted a story this morning](#) about United Parcel Service (UPS) aircraft mechanics, who are represented by the Teamsters, threatening to strike over management's proposed cuts to their health care benefits. The workers placed ads this week in *USA Today* and the *Seattle Times* that read, in part:

"What every American should know before they ship with UPS during the holidays: UPS wants to make deep cuts to its aircraft mechanics' health care benefits. That's why the 1,300 aircraft mechanics who keep UPS planes running during the holiday season are ready to strike."

One key point the story reports is, "UPS and the union have been in mediated contract negotiations over the changes. The union, which has voted to authorize a strike, recently filed a request with the Federal National Mediation Board asking to be released from the negotiations. The workers cannot go on strike unless the board releases them from negotiations."

UPS spokespersons say they are confident a settlement can be reached.

## **Union Rep Holding Vet's Home Meetings**

VSEA Union Representative Rachael Fields has scheduled a series of meetings to talk with Vet's Home employees about their issues and concerns.

If you work at the Vet's Home, please mark one of these dates and times down to stop by and talk with Rachael:

November 29 (Crispe Room)

December 27 (Crispe Room)

Available Times: 6:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

## **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.

## **Quote Of The Week!**

*"A part of me thinks I want to start my career feeling good about being a teacher, and being respected, and having the benefits that a union can give me. But if the students from the state's top teaching school don't even want to teach in their own home state, I don't think that's a very good sign."*

Wisconsin Teacher Britta Pigorsch, [commenting to CNN](#) about how bad things have become for teachers in the state after Gov. Scott Walker led the effort to pass Act



10 in 2011. The Act gutted teachers' and state workers' collective bargaining rights, while also cutting their benefits.

## **Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:**

### **November 23**

Thanksgiving Day 2018

Most State Offices & VSEA Closed

### **November 24**

Day-After-Thanksgiving Holiday

Most State Offices & VSEA Closed

### **November 27**

NMU Bargaining Team Meeting

VTrans Training Center

1716 U.S. Route 302

Berlin

8:00 a.m.

### **November 29**

Special Events Committee Meeting

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

9:00 a.m.

### **November 29**

Brattleboro Chapter Meeting

State Office Building

First-Floor Conference Room

Brattleboro

12:00 p.m.

### **November 29**

Meet w/ Your Union Representative

Vermont Veterans' Home

Crispe Room

Bennington

See *WIA* Story For Times

### **November 30**

Corrections Unit Bargaining Team Meeting

VTrans Training Center

1716 U.S. Route 302

Berlin

8:00 a.m.



**November 30**

Supervisory Unit Bargaining Team Meeting  
VTrans Training Center  
1716 U.S. Route 302  
Berlin  
8:00 a.m.

**November 30**

Waterbury Chapter Meeting  
State Office Building  
Ash Conference Room  
Waterbury  
12:00 p.m.