



74th Annual Business Convention
May 1, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

74th ANNUAL AFT CONNECTICUT BUSINESS CONVENTION

Rise up for a Better Tomorrow

As we do every year, our Convention Committee sat down to develop a theme for this year's business convention. After weeding out "A Year from Hell" and "Thank Goodness 2020 is Over," We decided on "Rise Up for a Better Tomorrow," which I think fits perfectly.

Obviously, COVID-19 impacted all of our lives in innumerable ways, but for most of us, the pandemic was more than an inconvenience. It was more than queuing for toilet paper or a crash course in Zoom etiquette. For too many of us, it meant losing friends, family, and loved ones too soon. Our union family was not immune to such losses.

As Mother Jones taught us, it is important to mourn for the dead – including and especially those who died doing work that matters for the communities we serve. Yet it is equally important that we remember that Mother Jones instructed us not only to mourn for the dead, but to fight like hell for the living. And in that respect, I could not be more proud of our union.

When our members were crying out that their workplaces were unsafe due to a lack of PPE, it was AFT who answered the call and provided us with N95 masks, face shields, and other PPE.

The people in this room already know that "there is power in a union," but we also know that there are other governing boards, politicians, and groups that have considerable influence over how we do our work. In response to that, our union has spent the last year building relationships and forming coalitions to respond to the challenges our members are facing. In education, the fruits of that labor were obvious: thanks to weekly meetings with the State Department of Education, as well as the Department of Health, our collective voice shaped the discussions regarding: district vaccinations, TVAL & PDEC, testing, hybrid teaching, and extracurricular activities. And those discussions continue as we discuss what education will look like next fall and beyond.

It was through our coalition with our brothers and sisters representing municipal and Board of Education employees that we were able to establish a list of 13 Core Competencies that served as our conditions for reopening. And it was through our coalition that we secured an Executive Order from Governor Lamont that no education employees were to be laid off as a consequence of the pandemic. And then, we got him to extend it for this year too.

By working with CEA, CAPSS, and the Dalio Foundation, we secured support to provide any of our education members with access to a course at Yale University in Social and Emotional Learning. If ever there was a year that demonstrated the need for greater competency and awareness of SEL – it was 2020. We are again working with this coalition to offer a set of SEL webinars for our school nurses and hospital workers.

Of course, no division was more affected by COVID this year than our healthcare workers. Even in the worst days of the pandemic, our healthcare workers put aside their fears for themselves and their families and, as they always do, concentrated on their patients. The year-long thank-yous to our frontline healthcare workers are no less deserved just because they have been constant; their work has been heroic. Those comments only ring hollow when they come from hospital administrators who take big bonuses while fighting any requests for fair wages. The hypocrisy has been shocking. I will never forget walking the picket line at Backus and seeing the private security firm the hospital administrators hired to keep the nurses off the property standing together in front of the "Heroes" sign. The fact that no one from administration noticed the irony says everything.

However, Backus Hospital learned what other hospitals have learned before: don't mess with organized, angry nurses. With a committed negotiating team, the work of our terrific staff, and the incredible leadership of President Sherri Dayton, our members stood together and ended up earning their best contract ever. If the hospital administration did not understand that the nurses were truly heroes, the community did; they supported the nurses throughout the contract campaign.

As more of our hospitals are bought up by corporations that laughably are called "non-profit," the battle for healthcare workers having fair contracts and a voice in the workplace is unlikely to end soon. That is why we are starting a strike school, so that the victory at Backus can be a model for future campaigns and not an anomaly. Americans are more aware than ever of the importance of healthcare workers. We need to ensure that respect is reflected in the contracts they sign.

Unfortunately, it is not only the healthcare division that finds itself under attack. Our state employees are negotiating in a climate more hostile than we have seen in over a decade. Not only is the State insisting on salaries that will go backwards for four years, but at many tables they are demanding rolling back workers' rights that were negotiated decades ago. The State has already spent a fortune hiring union-busting law firms like Jackson-Lewis. Now they seem to be ready to pay even more to go to arbitration on 32 contracts. Our Public Employee division will need to stand together to get through this lengthy, emotional process. AFT CT will not back down from this fight. We will stand fearlessly to fight once again to protect collective bargaining which ensures that workers, and not just the corporate and donor class, has a voice in our employment.

Unless this is the first AFT Connecticut Convention, you'll know that I am a strong proponent of our members being active in the political process. For me, it is never about partisanship; it is about speaking truth to power and about making those in power act in the best interest of our members and the communities we serve. And in that respect, the 2020 election was a good one for us. We increased the number of allies we have in the State Legislature -- and --- on the national level--- well, let's just say that President Biden is a little more labor friendly than his predecessor. And our new Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona, well, he was a member of this very union. He is a product of public schools and an advocate for public schools, and we are looking forward to working with him to undo some of the pain and damage caused by Betsy DeVos.

At the office of the State Federation, we made every effort to serve as exemplars of responsible employers. Our staff were encouraged to work from home as much as possible and we provided our Office Professionals with laptops that allowed them to access their workstations in Rocky Hill. More importantly, we achieved this by working together with them towards a solution that met the needs of our union while keeping our employees safe.

The expertise, commitment, and experience of our staff is invaluable. Our field reps continue to help our locals get through this crisis and prepare for the year ahead. Our organizers continue to work with employees who recognize the need to be in a union. The legislature is in a long session and our political advocates are as busy as ever. And of course, Matt and Neal ensure our members hear from us, and the public hears from them. Our PD and Ed Issues Coordinator, Jennifer Benevento, works tirelessly to see that our educators have the information they needed to navigate all the changes in these unique times, and that their feedback and concerns are heard. Our office staff – all of them able to now work from home, kept the organization functioning in this challenging year. We all are incredibly fortunate to have these amazing people working with us.

Recognizing that some of our financial practices required greater attention and increased scrutiny, we created the position of Chief Financial Officer and then we hired a familiar face in Stephanie Burnham to fill it. Most of you will remember Stephanie from her time spent as an auditor for Maletta & Co.

Finally, I am happy to report that we have begun work with AFT on an exciting organizing project that will add five more staff members to our team with the specific goal of organizing more healthcare workers into our union. And, thanks to our reputation as an organizing union, our national union has agreed to cover the entire cost of this project.

Our retirees have been very active over the last year and probably deserve a lot of the credit for a lot of the victories I have already mentioned. Laila Mandour, who serves on our Executive Committee representing our growing at-large retiree local, is viewed as a leader not just in the state of Connecticut, but nationally, when it comes to her creative dedication to retiree engagement.

2020 may have been a year that a lot of us would like to forget, but for our union – though, it was a year filled with challenges, it was a year that our union mustered the strength through collective action and unity to “rise up” to meet those challenges. None of us know exactly what 2021 is going to bring for us, but after seeing all that we accomplished last year, I know that we’ll be ready for it.

Respectfully submitted in solidarity,

Jan Hochadel
President, AFT Connecticut

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

74th ANNUAL AFT CONNECTICUT BUSINESS CONVENTION

2020 was declared the Year of the Nurse and Nurse Midwife by the WHO. Apparently, our gift was a pandemic. We have suffered through Friedrichs, through Janus, through anti-union legislation and policies, and now we face a pandemic.

Yet here we still stand. This year's Business Convention theme is *Rise Up For A Better Tomorrow*, and our union has done that.

On an international and national level, AFT has led the way in insisting on safety in the workplace, in speaking out for workers' rights, for immigrant rights, for racial equality, in protecting our climate and so much more. Jan Hochadel's involvement in Public Service International and the AFT Executive Council, along with our members' involvement in the AFT Program and Policy Councils, keeps us at the forefront of the international and national work of AFT. The recent passage of Covid Relief Legislation and Workplace Violence Legislation is a testimony to the ability of our members to mobilize. On the state level, our members' activism has advanced promising labor and safety legislation at the State Capitol.

Our Locals are also Rising Up. We have added members at A&R, paramedics at L&M, advocated for our safety in the workplace, and have fought for and achieved good contracts through collective actions in the way of contract campaigns, informational pickets, candlelight vigils and more.

The success of the Backus Nurses strike was not an accident. It was the result of a shared vision of the Executive Committee and Delegate Assembly that led to a staff with the needed skills and belief that we are a member led union. The multiple membership engagement campaigns and mobilizations over the last few years set the culture that allowed the Backus Nurses to develop a contract campaign plan that began more than a year before the contract expired and led to a successful strike and contract. It is in part the recognition of that commitment that has led to a multi-year collaboration between AFT and AFT Connecticut Organizing Departments that we hope will yield even greater membership engagement, activism and growth.

One positive note on the Covid pandemic is that AFT Connecticut, which has always been seen as a leading voice for Education and State Services, is increasingly looked at as a leading voice for Healthcare in the state.

On a personal note, I was honored to be asked by Randi and the AFT Executive Council to serve as Co-Chair of the RN and Healthcare PPC, and by Governor Lamont to serve on the Vaccination Communication Subcommittee. Along with other AFT Connecticut Healthcare members, I have returned to limited active service as a Medical Reserve Corps vaccination volunteer, vaccinating our members in schools and the community in my spare time. This work has been truly rewarding.

The year ahead will undoubtedly bring challenges that we cannot foretell, but our members are ready for this. We have been there before, and we know the way through difficult times. We travel these difficult times together, in solidarity.

It is an honor to serve as your Executive Vice President and work with Jan, David, and our Executive Committee Vice Presidents, and most importantly, our members. You inspire me daily.

Respectively submitted in solidarity and service,

John Brady

Executive Vice President, AFT Connecticut

PSRP: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

MAY 2021

“And so, we lift our gazes, not to what stands between us, but what stands before us.”

- Amanda Gorman

This year was a lot different than any other year, so it was a bit challenging to capture our grows and glows.

Our humanity and compassion were challenged on multiple levels. Many of us lost family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. We felt and still feel great grief and pain. Those of us able to do so, walked alongside others through their lowest moments. Through it all, we were reminded of the responsibility and opportunity to hold each other up.

Yes, we mourned those we lost and continue to stand ready as we fight like hell for those who remain.

As leaders, we had to strategize, make decisions, and implement policies, procedures, and programs that we never had to consider in the past.

Our strategic campaign and roll out was drastically impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic that forced our school doors to close. These closures impeded learning, essentially changing education as we know it. All students have faced unforeseen challenges, especially students with disabilities in special education programs. We voiced the concerns of the lack of technology support for paras, and the difficulty of remotely educating students with significant disabilities.

We created the Board of Education Coalition which convened 13 principles to help plan and ensure the safe reopening of our school buildings. In fact, each week, on Tuesday, I participated in morning calls with DPH/SDE. I have also attended the Accelerate CT meetings to bring our voice to a collective mission to recover stronger.

Our members continued to be shining lights of hope and strength. We talked to parents who were disconnected. We delivered laptops, Google Meets training, Zoom training. We delivered food to our students and communities while we were facilitating remote school.

We were then as we are now on the Frontline. We did this while following CDC guidelines.

If that wasn't enough, we also dealt with civil unrest for the heinous murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others, and witnessed a siege at the Capitol.

So many of us were trying to adjust, breathe, and still be of help to others.

Yes, it was a year like no other.

While we have had challenges, I'm proud of our team's commitment and diligence to stand up for justice and labor.

We have had weekly, monthly meetings to keep our members not only informed, but to keep them close and let them know we are here, we are in this together.

We demanded not only shall we have a seat at the table, but we will have a powerful voice. We have had continuing discussions about the attacks of labor, including lack of respect despite the increase of job demands and responsibilities. We used our collective power by hosting rallies, initiating car caravans, writing letters, and making phone calls to our state representatives. We created Coalitions to amplify our voice and power as Labor. Labor who cares, labor who fights, labor who wins.

In Hartford, our major accomplishment this year has been to achieve coordination with the much larger teachers' union so that a unified front can be presented to the Board in contract and other negotiations. This effort required close analysis of the common interests of both unions.

Resources and capacity building are vital for our continued growth and success. We were provided many choices of excellent and meaningful workshops that were specialized to our training needs by Jennifer Benevento, our excellent Professional Issues & Development Coordinator.

In our continuing fight for fair compensation, we have been working on rolling out our living wage increase campaign for PSRPs. We need to roll out our campaign in order to gain support and to effectively show that PSRPs are underpaid for the work that we do.

Yes, it has been a year.

As we move forward, I believe we will heal together. We will turn this corner and see better days ahead. We are our sister and brother's keeper.

We are an amazing group of people who show up for one another, who continue to create new ways to communicate and respond to all levels of urgency. And when needed, we take time to rejuvenate so that we are ready for the road ahead. We will come out of this better than we were going in. We will continue to be the U and I working forward in UNION!

Respectfully submitted in Solidarity,

Shellye Davis

Divisional Vice President for Paraprofessionals & School-Related Personnel

PREK-12: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

MAY 2021

During the last year, our AFT CT PreK-12 members have faced extreme circumstances. Public School teaching during this pandemic school year required constant flexibility to be informed, to do more every day, to do everything differently, and to devise ways to serve student needs while maintaining safety and well-being. Union work became essential in this environment. I had to think about power, what was possible and not, what was local, what was political, what was health department. Teachers found ways to rally when no gatherings were allowed, in car caravans organized across the state, which got the school year rolling and the Governor's attention. We found common ground with the AFT CT PSRPs, with CEA, with Boards of Education Union Coalition, and others to advocate for the establishment of basic safety standards and funds. We identified and prioritized our needs, organized our voices, and amplified our message by working in collaborations with educational partners, and engaging in honest dialog with decision makers across the state including the Governor's Office and the State Department of Education. I even found myself in a meeting agreeing enthusiastically with Attorney Tom Mooney!

Our positive outcomes so far during the last year include prioritized COVID testing and vaccinations for educators, funding, evaluation flexibilities, extension of CARES act benefits, and supports for contact tracing. During this last year, the AFT CT PreK-12 Council improved safety in our workplace and helped to establish conditions for improved professional practice, and the continuation of education for our students to the maximum extent allowable, within the wide range of conditions among the AFT CT districts throughout the pandemic school year so far. Our stronger organizational ties are proving helpful to fight the next battles of remote learning and teacher evaluation. One other good outcome this year is the production and distribution of a beautiful little colorful newsletter for teachers to supplement the wonderful items that already come our way from the union.

The theme for this Convention is *Rise Up Today for a Better Tomorrow*. Some days, truthfully, the struggle starts in just rising up and out of bed. So, it has been good exercise to take a longer look here today. We have done a good job, together, and I feel very much like we need a better tomorrow. This has been hard. Each step along the way during this last year, PreK-12 was supported and advised by various levels of AFT CT leadership and the dedicated and skilled staff, and by our members of course.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Yordon

Divisional Vice President for PreK-12

HEALTHCARE: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

MAY 2021

Don't call us Heroes, and treat us like Zeros.

2020 - What a long, strange trip it has been. Healthcare Division has continued undaunted this entire year. All around the state our locals continued to care for the public. When much of the state workforce was furloughed or taking on new telecommuting duties, we continued to be right there, on the front lines to provide care to everyone. We were lauded as heroes, just about every place put up signs thanking us and extoling "HEROES WORK HERE." It would have been nice if they treated us that way.

First and foremost, our thanks to AFT National who during the early days of the pandemic purchased the large quantity of N-95's, surgical masks and face shields as an important first step, not only for the healthcare locals, but for all of AFT-CT as well. I do know Healthcare tried to get them out to all our hospitals. The AFT-CT Healthcare Division also strengthened our communications through the year with nearly daily Covid-19 updates from John Brady, where local leaders were able to communicate in real time as to how each hospital and union was weathering the storm.

We have had to have multiple fights, picket lines and rallies throughout the state this year.

We started down at L&M where we lost Elva Gravelin, a member to COVID-19. Members from multiple unions across the state showed up to support the L&M quad locals, along with legislators, both Lt. Governor Susan Bysewicz and Governor Ned Lamont showed up to speak on that day. Social distancing while rallying was an interesting concept. They did a great job that day.

Backus Nurses have worked hard this year, including an informational picket and rally during their long contract negotiations and then a two-day strike, where the Backus Nurses had close to 100% participation rate, which resulted in correcting a disparate wage scale. The Backus Nurses stepped up, strengthened their delegate committee and are in a much better place moving forward. One delegate stood up and out, Labor Troubadour, Danielle Dufour, rain, or shine had her guitar with her.

Natchaug Hospital had an informational picket line as well this year. It poured that day, but we were out there, and they got a settled contract as well.

Danbury Hospital - Unit 47 nurses finished this year strong and again with record participation, despite it all being virtual. They fought for a pay raise for their members through each of the three years of their contract.

Rockville Hospital Unions came together this year with a "S.O.S" Save Our Services Car Caravan to work on preventing services that local area hospitals provide being shipped away from the local people who need them.

Through all the local issues, we have come together to fight for everyone. Through Union concerns brought forward, there have been 3 separate OSHA citations, which those hospitals must address. We continued to do educational trainings for the membership. Even through Covid, we pushed to make them better and we have even been able to provide CEU's this year for the first time.

Every day the fight continues:

At Windham Hospital, the unions there are fighting to prevent the loss of maternity services to that community. Hartford Health Care plans to move all those patients to other hospitals. At a much longer commute time, which could endanger mothers and babies.

And at UCONN Health, UHP is fighting "a war on two fronts." We are fighting for a fair contract at the same time as fighting off bills and privatization talk at the state legislature. UHP has stepped up its game this year. We have had more than 20 different members write testimony or have read their testimony over ZOOM this year. Multiple bills have been our targets this year, both for and against. Labor and Public Employees Committee, Appropriations, GAE, have all heard UHP members testimony. There has been great moving testimony this year. We cannot thank everyone enough, but what we hope everyone learned from this legislatively is that your stories matter. The Covid-19 Omnibus bill testimony was a long day into the night. I wish to reiterate that both Rosemary Swanke, APRN from UHP, and Brittany Manley, RN from Unit 47 – your testimony moved people. It is our members that make the difference.

In Solidarity,

Bill Garrity

UHP 3837 President

Divisional Vice President for Healthcare

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

MAY 2021

Sisters and Brothers,

The State Employee Division has faced attacks on our members and the services we provide not only through the negotiating process, but through the recent Boston Consulting Group "CREATES" report as well. In negotiations, not only are the seven AFT CT State Employee locals who have collective bargaining being offered four years of hard zeroes – which are in reality negatives, because pools of money are removed – but many locals are seeing proposals to remove long-held rights and language. With 32 of the 36 State Unions in negotiations for wages, our expectation had been that the State would want to negotiate salaries on a coalition basis, but that has not happened. Going to arbitration with 32 contracts will cost the State over \$1.5 million and take at least a full year. The State has hired expensive, anti-union law firms such as Jackson-Lewis; AFT has filed an FOIA request for the cost of these firms, but to date, the Administration has not answered the request.

A mere three years after the CT Fiscal Stability Commission report was commissioned and then forgotten, the Lamont Administration paid the Boston Consulting Group \$2 million for a new report on how to best view the upcoming "silver tsunami" of State workers leaving as an "opportunity" to create efficiencies in State government. To the surprise of no one, one can practically hear their hands rubbing together at the thought of privatization, Attrition, especially in the CTECS, is viewed as another savings opportunity, though there is no mention of how far fewer people can provide the same level of services. As Kevin Rennie pointed out in the Courant, the BCG report cost over \$16,000 per page – and much of that is pictures. The report does not note the most obvious money-saving idea: stop paying for these reports.

Though as always, the Public Employee division, both individually and through SEBAC, spent much of its time protecting what we already have, this year we have taken a more proactive role. Like every division, we spent much of the year trying to keep our members safe during COVID. Some agencies worked collaboratively with the unions, while others insisted on making every decision unilaterally. There were serious repercussions to that attitude; two AFT Public Employee locals had members die from the disease. On a more positive note, SEBAC began a racial justice coalition, and AFT had more members participate than any other union. Black and brown State workers make on average \$10,000 per year less than white employees despite collective bargaining. We are finally beginning to address this problem directly. We have also been thrilled to have M+E join the State Employee division. We look forward to working together in the future.

Finally, on a personal note I would like to thank the AFT State Employee presidents, AFT CT leadership, and the Executive Committee for their support during my tenure as Divisional VP and, before that, AFT CT treasurer. It is an honor to have served on the Committee on behalf of our members.

In Solidarity,

Ed Leavy
Divisional Vice President for Public Employees

HIGHER EDUCATION: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

MAY 2021

At our Convention last in May, we were dealing with college and university closings, remote learning, budgets, staff reductions and all of the challenges the pandemic brought to our doorsteps. We were hopeful that by this Convention we would be looking at this through our rearview mirrors.

Our Colleges and Universities, though mostly online, are slowly and cautiously reopening. With luck, the fall of 2021 should see a return to 75 to 80 percent of capacity.

The issues surrounding resources continue to be first and foremost. They can be witnessed firsthand in the current state of contract negotiations.

The more global challenges remain, and we are more optimistic that they will be addressed in the near future. To name a few:

- student debt
- privatization
- tuition and book costs
- academic freedom
- governance
- system and college reorganization
- academic standards

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Bogusky

Divisional Vice President for Higher Education

AFT-CT Statewide Retiree Division Annual Report – May 2021

The AFT Connecticut Retiree Division consists of the presidents and executive officers of the chartered retiree locals. In addition to those members, we continue to include members of the AFT Connecticut At-Large Retiree Local 8006-R, until such time as this local is fully operational. We have been meeting virtually over the past year due to the pandemic.

The sub-committee we established to work toward getting people who have an understanding of the teachers' pension issues appointed to the Teachers Retirement Board was successful. With our subcommittee (spearheaded by June Pinkin and Margaret Rick) lobbying and the support and assistance of AFT CT leadership and staff member Teri Merisotis, we were instrumental in having Kathleen Holt appointed as a member of the TRB. Attorney Holt is a director at the Center for Medicare Advocacy and is familiar with issues that impact retirees. Ms. Holt's appointment is the beginning of our work to have meaningful appointees in areas that impact retirees and that have been ignored in the past.

We also established a subcommittee spearheaded by Mary Moninger Elia to work on changing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) of the Social Security Act, which prevents some people, including teachers, police officers, fire fighters, and others who paid into social security from collecting social security upon retirement. Our subcommittee was successful in working with the CT ARA and other groups to establish a now nationwide coalition to change the legislation that negatively impacts retirees (and other workers).

We continue to work closely with Meghan Rozarie, our AFT liaison as we focus on growing our locals by engaging our current members and reaching out to soon to be retired workers. The AFT retiree website and Facebook pages have been reactivated and can be accessed at <https://www.aft.org/retirement> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/504165183598210/>.

With the support of President Hochadel (who lobbied the national leadership and with the support of President Weingarten) the national AFT Retiree Committee has finally achieved Program and Policy Council (PPC) status after passage of the enabling constitutional amendment at the 2020 AFT convention. Walter O'Connor and I represent Connecticut retirees on that Council. The retiree PPC has met virtually several times in 2020. We are looking forward to being a part of the PPC and working to elevate retirees to a cohesive group who make a positive difference in retiree issues for current and future retirees.

Many retirees continue to remain active and serve on AFT Connecticut's LPAC. As they did last year, retirees continue to come out of retirement to assist with vaccinations. A big thank you to them and all healthcare and frontline workers.

As we move forward in 2021, our goals continue to include growing our retiree contingent by actively engaging active/in-service union members who are close to retirement, increasing retiree activism, and increasing education of our members on the importance of being actively involved in working with the union to protect our pensions and healthcare. We also are mindful of working with active/in-service members to ensure pay, pension, healthcare, and workplace safety are preserved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laila Mandour, Chair
AFT Connecticut Retiree Division

AFT CT Organizing Update for Convention 2021

New organizing wins since last convention:

- A&R accretions (62)
 - A&R continues its successful run of adding new members to the bargaining unit through accretions. These are state employees who had been told for years they could not collectively bargain due to state statutes, but A&R has opened the flood gates for employees to join their union and SEBAC.
- CREC election win (42)
 - The pandemic proved very challenging for new organizing, but one bright spot was an election win that saw audiologists and other employees within the CREC school system joining the School RN local.
- L&M paramedics (20)
 - The first NLRB win of 2021 saw a small group of paramedics unanimously win their Armour Globe election to join the L&M Technical local. These new members were incredibly motivated and involved from start to finish.

Assistance with internal organizing and contract campaigns:

- Backus RNs
 - From an organizing standpoint, seeing the brave RNs of Backus stand down their vicious employer through a two-day strike was an inspiring highlight in a very challenging year for everyone, personally and professionally. It was special to see elected leaders, activists, and rank and file members embrace the "Organizing Model" and apply it to a successful contract campaign.
- Danbury RNs
 - The leaders of the Danbury RNs clearly took notice from the successful approach at Backus, as they also applied the model to their contract campaign, which ended with the ratification of a new deal this April.
- Some other contract campaigns and internal assistance included: Prospect locals at Rockville and Manchester Hospitals; New London PSRPs; East Conn locals; and L&M.

Update on Healthcare Organizing Project:

- At no cost to AFT CT, the National Union has graciously offered considerable resources to hire additional organizing and communications staff, as well as operations support. Four organizers have been hired and a communications specialist will be brought on board as well.

FERGUSON, DOYLE & CHESTER, P.C.

MAY 2020 – APRIL 2021

2020 was a year like no other. Due to the pandemic, Ferguson, Doyle & Chester was forced to work both from the office as well as remotely for six months, however, we never closed and continued to serve the members of AFT CT. Last spring the virus brought with it a flurry of questions and concerns from AFT Locals and the firm was able to provide guidance and support concerning the filing of Workers' Compensation claims, FMLA, FFCRA, CARES ACT and remote learning. The firm is currently representing twenty nine members that contracted COVID 19 in the workplace and several have received stipulated agreements and/or voluntary agreements while the remainder of the cases continue to be argued before the Workers' Compensation Commission. In May of 2020 Jim Ferguson and Eric Chester attended a conference with Governor Lamont regarding COVID 19 legislation. All Connecticut Courts, Workers' Compensation Commissions, Department of Labor, The American Arbitration Association and the Department of Children and Families have switched to "remote only" platforms and the firm has not missed a beat attending hearings and advocating for our clients remotely.

During the last year we provided defense to six tenured teachers who were being terminated. This number includes cases that were settled during the statutory hearing process as well as those that went through the hearing process to a decision. Included in the teacher termination process were numerous meetings with the client to work out settlement agreements and/or prepare the client for his/her termination hearings, as well as writing briefs and reply briefs at the end of the proceedings.

The firm provided representation to thirty seven AFT CT members for DCF investigations in the past twelve months and three of those investigations resulted in our representation at Substantiation Appeal Hearings along with writing the accompanying briefs and reply briefs.

The firm represents our members for Workers' Compensation claims. We have attended and advocated at 173 Workers' Compensation Hearings at the Informal, Pre-Formal and Formal Administrative Trial Hearing levels. When a member is referred to us for a Workers' Compensation matter our attorneys and staff dedicate an enormous amount of time preparing for hearings, communicating with insurance adjusters and/or attorneys as well as meeting with clients and answering their questions and putting their minds at ease in what can be a very complicated and frustrating process.

In the last year we have defended twenty five members for Unemployment Appeal Hearings before State Labor Department Trial Referees.

The firm has represented AFT CT at "Duty of Fair Representation" hearings at the NLRB and the State Board of Labor Relations.

Ferguson, Doyle & Chester, P.C.

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To AFT Connecticut

From: Eric Chester and James Demetriades

Date: 4/14/21

Re: American Rescue Plan and Paid Leave Benefits

I. Overview

- a. In March 2020 Congress passed the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which required certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.
- b. The Act expired on December 31st, 2020. Contained therein were the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA).
- c. EPSLA required that certain employers provide up to 80 hours of paid sick leave to employees who need to take leave from work for certain specified reasons related to COVID-19. These reasons may include the following:
 1. the employee or someone the employee is caring for is subject to a government quarantine order or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine;
 2. the employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking medical attention; or,
 3. the employee is caring for his or her son or daughter whose school or place of care is closed or whose child care provider is unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.
- d. EFMLEA required that certain employers provide up to 10 weeks of paid, and 2 weeks unpaid, emergency family and medical leave to eligible employees if
 1. the employee is caring for his or her son or daughter whose school or place of care is closed or
 2. whose childcare provider is unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

II. Connecticut Executive Order No-10

- a. Governor Ned Lemont extended the FFCRA provisions for staff of local and regional Boards of Education with Executive Order No-10 in 2021.
- b. This executive order extended retroactively to December 21, 2020 Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) for educational employees of Local and Regional Boards of Education.
- c. It did not extend the EFMLEA provisions described above.

III. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

- a. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allows private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees to voluntarily provide paid sick or paid family leave to employees and in exchange the employers receive refundable tax credits.
- b. The American Rescue Plan adds three new qualifying reasons to the existing 6 listed above. These new qualifying reasons are:
 1. Obtaining a Covid-19 Immunization
 2. Recovering from an injury, disability, illness or condition related to immunizations or
 3. Seeking or awaiting the result of a COVID-19 test or diagnosis when the employee has either been exposed to COVID-19 or the employer has requested the test or diagnosis.
- c. The Act allows employers to receive the tax credit for providing up to 10 days of paid sick leave beginning on April 1, 2021.
- d. Employees are eligible for EPSLA even if the employer previously took a tax credit for providing paid sick leave to an employee for a covered reason before April 1, 2021.
- e. In addition, employers can receive a tax credit for providing up to 12 weeks of paid family leave.
- f. It contains a new Anti-Discrimination provision which prohibits employers from discriminating by only offering Paid Sick Leave to highly compensated employees, full-time employees, or employees on the basis of employment tenure with such employer. Employers who volunteer to offer the leave provisions must do so regardless of job status or pay status.

2020 Election Summary

Connecticut; as well the Nation, was in the middle of a global pandemic and a resurgence of equity and justice movement around Black Lives Matter. These two events shaped the election last fall and for many years to come. The 2020 elections were about the candidates we endorsed, the election activities we worked on, and the issues we advocated. We worked to make sure Joe Biden would be the next President of the United States, we won all 5 Congressional Seats, and we increased our seats in both the Senate and House.

AFTCT endorsed 107 Congressional, State Senate and State House candidates. We had a 75% win rate during the elections and spent \$80,000 on state and town committee political action pacs.

AFT Connecticut worked closely with the Connecticut AFL-CIO to run a vigorous labor to labor program, engaging our members in the electoral process, educating about issues, and empowering them with the tools and training to accomplish our objectives. Our goal was to "build to win, build to last" and to achieve a strong labor movement in our state. We used data from LAN that targeted our universe of members; using analytics developed by the AFL-CIO for use when engaging our members.

AFT CT had 6 half-time release staff working on our key electoral races through out the state.

AFT Connecticut developed and mailed electoral mailings to members in both the primary and general elections using targeted data such as persuasive voters and GOTV voters. In key priority races, we mailed 3 electoral pieces per candidate; an introduction of the candidate and why we have endorsed, an issue-based mailer, and a GOTV mailer.

AFT Connecticut had to think outside the box on ways to talk to our members during this global pandemic. Labor to Labor Walks has always been our most effective way to talk to our members during the campaign but because of the pandemic we needed to have other activities in our arsenal. We used our 6 half-time release staff and volunteers to work on: literature drops at member households, virtual phone banking and Hustle (a texting app) to get the message out to our members about the candidates we endorsed, the new absentee ballot changes, and turnout on election day.

CT Election Primaries

In the September primary we worked on three house races, Kate Farrar in West Hartford, Richard Lacourciere in New Britain, and Amy Morrin Bello in Wethersfield and one senate race, Joe Cabrera in the Hamden/Ansonia area. Farrar, Morrin Bello, and Cabrera all won their primaries.

CT General Assembly

The State Senate was 22-14; we picked up 2 Democratic Seats in the 2020 elections. Two of our priority pick up seats were Rick Lopes (SD 6) and Joe Cabrera (SD 17) who won their election. We also had two AFT CT members who ran for the Senate; Martha Marx and Mary Fortier; but who did not win. We want to thank them both for stepping up and volunteering to run for these state senate seats. We also worked to make sure three key State Senate races stayed in democrat control: Mary Abrams (SD13), Julie Kushner (SD 24), and Mae Flexer (SD 29). The State House was 92-50; we picked up 4 democrat seats.