



Week In Action Newsletter

July 2, 2020

Read the full newsletter with links and more content on VSEA.org



Newest VSEA Bargaining Unit Ratifies First-Ever Contract!

VSEA Defender General Unit Also Ratifies New Deal

A little more than a year after voting for VSEA representation, employees working in State's Attorney's Offices (SAO) across Vermont learned yesterday that VSEA's Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee had certified that members of VSEA's new SAO Unit voted to ratify their first-ever, two-year

agreement with the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs.

"It has certainly been a long sustained effort to reach this point where the hard-working state employees of the State's Attorney's Offices first gained the right to engage in collective bargaining, and now have a contract securing important rights and benefits," says OSA Bargaining Team Chair Justin Jirin; a Deputy State's Attorney in the Chittenden office. "Thanks to a lot of patience and perseverance, and the unwavering support of VSEA, we have a contract we can be proud of and that gives us a solid base to build on in the future. For the first time we have a framework that spells out our rights and our responsibilities so that we can move forward together with the Department to improve our members' working environments and the essential service we provide to fellow Vermonters. We are grateful as well to the Department for their commitment to the bargaining process and their effort to negotiate a fair outcome for both sides. This is of course just a first step and we look forward to the next two years as a time to analyze how this contract serves our members and identify the areas that need focus in future bargaining sessions. It's a great moment for employees of the State's Attorney's Offices!"

In an email yesterday to SAO members, VSEA Labor

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Relations Director Gary Hoadley shared the news with the workers and thanked the SAO Bargaining Team members for their “extensive work and dedication to secure an excellent contract.”

The new contract covers more than 100 Deputy State’s Attorneys, Secretary IV’s, Victim’s Advocates, and Administrative Secretary’s, working in 14 OSA offices across Vermont.

DG Unit Also Ratifies!

VSEA is also cheering news that VSEA members in the union’s Defender General Unit voted recently to ratify a new two-year agreement with the DG’s Office.

Both the SAO and DG agreements implement July 1, 2020, and expire June 30, 2022.



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On JULY 4th

SHOP UNION

French's Mustard	Gianelli Sausages
Goldens Mustard	Lay's Brand Chips
Heinz Ketchup/Catsup	Kroger Brand Sausages
Sara Lee Buns	Ball Park Hotdogs
Barq's Rootbeer	Hebrew National Hotdogs
Coke and Sprite Products	Boar's Head Hotdogs
American Springs Water	Oscar Mayer Hotdogs
Poland Springs Water	Hormel Hotdogs
Bud Light	Nathan's Hotdogs
Breyers Ice Cream	Good Humor Ice Cream

UFCW

Important BOT Election Ballot Deadline Approaching!

A friendly reminder that the following deadline is quickly approaching:

- VSEA members’ ballots due **Monday, August 3** in election for the following VSEA Board of Trustees’ seats:
 - Supervisory;
 - Corrections;
 - VSHA/DG; and
 - District 4 – Franklin / Grand Isle / Chittenden / Addison

Important! If you have a question about this deadline, please contact VSEA Organizing Director Amy Kinsell at akinsell@vsea.org, or by phone at (802) 233-5834.

July Steward Training Being Conducted, Via Zoom

VSEA Director of Field Services Gretchen Naylor asked WIA to let VSEA Stewards know that, due to the COVID crisis, the July 17 training, scheduled to be held at the Rutland Holiday Inn will now be conducted by Zoom.

July 17 Steward Training
8:30 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

To register for the July training, or another upcoming training, please contact VSEA Administrative Professional Sue Devoid by email at sdevoid@vsea.org or by phone at (802) 223-5247.

Note: As of July 1, 2020 all VSEA Stewards in the Executive Branch are eligible for VSEA leave time for Steward Training, provided they receive supervisory approval.

Log-in information will be emailed, prior to meeting.



Upcoming VSEA Council Meeting Also Being Conducted, Via Zoom

VSEA First Vice President Aimee Towne recently let VSEA Council members know that their Friday, July 31, meeting is being conducted, via Zoom.

VSEA Council Meeting

8:30 a.m.

Via Zoom

Log-in information will be emailed, prior to meeting.

Delta Dental Supplemental Plan's July Premium Holiday Reminder

Several VSEA members recently contacted headquarters to ask why there was no deduction in their paycheck for the Delta Dental Supplemental Plan. Well, there's a reason.

This week, VSEA sent an email to members, reminding that Delta Dental's Supplemental Plan Division recently announced that there would be a premium holiday in July for VSEA members who participate in the optional benefit plan.

This means VSEA members will not see a deduction in July for your Delta Dental Supplemental Plan payment. Delta Dental is resuming the deduction in August.

The Supplemental Plan is also announcing that, for the plan year beginning July 20, the maximum allowance is being increased from \$1000 to \$1250.



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QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

"Thanks to a lot of patience and perseverance, and the unwavering support of VSEA, we have a contract we can be proud of and that gives us a solid base to build on in the future. It's a great moment for employees of the State's Attorney's Offices!"

New VSEA member and Deputy State's Attorney (DSA) Justin Jirin, commenting on the ratification this week of a first-ever labor contract for OSA workers statewide.

TALKING POINTS:

Salt In The Wound. More Than 1,000 Vermont Immigration Employees Get Furlough Notices

Vermont leaders were informed this week about a new economic hit coming soon, which is the furlough of more than 1,100 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services employees. According to a story posted this week to *VTDigger*, these Vermont workers will be out of a job on Aug. 3 and without pay for at least 30 days.

From the story:

If the temporary cuts go into effect, 8% of the total reductions nationwide would land on a state with less than 1% of the country's total population.

The agency alerted Congress May 15 of its \$1.2 billion budgetary shortfall and announced that more than 13,000 employees nationwide — including in Vermont — would be furloughed if emergency funding was not provided to the agency.

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On the floor of the U.S. Senate Wednesday, Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy urged Congress to act and pass emergency funding for USCIS to prevent the furlough.

“In Vermont, 1,111 men and women received this notice. This is over 65% of the USCIS workforce in Vermont,” the Democratic lawmaker said. “Men and women who do important work for the nation, and have continued to do that work even during the Covid-19 pandemic, have just been told that after Aug. 3, they can no longer do their job, and they will no longer receive a paycheck.”

Leahy said he and other Senate Democrats have been pushing Republicans to support more emergency relief, but time is running out for them to act.

UVM Faculty Union Files Formal ULP After Being Left Out Of COVID Planning

WIA let readers know last week that UVM’s faculty union, United Academics (UA), was considering filing a formal unfair labor practice (ULP) charge, alleging the union was left out of the planning process for fall “in-person” teaching during a pandemic. VTDigger reports yesterday that, this week, UA did file a formal ULP.

From the story:

[UA] wrote in a press release that university President Suresh Garimella and Provost Patricia Prelock have refused to engage in bargaining as the school has made “sweeping, unilateral” workplace changes affecting the collective bargaining agreement.

“It is all the decisions that they’ve made since the pandemic started, really, that they haven’t involved the union in at all, even though most of those decisions change our working conditions and therefore they should have been bargained,” faculty union President Julie Roberts said in an interview.

The unfair labor practice complaint — filed Tuesday night — is the first the union has filed in its 19-year history..

National AFL-CIO Creates Website For “Workers Impacted by COVID-19”

The national AFL-CIO has created a worksite to help workers impacted by COVID-19 find the resources they might need, such as:

- Resources and benefits to help replace lost wages;
- Eligibility requirements for emergency paid leave;
- Housing and food assistance programs; and
- Health insurance and public health services and guidance.

Find a link to the site on VSEA.org

Getting Ready To Retire? Retired Already? Join The VSEA Retired Members’ Chapter!

Long-time VSEA activist and leader Terry Lefebvre is asking VSEA members getting ready to retire to join the VSEA Retirees’ Chapter to continue to be an active and engaged union member, even in retirement. Lefebvre also appeals to VSEA members to talk up the co-workers they know who might be preparing to retire. If you already belong to the Retired Members’ Chapter, a big thanks to you. Learn more about the VSEA Retired Members’ Chapter by calling 802-223-5247 or emailing VSEARetirees@gmail.com. You can also log onto www.vsea.org/retirees



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