



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ April 16 – April 20, 2018

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!

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VSEA Files Unfair Labor Practice, Alleging State Bargained in Bad Faith With Three Executive Branch Units

VSEA filed an unfair labor practice Thursday morning with the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB), calling out the State of Vermont for bargaining in bad faith with VSEA's Non-Management, Corrections and Supervisory Units.

The charge sets forth a pattern of the State merely going through the motions, engaging in surface bargaining by making predictably unacceptable bargaining proposals, violating ground rules, insisting on waivers of bargaining rights, and other improper conduct—all with the intent to avoid a negotiated agreement so the contract could be decided by the VLRB at the Last Best Offer stage of the impasse proceedings.

In addition, the State used the appointment of a new Board member to gain an unfair strategic advantage during the final stages, withholding information about the appointment and then successfully maneuvering to seat the new appointee the day before the hearing.

VSEA is requesting the Board find that the State of Vermont has committed and continues to commit unfair labor practices in violation of 3 V.S.A. §§961(1) and (6); order it to negotiate in good faith until the parties reach agreement or a valid impasse; and further order the State to refrain from implementing the terms of the Last Best Offer adopted by the Board on March 30, 2018.

[Read VSEA ULP Here](#)

This legal process may take several months. **The VSEA legal team is continuing to review other additional legal measures.**

Committee Confirmation Hearing Next Week??

[VTDigger published a story on April 19](#) about VSEA's unfair labor practice charge against the State for "bad-faith bargaining." In the piece, the chair of the Senate Economic Development Committee says a hearing in his committee on the O'Neill confirmation could happen as soon as early next week. Once a hearing date in the Senate Economic Development Committee is announced, VSEA will be sending out an alert(s) and will be posting updates to its Facebook and web pages. Members and retirees will be welcome to attend the hearing.

The Committee's vote will serve as a recommendation to the full Senate, which will then vote as a body on Ms. O'Neill. VSEA will be requesting a voice vote to record each Senator's vote.

VSEA Judiciary Unit Reaches Tentative Two-Year Agreement With Courts

At the end of a long but productive Tuesday, VSEA's Judiciary Unit Bargaining Team and the Court Administrator tentatively agreed to a new, two-year contract that will mirror the wage and benefit package just imposed on the VSEA Executive Branch Bargaining Teams.

The Team did achieve some impressive gains at the table, including:

- First-time hourly pay of 60 cents for "Relief from Abuse" stand-by assignments, starting in year two; and
- Improvements to overtime and to the Unit's designated education and development fund.

Unit and Team Chair Margaret Crowley is thanking the Team and all Judiciary Unit members for their solidarity throughout a months-long, tough process.

The Judiciary Bargaining Team sent a comprehensive overview of the tentative agreement this morning to Unit members.

Judiciary Unit members will vote soon on the tentative agreement.

Deadline Fast Approaching To Apply For A 2018 VSEA Scholarship!

The deadline to apply for a 2018 VSEA Scholarship is Tuesday, May 8, and VSEA members and their spouses, dependents and domestic partners are welcome to submit an application.

[A downloadable 2018 scholarship application is now online.](#) VSEA students seeking financial assistance this year in the pursuit of your post-secondary educational goals are especially urged to apply.

Scholarship winners will be announced at the June 2018 VSEA Council meeting.

VSEA Campaign To Stop O'Neill Confirmation Continues

VSEA is thanking members, retirees and supporters for your collective outreach this week to Vermont Senators to voice your opposition to the confirmation of retired corporate attorney Karen O'Neill to the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB).

On Wednesday, members of the VSEA Legislative Committee were at the State House to personally lobby senators to vote "no" on the O'Neill confirmation. They were also distributing flyers with details about Ms. O'Neill's work history and the flawed VLRB process, working to educate lawmakers who are still acquainting themselves with all that happened here. At noon, the legislature's "Workers' Caucus" met, and VSEA Legislative Committee members were in the room to lobby

against O'Neill's confirmation and to request lawmakers' support. The Committee obliged by promising to draft a letter to the full Senate, registering its objection to Ms. O'Neill being confirmed. WIA will share the letter with members and retirees, once VSEA receives a copy.

VSEA is aware that some Senators are replying to members and retirees that even if the body votes "no" on O'Neill's confirmation, the State can just reappoint. VSEA's legal team is reviewing existing case law involving Vermont's appointment process, but the truth is there is not much to draw from, in terms of confirmations being rejected. There is, however, a particular sentence in statute that stipulates confirmations be done "with the advice and consent of the Senate." This could set up a potential for the Senate to say "no," and then have the State thumb its nose at its "advice and consent" and do it anyway. More to come on this in future WIAs.

For now, keep the "Stop the O'Neill Confirmation" calls, emails and personal messages to your Senator(s) coming.

[Find Your Vermont Senator\(s\) Here](#) on VSEA.org

Vermont NEA Stands In Solidarity With VSEA Members To Stop O'Neill Confirmation

In an email message to its membership this week, the Vermont National Education Association included the following:

We Stand With VSEA In Opposition to Scott Nominee for Labor Board

[The State]'s nominee to be the neutral on the Vermont Labor Relations Board is anything but: Karen O'Neill's background is as a corporate attorney. She has not been confirmed by the Senate yet, but, under Vermont law, she was able to take part in the recent VLRB decision that went against our sisters and brothers at the Vermont State Employees Association. We urge, along with VSEA members, that the senate reject her confirmation because she is clearly not a "neutral." Indeed, she has been a shareholder in Gravel & Shea, a management law firm that boasts: "In both the public and private sectors, we have successfully defeated union organizing drives." Let's help VSEA block this terrible nominee. Let your senators know that you want them to vote "NO" when it comes to O'Neill's confirmation. You can leave a message for your senators by dialing the Statehouse at 802-828-2228. You can find out direct contact [information for your senators here](#). [And read more from VSEA right here](#).

Labor Relations Director Emailing Contract Summary To NMU, Corrections & Supervisory Unit Members' Home Emails

Later this afternoon, VSEA Labor Relations Director Gary Hoadley is emailing his comprehensive summary of the contract recently imposed on VSEA members belonging to the Non-Management, Corrections and Supervisory Bargaining Units. Hoadley's email is being sent to members' home email addresses, but it can also be found on VSEA's website by visiting vsea.org

Revised Steward Training Dates Announced

VSEA Field Services Director Gretchen Naylor asked WIA to announce a revised series of Steward training dates in the coming months. The dates are:

- April 27: Diversity Training, VSEA HQ, Montpelier;
- May 9: (originally scheduled for December 7), Location TBD
- June 8: Holiday Inn, Rutland; and
- September 18: VSEA HQ, Montpelier.

Trainings begin at 8:30 a.m.

Next VPCH Chapter Meeting Is April 23

The VSEA Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Chapter is holding its next meeting on Monday, April 23, beginning at 1:30 p.m. in VPCH's Special Events Room, located in Berlin. One primary discussion will be about the recent VLRB decision, how it came about and what the ramifications are.

Please direct any questions or comments to VSEA VPCH Chapter President Jason Rushlow, via email at jason.rushlow@vermont.gov.

Organizer's Worksite Meeting On April 24 In Montpelier

VSEA Organizer Carmen Scoles is holding a meeting on April 24 with VSEA members working in Montpelier. The meeting begins at 12:00 p.m. in the large fourth floor conference room, located at the National Life Building in Montpelier. There will be pizza for members attending. A contract update will be provided, and there will be a discussion about the Janus lawsuit's progress to date.

Members with questions can contact Carmen by email (cscoles@vsea.org) or by phone at 802-223-5247.

Next Bennington Chapter Meeting Is April 24

The VSEA Bennington Chapter is holding its next meeting on Tuesday, April 24, beginning at 5:15 p.m. in the Back Room of Catamount Glass' Tap House, located at 309 County Street in Bennington. Limited light appetizers and cash bar. Chapter President Victoria Thorpe is fired up and hopes you are too!

Please direct any questions or comments to Victoria, via email at vthorpevsea@gmail.com.

Organizer's Worksite Meeting On April 25 In Middlesex

VSEA Organizer David Oppenheimer is holding a meeting on April 25 with VSEA members working in Middlesex. The meeting begins at 12:00 p.m. at the BGS Print Shop Building, located at 1078 U.S. Route 2 in Middlesex. There will be pizza for members attending. A contract update will be provided, and there will be a discussion about the Janus lawsuit's progress to date.

Members with questions can contact David by email (doppenheimer@vsea.org) or by phone at 802-223-5247.

Organizer's Worksite Meeting On April 26 In Barre

VSEA Organizer Carmen Scoles is holding a meeting on April 26 with VSEA members working in Barre. The meeting begins at 12:00 p.m. in the City Place Building's Conference Room 304, located at 219 North Main Street in Barre. There will be pizza for members attending. A contract update will be provided, and there will be a discussion about the Janus lawsuit's progress to date.

Members with questions can contact Carmen by email (cscoles@vsea.org) or by phone at 802-223-5247.

Now Is The Time To Enroll In VSEA's Popular Delta Dental Supplemental Plan Benefit

VSEA members should have received a letter by now, announcing a new, open-enrollment period to participate in your union's very popular Delta Dental Supplemental Plan. 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 a May 2018 date to be announced.

*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.*

VSEA Co-Sponsoring May Day Rally

VSEA members and retirees certainly have a lot to get off their chests these days, so why not join other Vermont workers on May 1 at the State House in Montpelier to raise awareness about state employee issues and fights and to support other groups of Vermont workers in their fights.

VSEA is reimbursing members for your mileage to come to the rally but carpooling is being highly encouraged. VSEA members are invited to stop by headquarters, prior to the rally, to make a sign(s) and to park (if room).

Help Spread The Word!

[Information Flyer \(PDF\)](#)

[Poster \(PDF\)](#)

It's Time! Please Donate Today To Your Unit Sick Leave Bank

Donations Being Accepted April 1 To June 30

VSEA member Dawn Carrillo staffs the Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank, and she is once again asking *WIA* to help her solicit time donations to the bank from VSEA members. Carrillo is also announcing that the donation period is April 1 to June 30, 2018, and she reminds that **donations to the Corrections and Supervisory Unit Banks are also needed.**

"Just donating an hour of your time can mean the world to a fellow employee," reads a DHR flyer. It also informs state employees that they can **donate any amount of annual- or personal-leave time** to their respective Unit 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."

VSEA Urges State Employees Who Are Threatened On The Job To File Form (Even If Online Form Navigation Is Tricky)

After leading a successful training this week for VSEA stewards, VSEA Field Services Director Gretchen Naylor asked *WIA* to remind all VSEA members that **there is an online form to fill out if you are threatened while at work.** Naylor said promoting the form and its link is something several stewards said would be useful.

[Find The State's "eAlert" Homepage Here](#)

Important: Once you land on the eAlert page, you will see an entry labeled "threat" in the menu provided. Click on it and you land on a page with written instructions, but the form's actual entry fields are located in a menu in the page's left-hand column.

In November 2017, the current Secretary of the Administration sent the [State's "Workplace Safety and Security" policy](#) to state employees and VSEA members are encouraged to read through the different policies, examples and responses, prior to an actual event occurring. Oddly, the policy does not include a reference to the State's eAlert online reporting function.

Facebook Group Pages

Responding to VSEA members' requests for new ways to engage with their fellow union members and state employees, VSEA recently created two new Facebook group pages, one for Council members and another for Stewards. The pages are being administered by VSEA, and in order to keep out trolls or non-members, the name of anyone seeking to join one or both of the groups will be checked through VSEA's membership database.

Hopefully, these pages will provide VSEA Council members and Stewards with a place to ask questions, provide information and post articles of interest to the group. In addition, Council members and Stewards can now engage with their counterparts statewide on a daily basis.

[Join VSEA Council Facebook Group](#)

[Join VSEA Steward Facebook Group](#)

VSEA Members Eligible For 2018 Vermont State Colleges Staff Federation Scholarships

If you are a VSEA member—or a member’s spouse, dependent or domestic partner—you are eligible to receive a 2018 Vermont State Colleges Staff Federation (VSCSF) scholarship award!

The fund is intended help VSEA members and their spouses, dependents or domestic partners who are seeking financial assistance to pursue post-secondary educational goals at one of the following:

- **Castleton University;**
- **Lyndon State College;**
- **Johnson State College (soon to be Northern VT University) or**
- **Vermont Technical College.**

The Scholarship Committee will base its decision for the scholarship eligibility on the following criteria:

- Career goals;
- Financial need;
- Abilities and initiative;
- Life experiences; and
- College attending

The scholarship application must be completed in full and one \$500 scholarship will be awarded. The deadline to apply is May 31, 2018.

[Application Here!](#)

VSCSF scholarship applications and essays should be sent to:

Samuel Read Hall Library
c/o Monique Prive
P.O. Box 919
Lyndonville, VT 05851-0919

If you have any questions, please contact Scholarship Committee Chair Denise Doyon by phone at 802-626-6350 or by e-mail at <mailto:denise.doyon@northernvermont.edu>.

Note: VSCSF scholarships are not to be confused with VSEA’s annual scholarships, also being offered right now [here](#)! Eligibility does not require attendance at one of the VSCSF’s four designated colleges or universities.

VSEA Legislative Team Publishing Weekly Updates

VSEA’s legislative team at the State House is now publishing a short, information-packed, weekly recap of what’s happening in Montpelier that VSEA members need to know about.

This edition’s topics include: State’s private-prison proposal, overview of anti-privatization legislation, outcomes of the recent Budget Adjustment Act and a

piece on the success of the Legislative Committee's recent dinner receptions with lawmakers.

You can find the first 2018 update and all future and past legislative updates at your convenience on VSEA.org. Just [log into your account](#), navigate to "[Forms, Documents & Downloads](#)" in the left-side menu, then select "VSEA Legislative Team Weekly Reports" from the menu. If you are already logged in, [you can follow this link to the 2018 report archive](#).

Need a VSEA.org account?

[Sign up for a free account here.](#)

Union Trying To Organize Campaigns Of Democratic Candidates Meeting Resistance

NBC posted a story on April 15, titled, "[Democrats Love Unions, Just Not For Their Own Campaign Workers](#)" that's about a newly formed union called the Campaign Workers' Guild that is actively trying to organize workers on Democrat's campaigns, but...

From the story:

"The Democratic Party is a champion of labor rights, except where its own laborers are concerned," reads the sign-on letter for the Campaign Workers Guild. "We sacrifice our health, financial security, and leisure time to support candidates and movements that we hope will make our society more prosperous, equitable, and inclusive. It's time for our employers to live up to the values they publicly espouse."

The CWG, which launched in February independently of any larger union, has so far organized 12 campaigns and progressive entities, with the ultimate goal of having a Democratic Party-wide collective bargaining agreement, as well as one for Republicans.

While the CWG declined to say how many campaigns they've tried to unionize or discuss ongoing efforts, they acknowledged encountering resistance from progressive candidates and organizations.

Note: Certainly, Vermont Democratic candidates will be on board, especially Senator Sanders, right?

Illinois Lawmakers Consider Legislation To Better Protect Frontline DCF Workers--And Others

VSEA members have not forgotten that improvements still need to be made right here in Vermont to bolster safety for frontline state employees at the workplace and in the field.

Illinois state employees are also actively lobbying for enhanced safety measures after a DCF employee was beaten to death last fall by a client. State lawmakers aren't wasting any time responding.

From an [April 18 Herald Whig \(IL\) story](#):

Sen. Michael Hastings, a Tinley Park Democrat, wants attention paid to violence against other state workers.

His legislation, which moved to the Senate floor after committee approval Tuesday, would require DCFS and the Departments of Corrections, Human Services and Juvenile Justice to record and issue quarterly reports of violent incidents against state workers so officials may review the data for scope and trends. It has the backing of the state's largest public sector union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Note: The quarterly reports idea is a good one.

They're Back... Koch Brothers Funding Campaign To Discredit Teacher Strikes

Recognizing that teachers nationwide are mostly prevailing after taking to the streets to protest declining budgets, deteriorating school conditions, low pay and minimal benefits, the infamous, anti-union Koch brothers have produced a 66-page "messaging guide" filled with "anti-teacher and anti-union talking points."

According to an [April 13 post to PoliticusUSA](#):

In the past the State Policy Network (SPN) initiatives have included PR campaigns and a plan to "defund and defang" public sector unions. As the middle class in American declines, these anti-union billionaires are doing everything they can to kill unions and reduce wages for the average American.

Now it is turning its attention to the striking teachers and is attempting to harm them and prevent them from receiving the pay they are entitled to.

The SPN document urges its followers to attack the teacher walkouts in a stealth manner, and not to attack them directly.

April 20 Marks Anniversary Of Ludlow Massacre

Workers across America have the right to belong to a labor union, largely in part because of the battles our ancestors waged, often at huge cost, to procure it and, subsequently, the wages and benefits that come with union membership.

On April 20, 1914, a group of miners and their families suffered a horrible fate in their fight to form a union. Here's an [excerpt from a post about the Ludlow Massacre on the Zinn Education Project](#).

The miners at first thought the Guard was sent to protect them, and greeted its arrival with flags and cheers. They soon found out the Guard was there to destroy the strike. The Guard brought strikebreakers in under cover of night, not telling them there was a strike. Guardsmen beat miners, arrested them by the hundreds, rode down with their horses parades of women in the streets of Trinidad, the central town in the area. And still the miners refused to give in. When they lasted through the cold winter of 1913-1914, it became clear that extraordinary measures would be needed to break the strike.

In April 1914, two National Guard companies were stationed in the hills overlooking the largest tent colony of strikers, the one at Ludlow, housing a thousand men, women and children. On the morning of April 20, a machine gun attack began on the tents. The miners fired back. Their leader was lured up into the hills to discuss a truce, then shot to death by a company of National Guardsmen. The women and children dug pits beneath the tents to escape the gunfire. At dusk, the Guard moved down from the hills with torches, set fire to the tents, and the families fled into the hills; thirteen people were killed by gunfire.

Note: With the impending *Janus* ruling, it's important to remind ourselves of the sacrifices our ancestors and our retirees made to ensure America's workers and Vermont state employees are treated fairly while at work and compensated adequately for their service. Your right to belong to a labor union did not come without a cost.

Quote Of The Week!

"It's not that she's not qualified. She's definitely qualified to be a management seat. However, this is for the NEUTRAL seat. No one with a background working for a union-busting law firm should ever be considered for the neutral seat. PERIOD."

Facebook user commenting on Karen O'Neill VLRB confirmation post. Have you asked your Senator(s) to vote NO on the O'Neill VLRB confirmation yet?

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

April 23

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Chapter Meeting
VPCH
Special Events Room
Berlin
1:30 p.m.

April 24

Organizer's Meeting: Montpelier
National Life
Large Fourth Floor Conference Room
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier
12:00 p.m.

April 24

Bennington Chapter Meeting
Tap House @ Catamount Glass
Back Room
309 County Street
Bennington
5:15 p.m.

April 25

VSCSF Executive Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
155 State Street
Montpelier
9:00 a.m.

April 25

Organizer's Meeting: Middlesex
BGS Print Shop
1078 U.S. Route 2
Middlesex
12:00 p.m.

April 26

Organizer's Meeting: Barre
Barre City Place
219 North Main Street
Barre
12:00 p.m.

April 27

OCS Labor / Management Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
155 State Street
Montpelier
8:00 a.m.

April 27

Training: Diversity
VSEA HQ
155 State Street
Montpelier
9:00 a.m.