



## **VSEA "Protect Your Pension" Tour Continues!**

VSEA's tour to educate members statewide about the need to protect your existing defined-benefit pension plan by stopping any proposal to move new hires to state government into a "defined-contribution" pension plan (401K) is underway.

Moving new hires into 401Ks means they are no longer contributing to the existing pension fund, and that's a serious problem. It's also bad for the new hire, as they would be at the mercy of Wall Street's ups and downs to ensure future retirement security.

Please attend an upcoming meeting in your area to learn about the importance of this fight, its outcome and, most important, your role in it.

### **December 12 at Noon**

Middlebury  
State Office Building  
156 South Village Green  
Conference Room

### **December 13 at Noon**

Rutland,  
Asa Bloomer Building  
88 Merchant's Row  
Conference Room #266

### **December 18 at 11:45 a.m.**

St. Albans  
State Office Building  
First Floor Conference Room  
11:45 a.m.

### **December 19 at Noon**

Newport  
Emory Hebard State Office Building,  
100 Main St.  
Conference Room 250

## **State Wants To Hear What You Think Needs To Be Prioritized In The Budget**

It's not the most welcoming language you'll ever read on a State agency or department's website public-survey page, reading "Per 32 V.S.A. § 306(d) the

*Continued...*

Governor is required to develop a process for public participation in the development of goals and a general prioritization of spending and revenue initiatives as part of the development of the state's budget," but so be it.

In addition to an online survey, the State's budget input page contains a presentation about the budget and the budgeting process, as well as an online "Public Comment" form, where you can submit written input to supplement your survey answers.

This is a good forum for VSEA members to semi-directly engage in the state budgeting process, and share your expertise about need, places to save or bloat within the state government.

If you do send input to the State and are willing to share what you sent with VSEA, then please do. Your union and its legislative team will then be able to digest your idea(s) and possibly share your input with lawmakers as well (anonymously, if desired).

Send your input to: [vsea@vsea.org](mailto:vsea@vsea.org). Subject line: State Budget

Thanks in advance for your help!

## **VTrans Workers Meeting In Advance Of Barre Move**

VSEA is holding a meeting on December 13 with VTrans workers currently housed at National Life in Montpelier to discuss an upcoming move to new space inside Barre City Place. Workers are invited to attend to share your questions and concerns about the move with VSEA Organizer Carmen Scoles.

To talk with Carmen in advance of the meeting, please email her at: [cscoles@vsea.org](mailto:cscoles@vsea.org)

## **Brattleboro Chapter Fundraiser Is Tomorrow!**

If you happen to be traveling on I-91 tomorrow, Saturday, December 8, pull off for a break at the North Mile Marker 5.4, Rest Area and visit with members of VSEA's Brattleboro Chapter, who are holding a fundraiser on the premises.

***Continued...***

**Brattleboro Chapter  
Saturday, December 8**

7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

I-91 Rest Area

North Mile Marker 5.4

Guilford

Food / bake sale to raise funds for Brattleboro Chapter. Need baked goods and other food, as well as volunteers.

**Questions:** Contact Brattleboro Chapter President Robin Rieske:  
[robin.rieske@vermont.gov](mailto:robin.rieske@vermont.gov)

**Enroll Today In VSEA Member-Only  
Supplemental Dental Plan!**

One key benefit of VSEA membership is access to a supplemental dental plan that has been helping VSEA families bring down the costs of expensive dental procedures for nearly a decade now. The program is so popular that VSEA is now offering a second chance in 2018 (usually just once a year, in the spring) for members to enroll in the program, which is a unique benefit for state employees represented by VSEA.

VSEA sent an all-member email this week about the new enrollment period. If you don't recall receiving the email, you can [learn more about the the plan here](#).

The supplemental program is offered as an enhancement to state employees' State-administered dental insurance benefit.

## **VSEA Announces 2019 Steward Training Schedule**

VSEA Stewards are urged to mark the date of the 2019 Steward training nearest you.

\* designates a Unit-specific training

### **Saturday, January 12, 2019**

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Double Tree by Hilton Hotel

870 Williston Road

South Burlington

### **\*Friday, February 15, 2019**

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Judiciary Steward Training

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

### **\*Friday, March 15, 2019**

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

VT State Colleges' Steward Training

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

### **Friday, April 26, 2019**

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn

476 Holiday Drive

Rutland

### **Saturday, July 20, 2019**

8:30 – 3:00 p.m.

TBD

St. Johnsbury

### **Thursday, October 17, 2019**

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Vermont Veterans' Home

325 North Street

Crispe Room

Bennington

## **New Mental Health Commissioner Appointed**

The State announced the appointment on Thursday of Sarah Squirrell to be the next Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

Squirrell will take over on January 1, 2019.

“I want to thank Governor Scott and Secretary Gobeille for the opportunity serve the Department of Mental Health,” said Squirrell in a statement. “When our children, family, friends and neighbors need mental health care they need access to a high-quality continuum of care that includes promotion, prevention, treatment and recovery. I look forward to working side by side with Deputy Commissioner, Mourning Fox and our state and community partners to advance solutions to improve our mental health system of care, and to always keep the needs of those we serve and their families at the center of our work,” Squirrell added.

---

### **Quote Of The Week!**

*"This lawsuit is part of a nationally coordinated strategy by powerful forces aiming to destroy collective bargaining. It is a direct attack on our shared values and collective voice."*

St. Cloud University (Minn.) Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) President Brent Jeffers, commenting on a lawsuit filed by one of his professors that has made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court and could be worse than Janus. The lawsuit seeks to prohibit forced public sector union representation.

---

## **Help A Fellow State Employee By Donating Some Time To Your Unit's Sick Leave Bank!**

**Donation Period Ends December 31!**

VSEA member Dawn Carrillo is reminding Non-Management Unit members that your Unit's Sick Leave Bank is currently accepting annual and personal

***Continued...***

leave time donations to the bank and that the deadline to do so is December 31, 2018. Carillo 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.](#)

"Big thanks to 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."

## **Bolton Valley Again Offering "Industry Rate" To VSEA Members On 2018-19 All-Access Season Passes**

All VSEA members in good standing are eligible to purchase a pass or passes. You can purchase yours today by first contacting VSEA by email at [vsea@vsea.org](mailto:vsea@vsea.org). VSEA will verify your membership status and provide you with VSEA's code, which you will need to complete your online purchase.

---

## **VSEA Meetings/ Trainings/ Events:**

---

### **Upcoming VSEA Organizer Worksite Meetings**

#### **Barre**

**Wednesday, December 12**

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Economic Services Suite, 150 Conference Room

McFarland State Office Building

5 Perry Street

Barre

**Questions:** Contact VSEA Organizer Carmen

Scoles:[cscoles@vsea.org](mailto:cscoles@vsea.org)

#### **Montpelier**

**Thursday, December 13**

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Montpelier Room

National Life, Davis Building

1 National Life Drive

Montpelier

**Questions:** Contact VSEA Organizer Carmen

Scoles:[cscoles@vsea.org](mailto:cscoles@vsea.org)

### **Upcoming VSEA Organizer Worksite Meetings**

#### **Franklin / Grand Isle Chapter**

**Friday, December 14**

5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

14th Star Brewing Co.

133 N Main St. #7

St Albans ([View Map](#))

**Questions:** Contact VSEA Franklin / Grand Isle Chapter President

Janine Cary: [janinecary1983@gmail.com](mailto:janinecary1983@gmail.com)

---

## **Points of Interest:**

---

### **Article Advises "Now Is The Time To Enact An Affirmative Agenda For Workers' Rights At The State Level"**

The website Governing posted a disturbing story this week about a recent conference conducted by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC); a notoriously anti-union group that wants to completely dismantle organized labor in the coming months and years.

The group's first blow came earlier this year when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unfavorably to unions in the *Janus* case, and now ALEC is filing new and more harmful lawsuits--ones that must be stopped.

From the *Governing* story:

*ALEC's "Public Employee Rights and Authorization Act," for instance, would codify the Janus decision at the state level, establishing a "right to work" for public employees and declaring that these employees have to give "affirmative consent" for their union to collect payments from them. More than half the states already have similar laws.*

*Under the "Union Recertification Act," what ALEC calls "worker voting rights," workers in unions would have to vote every couple of years on whether they want to continue with their current union representation. Typically, there is no such opportunity for public employees, unless they go through a very involved and rare "decertification" process. Similar laws have already passed in Florida, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin, according to F. Vincent Vernuccio, a senior fellow at the conservative Mackinac Center for Public Policy.*

*Then there are "workers' choice" bills, the "Public Employee Choice Act" and the "Comprehensive Public Employee Freedom Act," which would allow government workers to opt out of union representation and represent*

**Continued...**



*themselves in negotiations with their employer. These type of bills have yet to be passed anywhere, though they've been introduced in states like Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Pennsylvania, says Vernuccio.*

*Other ALEC bills would increase transparency in union spending and ban "release time," in which a public employee draws a public salary while working on union recruiting and representation activities.*

Note: VSEA members can hopefully work with the newly elected super majority to pass legislation at the state level to thwart some of these obscene measures, if they gain traction. Get ready.

## **Labor Notes Hosting December 17 Q&A With Union Activists In Some Of 2018's Biggest Fights**

*From a Labor Notes promotional post this week:*

*"Labor might be on the ropes, but it still knows how to throw a punch. 2018 saw thousands of teachers, campus workers, and hotel workers hit the streets in support of bold demands. What does it take to strike and win in the new Gilded Age?"*

***Join Labor Notes Assistant Editor Dan DiMaggio on Monday, December 17, at 9:00 p.m. EST for a video conference call with activists on the front lines of some of 2018's biggest labor fights.***

*This event is free and open to the public. Participants can join by phone or computer. Space is limited. You must register to participate in this call.*

## **Marriott Housekeepers Prevail After Nine-Week Strike**

*Marriott workers in cities across the nation, including Boston; Detroit; four California cities—San Jose, Oakland, San Diego and San Francisco; and Honolulu and Lahaina, in Hawaii, have been striking for social and economic justice for nine weeks and this week they won.*

***Continued...***

*From a New York Times story:*

*A new contract with Marriott International that will give housekeepers in San Francisco an eventual \$4-an-hour increase and better protections against sexual harassment was approved Monday, ending a nine-week strike by 2,500 workers at seven hotels in that city.*

*The settlement in San Francisco concludes a nationwide walkout against the world's largest hotel chain. At its peak, the protest involved 7,700 workers at 23 hotels.*

*"It means so much to me," said Larrilou Carumba, a single mother of three who had been earning \$23.50 an hour after six years as a housekeeper at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis. "I can go back to work," she said, without worrying "about where I will get money for my kids, and my health benefits."*

---

## **Subscribe To VSEA Today!**

### **[VSEA.org/subscribe](http://VSEA.org/subscribe)**

*Copyright © 2018, Vermont State Employees' Association  
155 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602  
(802) 223-5247  
[vsea@vsea.org](mailto:vsea@vsea.org)*

***Follow your union on Facebook!***  
*[facebook.com/vseaunite](https://facebook.com/vseaunite)*