



BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD

75th Annual Business Convention
June 4, 2022

Aqua Turf Club
Plantsville, Connecticut

REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

75th ANNUAL AFT CONNECTICUT BUSINESS CONVENTION

Brighter Days Ahead

Mother Jones famously said, "We must mourn the dead and fight like Hell for the living." Just when things appeared to be normalizing last summer, and we could open the school year "back to normal," the Delta variant – and later the Omicron variant – touched off renewed fears, anxiety, and illness. It looked like we would never get out of the pandemic life. It now seems we are getting to a new normal, in which we take the precautions needed to be as safe as possible.

We have learned a lot during the pandemic. We have learned lessons that we can take to our other fights. We have learned that we can change without sacrificing what truly matters. That is why I am calling this past year "The Year of Resistance."

Everyone who is part of AFT-CT should be proud. We as a union played a large role in that resistance. We ensured that working people continued to earn decent pay and benefits. We worked to reduce inequality. We advocated for the working class, at the legislature and across the table in negotiations. We fought to ensure everyone has a voice in democracy. We know the power of belonging to a union, and we worked to ensure everyone has that right. We know that while billionaires and corporations have thrived during the pandemic, working families have suffered physically, emotionally, and financially. Over a million people in this country have died. As a union, we have mourned the dead and fought for the living. We have resisted.

We cannot wage this fight alone. We knew reopening schools this past September would be a challenge. We worked closely with CEA, SDE, and SDE/DPH to ensure our schools were safe for our education community. We continued to fight against the hybrid model of teaching and online learning, because we know that students learn best with their classmates in front of a teacher and paraeducator. We have grown to understand how two school years away from regular in-class learning, the absence of the reassuring routine of schools, and the trauma of COVID has affected our students. It has been a difficult year for our educators, but we have not given up. We have resisted easy answers and excuses to ensure a better, safer school year for everyone.

Not every fight in our schools has been about COVID. With the help of Jonathan Rodriguez from AFT, we expanded our coalition against racist curriculum and Black and Latin exclusion. We developed the Educator's Bill of Rights (included in packet) and participated in a "What's Real in Education" forum with CEA and CAPSS. Our goal is to have the Bill of Rights adopted by school boards and the State Board of Education. The "don't say gay," transphobic, and anti-CRT madness in other states is not happening here. We have worked with our coalition partners, and we have resisted.

We are learning to adapt to COVID, but the burden of dealing with this illness has left those who work in many of the occupations we represent – especially our healthcare workers – exhausted and frustrated. Too often, healthcare workers have lost hope and left their profession, increasing the stress on those who remain. As our healthcare workers continued to ride the roller coaster of variants, putting aside their fears for

themselves and their families to concentrate on their patients, the hospital corporations who believe they are Connecticut have seen the pandemic as an opportunity to further their agenda. They have tried to manipulate working conditions, normalize unsafe patient ratios and mandatory overtime, and prioritize financial gains over community needs. We have resisted them at the legislature, in the community with partners such as Windham United to Save Our Healthcare, and in contract and MOU negotiations with hospital corporations from Norwich to Danbury. We have resisted the idea that the people in the boardrooms are more important to patients than the people at the bedside. We must and we will continue this fight. Our members work too hard to feel so alone.

As I was looking back at my calendar, I was amazed at the amount of time that was allocated to SEBAC. As someone who has had a seat at the SEBAC table for a very long time, I can tell you these negotiations were like no other. We ensured that State employees have an incentive to continue working to mitigate the 2022 Great Resignation or Silver Tsunami. When the administration made proposals that would divide the unions, that would pit member against member, we resisted. After working through union-busting lawyers and explaining that we were not going to rip up our contracts and let administration have all the rights, SEBAC leaders stood and fought together to get a well-deserved historical contract.

AFT CT works hard for our members, but we support all working people. In New Britain, we helped form the coalition Building Economic Equality that has been developing a community-based demand for necessary funding. Our organizers recognize that the best avenue for workers' rights is a union. Thanks to their efforts, we continue to add workers to AFT CT. Last year, we began work with AFT on a unique organizing project that added three organizers and a communications specialist to help our work. AFT CT continues to be the best avenue for workers' rights.

In the past year, our Field Representatives, and Jennifer Benevento, continued to help our locals get through crises, meet the needs of our diverse membership, and prepare for the year ahead. AFT-CT has worked hard to build capacity among our membership, offer professional development, and provide leadership opportunities for members. Our goal is to offer training and learning opportunities for our local leaders and members to equip them for the challenges they face now and in the future.

Even though the legislature was in a short session this year, our political advocates were as busy and ever, and as you can see from the Legislative report, had many wins. Especially important was the work our staff and members did to ensure places of work cannot hold our potential members in captive audience meetings. Testimony from our members was crucial to get this first-in-the-nation legislation passed. Our organizers can now ensure workers can have a voice, the ability to join a union through a fair process, and strong union rights without fear of reprisals and intimidation. Once again, Connecticut is the leader in pro-worker legislation. As you can imagine, powerful corporations fought against this bill. We resisted, and we won.

The past two years have been challenging for our Legislative breakfasts, but we continue to influence those elected to represent us and gather their suggestions. One recommendation was to start working on our legislative agenda this summer or fall. We will look at what important bills didn't pass this year and what we need to change to be successful this year. We will start our first round of legislative breakfasts in fall to

work on language and sponsors before we start the session. By working with our friends and electing new ones, we can make next year's long session even more successful than this one.

When we are successful with our agenda, it is because the members are at the front of the fight. With so many battles happening every day, keeping our membership informed is crucial. With nearly 100 locals all dealing with their own issues, the challenge is daunting. We are blessed in having a communications team is unsurpassed in ensuring we have an engaged, active membership.

With the stress, anxiety, and frustrations of the pandemic, we have seen a great deal of leadership change in our locals in the past couple of years. In New Haven, Hartford, New Britain, Newington, and many other places, new leaders have stepped forward to guide their locals through these difficult times. For all the leaders and members who are at the AFT-CT Business Convention for the first time, welcome to the resistance.

It has been a busy but fascinating year for me as well. In my role as AFT VP and representative to Public Service International, I have again had the opportunity to visit other countries and other unions. This past month, I traveled to Poland and Germany, where I met the president of the Ukrainian teachers' union. This visit was both inspiring and heartbreaking. Seeing how other countries and other unions address similar challenges helps me return home with a new perspective.

I had the opportunity to witness the Germany Career Technology Education Apprenticeship Program and learn how we can expand and enhance our CTEC system. I saw in other countries how they help their employees have a work/life balance. They are far more willing to promote remote work so employees can be closer to family or moved farther away from city centers to have more space and fresh air. Management views the unions more as partners than as adversaries. In America, especially in the private sector, we are far from that ideal. Yet it is possible. I know, because I saw it at work just this month.

I have labeled this past year, "The Year of Resistance," and I am looking for "Brighter Days Ahead." We have a great deal to be proud of; we have stood up to the powerful forces that tried to use COVID to strip us of our rights, and we have largely won. Next year, though, we cannot be satisfied with resistance; we must advance. We need living wages for all workers. We need dignity in the workplace. We need to ensure our neighbors can go to work, school, the grocery store, or place of worship and be safe from the scourge of racism and gun violence. There is work to be done, and that work will only happen with an engaged membership. I am proud of what we have accomplished, and I am eager to work with all of you to ensure better, and brighter days are ahead.

Respectfully submitted in solidarity,

Jan Hochadel
President, AFT Connecticut

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

75th ANNUAL AFT CONNECTICUT BUSINESS CONVENTION

I started my report to convention last year by recalling that 2020 was declared the Year of the Nurse and Nurse Midwife by the WHO and that apparently, our gift was a pandemic.

I guess the WHO heard me, because they designated 2021 as the 2nd Year of the Nurse and Nurse Midwife. We're still waiting for our cash prize, but we did get more Covid. Thankfully, with vaccinations, we seem to be learning to live with this virus. However, we mourn the one million people we have lost.

75 years!

I remember standing on the stage at the Backus Nurses strike and looking over the crowd. My eyes went to the members, some whom I recognized as having been there at the beginning and some obviously just starting out their careers. I was moved with pride and gratitude. THIS was what we had hoped for when we stood together in 2011. We hoped that we were at the start of a union that would grow in strength and influence. That is what we had hoped for, but we could have never imagined our little local would grow into what it is today. I said so to the crowd that they deserved to hear that, and as I did, the heads of those who had been there at the start nodded in agreement. I told Randi on that day that this is the example of what a young, small local can be.

I wonder, would those who formed our state federation 75 years ago feel the same about us?

I think they would. I know I am proud of the 30,000 (and growing) members of AFT Connecticut. I am proud of your strength and advocacy, and this year we continued in that direction. We are a federation of nearly 100 autonomous locals who often see things from different perspectives. We debate, we disagree, and then we stand as one. That is our strength. We are at the table on education, state employee, and healthcare issues because we fight not only for ourselves, but for our patients, our students, our communities, and the public we serve.

THAT, my cousins, is what we are. I hope that is what our founders wished we would become 75 years ago.

This year we, advocated in the streets, in the Capitol, in the classroom, patient room, office, and workplace. We rallied and picketed and protested in Hartford, Farmington, Storrs, Willimantic, and elsewhere.

We fostered community coalitions in New Britain and Windham. We worked with partners to stand up to Hartford Healthcare to save Labor & Delivery, to pass legislation to assist PSRPs, to guarantee clean air in schools, to strengthen our Certificate of Need policy, to hold the line on healthcare and education Multi-state Compacts, to end the practice of Captive Audience meetings and to secure a new SEBAC agreement. We fought for an end to Mandatory OT, and while we were not successful in this endeavor, we laid the groundwork for next session.

We elected one of our members, Mariam Kahn, as the first Muslim member of the CT House, giving us 4 AFT members (Kahn, Hall, Winkler, Vargas) in the House and one as U.S. Secretary of Education, and although Mike Winkler will retire after this term, we have two wonderful candidates running for State Senate - nurse Martha Marx and AFT CT President Jan Hochadel.

We continue a great partnership with AFT Healthcare Organizing, which brought us a new National Rep, Boyd McCamish, and a new member of our Communications team, Rosemary Picarelli. We also welcomed a new AFT Regional Director, Stephanie Baxter-Jenkins. In fact, if there is a better state team of organizers, field reps, political and communication team, legal team and the rest in any state federation, you will have to show me where. Our team was asked to present on our joint AFT/AFT CT organizing project recently in Chicago at an organizing conference and in New York at the leadership conference.

We have a great team, which leads to the ability to do great work, because we have the vision of my partner, my friend, and our president. Jan has assembled a leadership team (Stuart, Eric, Stephanie), a staff, and has encouraged member and community engagement at every turn, which allows us to accomplish what we do. I cannot stress enough that having this foundation is our key.

The year ahead will not be easy. We face challenges from those who would seek to tear unions down. They wish to de-professionalize education and healthcare, and privatize public services. But we will not allow them. We are AFT Connecticut, 30,000 (and growing) strong, with just as many opinions (or more), but once we discuss and debate, we come together as one. We are also AFT, 1.7 million strong and the AFL-CIO with 57 unions and 12.5 million strong.

I will close with a thought.

Often, I can be found in Jan's office where I'll wander in and sit at the table, working on my iPad as she takes calls or works away. At some point, I'll announce that I'm trying to make a decision on which direction we should go on something, and Jan will say, "Did you ask the members?"

It's never the wrong answer.

As leaders, we all represent people who have dedicated their lives to the care of patients, students and the public, and they're wicked smart. Although it's sometimes easier to just decide and act, we are stronger when we work in coalition.

We are 100 of the most independent locals in the movement, all made up of some of the most independent members of the movement, but in this is our strength.

We are AFT Connecticut and I am honored and proud to serve as your Executive Vice President.

Respectively submitted in solidarity and service,

John Brady
Executive Vice President, AFT Connecticut

PSRP: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

*"There is no magic to achievement. It's really about hard work, choices and persistence."
- Michelle Obama*

This year continued to be a challenging one for paraeducators across Connecticut as we worked to help students recover from the academic and social-emotional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We dug deep to find the strength and the tools to support our students through this difficult time. Simultaneously, we continued our efforts to professionalize our roles by requiring the State Department of Education (SDE) and school districts to invest in paraeducators and provide us with the resources we require to successfully meet student needs.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the General Assembly directed the School Paraeducator Advisory Council to conduct a study and make legislative recommendations concerning the development of a statewide, uniform system for paraeducator qualifications, career development, pay rates, and retirement and health care benefits, among other issues critical to paraeducators. As Co-Chair of the Council, I was proud, with the assistance of AFT and AFT Connecticut staff, to have led completion of that work, conducting an extensive survey of paraeducators across the state. Thousands responded and it confirmed what many have experienced for some time – that paraeducators are often an afterthought and despite the important work we do, our efforts in the classroom are rarely prioritized or maximized. Those responses formed the basis of our eight recommendations.

During the 2022 Legislative Session, we urged the General Assembly to fully embrace those recommendations given the profound learning loss that many students have sustained during the pandemic. We asked them to recognize that well trained, well equipped, and fairly paid paraeducators can be a stable force for students, providing additional support and reinforced instruction to curb and reclaim COVID learning losses.

The General Assembly's Education Committee initially only included three of those recommendations in HB 5321: (1) establishing a clear professional development plan and structure for paraeducators; (2) creating a working group to explore a certification program for paraeducators; and (3) making common sense changes that allow paraeducators to attend Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings and have access to student IEPs. By lobbying the Committee Co-Chairs, we were able to add two more: (4) requiring the State Board of Education, in coordination with school districts, to conduct an annual review of healthcare plan options and compare the plans chosen with the Connecticut Partnership Plan; and (5) requiring SDE to collect information on the number of paraeducators employed within each district, job titles, hourly rates of pay, number of hours and days worked, healthcare contributions as a percentage of salary, and annual salary calculated based on hours worked multiplied by the hourly rate. The five recommendations passed the Education Committee unanimously, but when the bill was sent to the Appropriations Committee, they cut recommendations 1, 2 and 4 and didn't provide any money for the State Board of Education to complete number 5.

We had to channel our frustration into action, calling on SDE Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, Governor Lamont, Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney and House Speaker Matt Ritter to do more. Paraeducators lobbied at the State Capitol and e-mailed legislators. They also held a virtual roundtable with these leaders and members of the Education Committee. Paraeducators from around the state had the opportunity to share their experiences and call on legislators and elected officials to do more.

In the end, HB 5321 died, but the state's mid-term budget adjustment bill (HB 5506) included \$1.8 million to provide professional development to paraeducators and required districts to provide paraeducators with training for participating in PPT meetings. A second bill, HB 5466 is waiting to be signed by Governor Lamont. It allows paraeducators to view a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to be able to better provide high quality services to that student.

While our persistence paid off in some ways, our work is not finished. The successes we had this session amounted to more than the passage of some helpful policy. We also began to build deeper and more effective relationships with SDE Commissioner Carlene Russell-Tucker, Governor Lamont and legislative leaders. These, along with more hard work, will help us continue our fight to make sure paraeducators are paid a living wage, have affordable healthcare and the tools they need to effectively do their jobs.

In addition to our legislative work, we continued to have monthly meetings to keep our members and affiliates informed and engaged with each other.

We also took part in personal growth and professional development opportunities by taking advantage of the helpful and meaningful workshops provided by Jennifer Benevento, our excellent Professional Issues & Development Coordinator.

Lastly, Governor Lamont issued a proclamation recognizing paraeducators and honoring the work we do by declaring Paraeducator Appreciation Week during the week of April 4th. The State Board of Education issued a similar recognition at its April meeting. Representatives of the School Paraeducator Advisory Council were present for both events.

Paraeducators are a dedicated and powerful group of people who show up for one another and for our students. Overall, it's been a successful year. No doubt, the next year will bring more hard work, more difficult choices and the need for even greater persistence, but I know that by standing together, the PSRP Council will continue to achieve.

Respectfully submitted in Solidarity,

Shellye Davis

Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals, Local 2221 President

Divisional Vice President for Paraprofessionals & School-Related Personnel

PREK-12: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

The PreK-12 Council began the year with the primary goal of providing a forum for information, advocacy and support for COVID issues. Main topics were the new vaccination mandates, testing requirements and low-cost test sites, 14-day quarantines, teacher and sub shortages, the need for more sick time and the end of the Federal Family Cares Act provisions. There was much to divide us and divide our members, but we kept our focus on safety and science, and though nothing is easy now, we got through those very tough days.

We talked to local leaders every month during the PreK-12 Council, and exchanged many emails and phone calls together in between. We found meaningful support and solidarity with the PSRPs and Shellye Davis for many of our meetings. These Joint Educators meetings were great because COVID concerns have nothing to do with certified status and everything to do with keeping current on the latest news, understanding needs, organizing talking points, sharing facts and eliminating rumors. PreK-12 has also tried to support members and locals by using our network to inform of AFT CT PD opportunities, often presented by members.

PreK-12 had several important guest speakers and topics this year, including on Windfall Elimination Provision/Govt Pension Offset, on the new CT special education data system, on the Freedom Foundation, among others. Our own members brought us information about Teacher Leadership, Public Service Loan Forgiveness, the National Day of Teaching Truth, and WEP/GPO actions.

We tackled misinformation about CRT and indoctrination in several ways, including educating members, public joint statements and the "What's Real in Education" event to our locals. That was another joint effort with AFT CT, CEA, & CAPSS. We participated in a successful "Black-out," a January day of action of members across the Board of Education Union Coalition to protest the lack of safety in the face of open schools but limited protocols and PPE. This action gave members a voice, kept school needs in the public eye and set the stage for the legislative session.

One of the best examples of how things worked this past year was when Jan learned of the state's release to school districts of thousands of tests kits, likely in response to pressure from the Black-out action. We shared out the info about these, and tracked the arrival into districts, asking informed questions locally. Without this chain of member action, good AFT CT/Hartford relationships, and good PreK-12/PSRP communication, I believe those test kits might not have all arrived for the benefit of our members. It took some nudging, but our members got their tests. We were on it. With COVID, time and testing were essential, and information was power.

PreK-12's Legislative Agenda resulted in some wins. Many staff, members and officers helped to organize and present in Hartford. Teri and Jim worked their magic to watch out for educator interests. Some successes included grants for social workers and other childhood mental health professionals, and IAQ legislation

with a special taskforce to identify optimal humidity and temperature ranges, and school air quality emergency conditions and thresholds, among other things. Another success was the prohibition of dual teaching. There will be a minority teacher recruitment task force, and a teacher shortage and retention task force to help tackle some of these issues.

Through it all, PreK-12 found AFT CT staff have been as top notch as our members, especially Matt O'Connor and his team, Teri and Jim, Jenn Benevento, Eric Borlaug, Stuart and Stephanie. Jim, Eric and James serve us so well. Anna and Kristine and the others, too. They never grumble to me about my last-minute reports, or that I still haven't figured out what to send to which when. They strike a friendly tone and sort it out. I'm grateful for the way each of my AFT CT brothers and sisters steps up. We have a mission to serve our members, amplify the voice, find the way.

Topics that loom large for the next year include how to more equitably educate Connecticut's students, how to staff our schools with teachers who feel respected and empowered in all the right ways to serve students well, and how to transition to a more effective and enlightened disciplinary approach.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Yordon
Norwalk Federation of Teachers, Local 1723 President
Divisional Vice President for PreK-12

HEALTHCARE: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

As I close out the first year of being a Divisional Vice-President for Healthcare, I would like to thank everyone for helping me get acclimated to this position. It has been a year of fighting together to pick up the pieces of a shattered healthcare system due to COVID. Each month at our healthcare committee meeting, we can share our struggles with our union sisters and brothers and collectively develop plans to improve our workplaces. We have continued zoom meetings for both safety and convenience, but one day hope to meet in person again. Issues we have tackled this year include mandatory vaccine effects bargaining, legislation for a certificate of need and mandatory overtime, social media project for safe patient limits, we fought off legislation for a nurse compact license, advocated for OSHA to institute a COVID permanent standard, supported workplace violence legislation to protect healthcare workers, and shared the results of several ratified contracts and their wins. We have held professional development workshops on diversity and inclusion in healthcare, legal issues for healthcare workers and a webinar series for nurses on managing emotions. We had Sara Markle talk about NIOSH evaluations, Eric Borlaug came to discuss member organizing, and we had Kim Law and her staff from Health Equity Solutions talk about community benefits and hospitals.

We are looking forward to our summer interns, who will be focusing on the issue of unsafe staffing and its effect on the mental health of healthcare workers. The fight for fair and equitable healthcare is challenging, but with many community hospitals closing needed services, we now need to stand by our friends in community coalitions to ensure our communities and healthcare professionals have the resources required to provide safe patient care. We will continue next year to advocate for patients before profits in our upcoming collective bargaining sessions, in our legislation lobbying, and in our community activism.

Thank you for the opportunity,

Sherri Dayton RN, BSN, CEN

Backus Federation of Nurses, Local 5149 President

Divisional Vice President for Healthcare

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

“THE FIGHT CONTINUES”

This has been a year like no other. COVID-19 continued to fight us at every step. Tele-work was a fight we had to have on behalf of so many of our members. When our members proved their jobs could be done remotely, state officials wanted to force everyone back in person. We fought, through SEBAC - the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition - for those members' access and eventually won a Statewide Telecommuting Agreement.

Our Public Employees Division has one brightly shining win - our SEBAC agreement. Raises, steps and lump sum payments for over 43,000 public employees guaranteed for the next three years, with a wage reopener in year four. We secured an additional prescription benefit, PrudentRx, at no additional cost to members. We maintained strong language in our contracts despite over 18 months of the most contentious negotiations many of us have seen in our histories.

Connecticut had one of its shortest sessions on record this year, much of it remote. Still, many public employees testified in support of proposed bills that were important to us. Whether remotely, or on the rare occasion we were able to head to the State Capitol for a lobby day, AFT's public employees always turned out.

Many of our legislative priorities did not do well this year; but “the fight continues.”

Labor lost a partner and friend to COVID this year; Sandra Fae Brown-Brewton. She was a state human resources agency official who I often worked closely with in SEBAC negotiations. Fae, as we called her, positively impacted many of our members in ways few will ever realize. She is and continues to be sorely missed.

For five years we've warned of a looming “silver tsunami” among the state government's workforce. Some are now calling it a “great resignation.” Call it whatever you want; it is an opportunity for our opponents to weaken the collective voice of public employees. We need to be vigilant and make sure we are not displaced as a result.

We need to continue to work together to serve the people of Connecticut. Our labor movement has sacrificed so much over the last two years - often facing risks just to do our jobs. We cannot let those sacrifices become the “new normal.”

We have fought for far too long to allow past gains to fall by the wayside. That is why I opened this report - and now conclude with - “the fight continues.”

In Solidarity,

Bill Garrity
University Health Professionals, Local 3837 President
Divisional Vice President for Public Employees

HIGHER EDUCATION: ANNUAL DIVISIONAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

AFT-CT Higher Ed is immersed in all of the issues that all of our country's Colleges and Universities continue to confront and deal with. Most of these issues have been with us for years. Some of these issues include:

- Reorganization
- Privatization
- Funding
- Student Debt
- Academic Freedom
- Returning to campus amid Covid outbreaks

The good news includes a new multi-year contract and the anticipation of a potential AAUP and AFT merger in the upcoming year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Bogusky
Federation of Technical College Faculty, Local 1942 President
Divisional Vice President for Higher Education

FERGUSON, DOYLE & CHESTER, P.C.

APRIL 2021 – APRIL 2022

During the last year Ferguson, Doyle and Chester provided defense to fourteen 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 negotiate 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 one hundred and fifty two AFT CT members for DCF investigations in the past twelve months and seven of those investigations resulted in our representation at Substantiation Appeal Hearings along with writing the accompanying briefs and reply briefs. This is a sharp contrast to the thirty seven members that we provided representation for in DCF matters in the prior twelve months.

The firm represents our members for Workers' Compensation claims and we provided representation to forty six members for new Workers' Compensation claims. We have attended and advocated at hundreds of 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 four members in Unemployment Appeal Hearings before State Labor Department Trial Referees.

The firm has represented AFT CT at "Duty of Fair Representation" hearings at the State Board of Labor Relations as well as successfully defeating a decertification effort made by a local at the National Labor Relations Board. The firm was also successful in having an EEOC complaint that was filed against a local dismissed. Finally, we offered assistance to Field Reps with numerous issues such as Unfair Labor Practices at Danbury Hospital.



2022 Legislative Summary

The 2022 CT Legislative Session started in early February and adjourned on midnight on Wednesday, May 4th. It was one of the shortest sessions that you can have. Overall, it was a very successful session for AFT Connecticut members. We worked in coalition to pass legislation around limiting mandatory captive audience meetings, collective bargaining agreements for state employees, indoor air quality standards in schools with funding allowing districts to meet those standards, pandemic pay for some essential workers, long overdue tax relief targeted for low- and middle-income families and many other victories, which are detailed below. We did have a few disappointments such as eliminating mandatory overtime in hospitals, meaningful certificate of need legislation, state employee staffing legislation and the state employee task force recommendations.

Legislative Links:

[Labor/COVID Worker](#)

[State Employees](#)

[Judicial Professionals](#)

[Higher Education](#)

[Education](#)

[Para Educators](#)

[Retirees](#)

[Hospital and Healthcare Workers](#)

[State Budget & Taxes](#)

Labor/COVID Worker Legislation

An Act Protecting Employee Freedom of Speech and Conscience (PA 22-24)

[**SB 163**](#) prohibits employers, including the state and its political subdivisions, from disciplining or discharging (i.e., penalizing) an employee or threatening to do so because the employee refused to attend employer-sponsored meetings, listen to speech, or view communications primarily intended to convey the employer's opinion about religious or political matters (i.e., "captive audience meetings;". The prohibition covers meetings with the employer or its agent, representative, or a designee.

Pandemic Pay

[**HB 5356**](#) providing pandemic pay to essential workers died, but pandemic pay for private sector essential workers was included in the State Budget bill, [**HB 5506**](#). It establishes the Connecticut Premium Pay program to provide \$200 to \$1,000 to certain employees who worked throughout the COVID-19 emergency, depending on their individual income, to recognize and compensate them for their service

- ❖ Allocates \$30 million to provide pandemic hazard pay to private sector essential workers in CDC vaccination categories 1a and 1b. Full time workers earning less than \$100,000 will receive \$1,000. Part-time workers will receive \$500.
- ❖ Benefit levels decrease as earnings increase and will be awarded on a first come, first served basis from a fund administered by the Comptroller.
- ❖ It also protects workers from employer retaliation for seeking pandemic hazard pay.

COVID-19 Essential Workers Fund

The Fund was expanded in the budget bill, [HB 5560](#) to cover workers in CDC vaccination category 1c, extends the application deadline to December 31, 2022 and makes changes to how the programs benefits must be determined and administered, e.g. allows the Fund to pay completed parts of application while others are pending and clarifies that a worker does not have to be currently employed to have a claim approved. The Fund reimburses essential workers who contracted COVID-19 for lost wages, out-of-pocket medical costs and burial expenses.

Juneteenth Independence Day (PA 22-128)

[SB 350](#) establishes a new legal state holiday on June 19 known as Juneteenth Independence Day.

The State Personnel Act mandates that each full-time permanent state employee receives paid time off for legal holidays (CGS § 5-254). To the extent it is considered a change in working conditions, an additional paid day off may have to be negotiated with public employee collective bargaining units.

By law, legal state holidays are also bank and credit union holidays, during which time, bank and credit union transactions are generally suspended (CGS § 36a-23). The decision to close public schools on Juneteenth Independence Day is made by each local school district. By law, each local and regional board of education that remains open on a legal state holiday must hold a suitable educational program in observance of the holiday.

Paid Sick Time (DIED)

[SB 312](#) would have expanded the state's paid sick leave law.

Unemployment Benefits (DIED)

[SB 317](#) would have allowed workers to collect unemployment benefits after being on strike for two weeks.

Workers Compensation Coverage (DIED)

[SB 321](#) would have expanded workers' compensation coverage for work-related post-traumatic stress injuries PTSI to all types of workers.

State Employee Legislation

[SR 3/HR 3](#) **Arbitration Award between the State of CT and the Union of Professional Judicial Employees (Adopted)**

[SR12/ HR11](#) **Resolution Proposing Approval of an Agreement Between the State of Connecticut and the State Employees Bargaining Coalition (SEBAC) (Adopted)**

[HB 5378](#) AAC the Nondisclosure of the Residential Addresses of Certain Employees under the Freedom of Information Act (DIED in Senate)

This bill would have added Office of the Attorney General (OAG) employees to the list of individuals covered by the Freedom of Information Act's (FOIA) limitation on disclosing home addresses. In doing so, it prohibits OAG from disclosing its employees' home addresses from the office's personnel, medical, or similar files.

DRS Tax Liabilities and Out of State Debt Collections (PA 22-117)

[HB 5473](#) would do the following:

- DRS STUDY ON SALE OF OUTSTANDING TAX LIABILITIES (Section 32)
- Requires the DRS commissioner to study the feasibility of selling outstanding state tax liabilities and report his findings and recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2023
- OUT-OF-STATE DEBT COLLECTIONS (Section 33 & 34)
- Extends existing laws on enforcing tax debts in other states to the District of Columbia and (2) requires the attorney general and DRS commissioner, by February 15, 2023, to report to the legislature on these enforcement efforts during the 2021 and 2022 calendar years

Contracting Standards Board (DIED)

[SB 473](#) would have protected the State Contracting Standards Board's budget from being swept in future years. An early version would have also given the Board authority over quasi-public agency and municipal procurement.

- ❖ In the Budget, **[HB 5506](#)** it repeals Section 201 of Public Act 21-2 of the June Special Session, which allows funding for the State Contracting Standards Board to lapse and fully funds five new positions.

State Employee Training Fund (DIED)

[SB 419](#) would have established an account to provide funds for career development within state service. The account would have covered the cost of trainings, seminars and conferences that assist participating employees in upward mobility or promotional opportunities.

Zero-Tolerance Policy in State Service (DIED)

[SB 420](#) would have required state government to adopt a zero-tolerance policy for using managerial authority to discriminate or retaliate against employees who complain of discrimination.

State Employee and Retirement Task Force Recommendations (DIED)

[HB 5441](#) would have required nonunion executive or judicial branch employees to receive at least the same wages as those granted to employees covered by collective bargaining agreements, broadened the range of state employees who may collectively bargain by tightening the definition of "managerial employee," repealed a law that allows nonunion state employees to be charged more for their health insurance premiums than employees covered by collective bargaining agreements, and required each state agency to (1) fill all open positions to levels appropriated in the 2022-2023 biennial budget and (2) adopt continuous recruitment practices to fill critical shortage positions.

- ❖ In the State Budget, **[HB 5506](#)** requires most nonunion employees to receive the same pay increases as union employees in FYs 22, 23 & 24; requires legislative employees to receive the same lump sum payments as union employees in FYs 22 & 23.

Staffing Levels (DIED)

[HB 5445](#) would have required each state agency's commissioner and the technical high school system superintendent to automatically refill any vacant positions and submit to the legislature a plan for filling all staffing vacancies. It also would have required (1) the administrative services commissioner, the technical high school system superintendent, and each state agency's human resources department to keep open requests for applications for all job classifications and (2) hiring to take place continuously for all vacant positions.

- ❖ In the Budget, [HB 5506](#) it requires the Department of Administrative Services to report monthly during FY 23 on the number of vacancies, new hires, and refused employee offers for each state agency.

Judicial Professional Union Legislation

[HB 5417](#) Juvenile Justice and Services (PA 22-115)

- **JUVENILE ARRESTS AND DELINQUENCY PROCEDURES**
Makes various changes to procedures when a juvenile is arrested following an alleged delinquent act, such as (1) generally requiring an arrested child to be brought before a judge within five business days after the arrest; (2) allowing the court to order electronic monitoring if a child was charged with a second or subsequent motor vehicle or property theft offense; and (3) in certain circumstances, increasing the maximum period, from six to eight hours, that a child may be held in a community correctional center or lockup without a judge's detention order
- **SERIOUS HOMICIDE, FIREARM, OR SEXUAL OFFENDER JUVENILE PROSECUTION**
Expands existing law on juvenile serious sexual offender prosecutions to also cover certain homicide and firearm crimes, and makes various changes affecting these cases, such as allowing the juvenile portion of the sentence to be extended for up to 60 months
- **ACCESS TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY RECORDS**
Gives municipal employees and agents access to juvenile delinquency records if they are involved in the proceeding or delivery of related services; specifically requires that law enforcement officials have electronic access to certain juvenile delinquency records for criminal investigations; requires CSSD to report by March 1, 2023, on progress made toward implementing these provisions
- **TRAINING PROGRAM ON DETENTION ORDER PROCESS**
Requires the chief state's attorney to develop and implement a training program on the juvenile detention application process for prosecutors and most peace officers
- **DETENTION REQUEST FORMS AND DATA**
Requires prosecutors, not just the police, to attach the official court detention form to the summons when requesting a detention order for a child; requires the form to instruct judges who decline to order detention to articulate their reasons why; requires prosecutors and the police, not just the judicial branch, to compile and categorize data on detention order requests
- **LARCENY OF A MOTOR VEHICLE**
Establishes a new penalty structure for larceny of a motor vehicle, with graduated penalties based on whether it is a first or subsequent offense, rather than based on the vehicle's value as under current law
- **DCF AND CSSD REPORT ON TRANSFER OF JUVENILE SERVICES**
Requires DCF and CSSD to report on the transfer of juvenile delinquency services from DCF to the judicial branch under PA 18-31
- **CSSD REPORT ON JUVENILE JUSTICE ISSUES**

Requires CSSD to review certain juvenile justice issues, such as the effectiveness of pretrial diversionary programs, and report on its review to the Judiciary Committee by December 31, 2022

HB 5393 An Act Concerning Court Operations (PA 22-26)

JUVENILE MATTERS

Expands the circumstances under which juvenile delinquency and youthful offender records may be disclosed; makes records for juveniles transferred to the adult criminal docket public; requires next-day arraignment for children arrested for firearms or motor vehicle offenses; changes the frequency of CSSD's report on the use of chemical agents and prone restraints on juveniles

SB 306 Deceptive Interrogation Tactics (DIED)

We were successful in taking out the words "juvenile court official or their agent" in the bill. SB 306 eventually died on the House Calendar.

Higher Education Legislation

SB 18 AAC Various Revisions to the Higher Education Statute

This bill requires public Connecticut higher education institutions to adopt a policy requiring new appointed governing board members to complete specified training within a year after their appointment or election to the board. The bill establishes the required instruction and training topics, which include financial, legal and ethical, and institutional operation training topics, among others. By January 1, 2023, each institution must post on its website the training policy and a summary of the instruction and training board members received.

Additionally, the bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to make the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) central office a separate line item in its consolidated operating budget.

Unemployment Benefits for Adjunct Faculty (DIED)

HB 5030 would have allowed adjunct faculty members to collect unemployment benefits.

Legislative Approval for Merger/Closings (DIED)

HB 5300 would have required legislative approval for the merger or closing of institutions within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and prohibited the consolidation of the regional community-technical colleges. (DIED)

Children's Mental Health

HB 5001 does the following (in Higher Education):

- GRANT COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY DELIVERY OF STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (Section 15)
- Requires OHE to administer a grant program for FYs 23-25 to provide funding to public and private colleges and universities for delivery of student mental health services
- COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY IDENTIFICATION CARDS (Section 29-30)
- Requires all public colleges and universities to include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number on student ID cards

In State Budget, HB 5506

- ❖ Expands the debt-free community college program's eligibility to qualifying first-time, part-time Connecticut community-technical college students.

Education Legislation

Charter School Approval Process (DIED)

[SB 229](#) It would have allowed the State Board of Education to grant full charters rather than initial certificates of approval. Additionally, it creates the “charter school approval grant account” within the General Fund to give initial funding to state and local charter schools that have been granted a new charter in the fiscal year immediately following the one in which the charter was granted instead of waiting for the legislature to appropriate the funds.

Additionally, the bill prohibits SBE from approving more than two new state charter schools per fiscal year beginning in FY 23. D)

Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB) (PA 22-35)

[HB 5427](#) changes the criteria for designating, and terminating the designation of, municipalities as tier I, II, III, or IV for purposes of state fiscal oversight and control by the Municipal Finance Advisory Commission (MFAC) or Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB), as applicable. In doing so, it generally establishes new criteria for detecting municipal fiscal distress. As under existing law, the municipality’s degree of distress determines its designated tier.

Recommendations of the Department of Education (PA 22-38)

[SB 226](#) makes the following changes in the education statutes:

- extends the term of validity for three levels of public-school teaching certification (i.e., initial, provisional, and professional) (Sections 1-3);
- establishes new reporting requirements and deadlines for the State Department of Education (SDE) and the State Education Resource Center’s (SERC’s) collaborative effort to create a model curriculum for grades kindergarten to eight (K-8) (Sections 4 & 5); and
- grants the education commissioner temporary authority to waive provisions or modify requirements in state laws about school feeding programs in response to changes in federal law or federally issued agency waivers (Sections 6 & 7).

AAC THE IDENTIFICATION AND PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO ADULT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AGAINST CHILDREN

[HB 5243](#) makes various changes in laws on adult sexual misconduct against students and related matters.

The bill creates a mechanism by which adult sexual misconduct can be identified by requiring the Department of Public Health (DPH), starting with the 2022-23 school year, to biennially administer the Connecticut School Health Survey to randomly selected high schools. It requires the State Department of Education (SDE), in consultation with DPH, to develop a uniform parent notification policy and form related to the survey.

The bill also allows the Department of Children and Families (DCF), starting July 1, 2023, to include bystander and appropriate interaction with children training programs in its state-wide sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program’s instructional modules. The bill extends these instructional modules to all school employees, starting in the 2023-24 school year. It also requires DCF to make certain related materials available to youth-serving and religious organizations upon their request.

The bill generally requires local and regional boards of education (“boards of education”) to annually distribute the board’s mandated reporter policy electronically to all school employees. It also requires these boards to annually distribute electronically, to all school employees, board members, and parents and guardians of enrolled students, (1) guidelines on identifying and reporting child sexual abuse, starting in the 2022-23 school year, and (2)

information on DCF's sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program, starting in the 2023-24 school year.

Starting July 1, 2023, it also requires school employees to complete training every three years on the (1) prevention and identification of, and response to, child sexual abuse and assault and (2) bystander and appropriate interaction with children training programs.

Recommendations of the Office of the Child Advocate

SB 308 makes several changes in laws related to the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). It:

- expands the age range, from children age 20 or younger to children age 21 and under, for which the child advocate must report confinement conditions;
- requires the child advocate to report at least three times each year to the OCA advisory committee on the office's goals and projects, within available appropriations, that are consistent with the child advocate's responsibilities;
- requires the OCA advisory committee to (a) meet at least three times each year with the child advocate and her staff to receive her reports and (b) annually evaluate OCA's effectiveness; and
- extends existing law's whistleblower protections that prohibit municipal agencies from discharging, discriminating, or retaliating against employees who make good faith complaints to OCA, or cooperate with OCA investigations, to cover employees of any agency or entity providing publicly funded services.

Working Group on Professional Development Requirements

HB 5466 requires the Executive director of the CBE to convene a working group to examine and make recommendations concerning the consolidation or elimination of unnecessary, obsolete or redundant professional development requirements and in-service training requirements. The working group shall consist of:

- The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, and
- one representative from each of the following associations, designated by the association, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Association of Public-School Superintendents, the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, the Connecticut Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut, the Connecticut Association of School Administrators, the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Special Education Equity for Kids of Connecticut.

Not later than January 1, 2024, the executive director shall submit a report on the working group's findings to the Education Committee.

Provision of Information about the Available of Technical Education and Career Schools (PA 22-135)

SB 228 requires local and regional boards of education ("school boards") to require that their school counselors provide information to middle and high school students and their parents on the availability of (1) vocational, technical, technological, and postsecondary education and training at technical education and career schools and (2) agricultural science and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers. It also requires school boards to publish this information on their websites. Under current law, school boards must inform these students and parents about the availability of this education and training.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (PA 22-116)

SB 5466 says that if a local or regional board of education receives a grant under PA 22-47 for the hiring of a school counselor, such school counselor shall provide one-on-one consultations with each student in grades eleven and twelve on the completion of the FAFSA. If such board can provide evidence to the Commissioner of Education that the student completion rate of the FAFSA for the school district has increased by at least 5%, such board shall receive an additional grant in the amount of 10% of the grant received under this section for the fiscal year in which such board provided such evidence.

Indoor Air Quality in Schools

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#) would

- ❖ \$75 million [bonding or surplus] for HVAC improvements and repairs over next [two] years. [budget]
- ❖ In-depth HVAC assessments for all schools completed by certified technicians by 2024 and every 5 years afterward – Including identifying needed corrective actions.
- ❖ Requires more frequent tools-for-schools monitoring – every 3 years (instead of 5) Applicable to schools receiving school construction funds since 2003.
- ❖ Prevents districts that have not completed assessments from qualifying for DAS HVAC grant.
- ❖ Special taskforce to identify
 - Optimal humidity and temperature ranges
 - School air quality emergency conditions and thresholds warranting temporary school closures – based on the presence of insufficient heat, an excessive combination of indoor temperature and humidity levels, or some other thresholds
 - Protocols to be used by school districts to receive, investigate, and address complaints or evidence of mold, pest infestation, hazardous odors or chemicals, and poor indoor air-quality;
 - Criteria for prioritizing HVAC repair and remediation, including the needs of the students attending a school
 - Optimal HVAC system performance benchmarks for minimizing the spread of infectious disease;
 - Frequency and uniformity of assessments and inspections
 - Best practices for the proper HVSC maintenance

Childhood Mental and Physical Health Services in Schools (PA 22-80)

[SB 1](#) would do the following:

- SURVEY ON SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, COUNSELORS, AND NURSES
Requires SDE to develop and distribute a survey that school districts must annually complete on the number of school social workers, psychologists, counselors, and nurses they employ; requires the education commissioner to calculate the student-to-worker ratio for each of the four types of professionals and report the survey results and the ratios to the Education and Children’s committees
- NEW GRANT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, COUNSELORS, AND NURSES
Requires SDE to administer grants for FYs 23 to 25, for school districts to hire and retain more school social workers, psychologists, counselors, and nurses; requires SDE to make recommendations on the on the program’s renewal beyond FY 25; requires SDE to hire a program administrator
- HUMAN SERVICES PERMIT
Requires SDE to study the feasibility of creating temporary human services permit to allow individuals who have specialized training, experience, or expertise in social work, human services, psychology, or sociology to provide services to students in school
- OPIOID ANTAGONISTS IN SCHOOLS
Generally (1) allows school nurses and qualified school employees to maintain and administer opioid antagonists to students who do not have prior written authorization to receive the medication; (2) requires SDE to develop related guidelines by October 1, 2022; (3) authorizes certain prescribers and pharmacists to enter into agreements with school boards on the distribution and administration of opioid antagonists; and (4) requires DCP to provide school boards with information on how to acquire opioid antagonists from manufacturers
- TASK FORCE TO COMBAT ABLEISM
Establishes a 14-member task force to combat ableism and requires it to submit its findings and recommendations to the Children’s and Education committees by January 1, 2023
- SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER GRANT EXPANSION PROGRAM

Requires DPH to administer a school-based health center grant expansion program in FY 23 to provide grants to certain operators of school-based health centers to expand the centers and services they provide

- **LEARNER ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE PROGRAM (LEAP)**
Requires SDE to provide, within available appropriations, assistance and support for FY 23 to the school districts participating in LEAP
- **MINIMUM DUTY-FREE LUNCH PERIODS FOR TEACHERS**
Creates a minimum 30-minute uninterrupted lunch period for teachers and other professional employees of school districts
- **MINORITY TEACHER CANDIDATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**
Requires SDE to administer a new minority teacher candidate scholarship program; authorizes grants of up to \$20,000 a year for high school graduates of priority school districts who are enrolled in a teacher preparation program at any four-year institution of higher education
- **MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT**
Renames the minority teacher recruitment task force and requires it to conduct a study of existing recruitment and retention programs
- **CAREER AND TECHNICAL PATHWAYS INSTRUCTOR PERMIT**
Authorizes SBE to issue career and technical pathways instructor permits if requested by a board of education or RESC; the permits allow individuals who meet the criteria to teach part-time in a specialized field (i.e., manufacturing, allied health, computer technology, engineering, or the construction trades) for the 2022 and 2023 school years
- **REMOTE LEARNING**
Permits local or regional boards of education to authorize remote learning for students in grades kindergarten to 12 beginning with the 2024-25 school year and requires boards that provide remote learning to prohibit dual instruction
- **TEACHER SHORTAGE AND RETENTION TASK FORCE**
Creates a teacher shortage and retention task force responsible for reporting on recommendations that address (1) teacher attrition and retention, (2) teacher shortages across subject matter disciplines, and (3) issues relating to equity and diversity
- **RAISING THE SPECIAL EDUCATION AGE LIMIT**
Requires school districts to provide special education services to qualifying students until they reach age 22
- **ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER STUDIES**
Starting with the 2025-26 school year, requires all local and regional boards of education to include Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) studies in their social studies curriculum and adds AAPI studies to the state's existing required program of instruction for public schools as part of the social studies curriculum

Children's Mental Health (PA 22-47)

HB 5001 would do the following (specific to education):

- **STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST EMPLOYMENT SURVEY (Section 12)**
Requires SDE to annually survey boards of education about their employment of student mental health specialists and calculate student-to-specialist ratios for districts and schools
- **GRANT FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST HIRING (Section 13)**
Requires SDE to administer a grant program for FYs 23-25 to provide funding to boards of education to hire student mental health specialists
- **GRANT FOR DELIVERY OF STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (Section 14)**
Requires SDE to administer a grant program for FYs 23-25 to provide funding to boards of education, youth camps, and other summer program operators for delivery of student mental health services
- **STUDENT TRUANCY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS (Section 16 & 21)**

Requires each school district to adopt and implement three new policies or procedures related to truant students; requires SDE to develop a truancy intervention model that accounts for mental and behavioral health; requires SDE, along with DCF, to issue guidance to school districts regarding best practices for behavioral health interventions and when to call the 2-1-1 Infoline program or use alternative interventions

- **REGIONAL STUDENT TRAUMA COORDINATORS (Section 17-18)**
Requires each of the state's six regional educational service centers (RESCs) to hire a regional trauma coordinator to, among other things, develop and implement a trauma-informed care training program; requires coordinators to train specialists at the local level to train teachers, administrators, and other staff; requires progress report and a final report to be submitted to the Children's and Education committees
- **BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION MEETINGS (Section 19)**
Allows classroom teachers to request behavior intervention meetings for students exhibiting disruptive or harmful behavior; requires the crisis intervention team to hold them
- **STUDENT TRAUMA ASSESSMENT ADDED TO STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE (Section 20)**
Adds a needs assessment that identifies resources needed to address the level of student trauma to the existing list of items included in every school's strategic school profile
- **MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS (Section 28)**
Requires public schools to include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number on student identification cards for grades 6-12
- **PEER-TO-PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM (Section 34-36)**
Requires DCF, in collaboration with SDE, to develop a peer-to-peer mental health support program for students in grades 6 through 12; authorizes local and regional boards of education and certain other entities to administer the program in grades 6 through 12 beginning with the 2023-2024 school year
- **SPECIAL EDUCATION DISABILITY TERMINOLOGY (Section 67)**
Requires SDE and boards of education to use "emotional disability" instead of "emotional disturbance" for special education purposes

School Funding

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#)

- ❖ Expedites phase-in of full funding of ECS (Education Cost Sharing).
- ❖ Caps magnet school tuition paid by certain districts (East Hartford, Manchester, New London, other Sheff region districts). (\$8m)
- ❖ Increases the charter school grant adjustment percentage, from 14.76% to 25.42.
- ❖ Increases funding for the bilingual education grant from \$1.9 million to \$3.8 million a year.
- ❖ Creates a three-tiered reimbursement method, based on each town's property wealth per capita, for determining the special education excess cost grant when the appropriation does not fully fund the grant.
- ❖ Renews the Alliance District program for five years and requires the Education Commissioner to designate 36, rather than 33, Alliance Districts.
- ❖ Creates an additional \$2,000 per student Open Choice grant for Hartford region school districts that accept out-of-district students.
- ❖ Requires SDE to compile and analyze school district special education expenditure information and report it to the Appropriations and Education committees by July 1, 2023

Climate Change

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#)

- ❖ Requires, rather than allows climate change to be taught as part of the science requirement in public schools' program of instruction

CTECS

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#)

- ❖ Makes numerous conforming, minor, and technical changes necessary as part of transitioning CTECS into an independent agency; addresses specific duties of the CTECS executive director and superintendent
- ❖ Makes conforming changes to maintain CTECS teachers and professional staff as members in TRS

School Construction

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#)

- ❖ Eliminates the DAS commissioner's authority to approve emergency school construction reimbursement grants for administrative and service facility and school safety projects; removes the requirement that a superintendent notify the DAS commissioner of the need for an emergency grant and formally apply within a certain timeframe.
- ❖ Eliminates from current law the (1) newspaper advertising requirement for public invitations to bid on orders and contracts for school construction services; (2) option for a construction manager to self-perform any school construction project element, which takes effect under current law beginning on July 1, 2022; and (3) requires the construction manager to invite bids on project elements on the State Contracting Portal.
- ❖ Authorizes eight school construction grant commitments totaling \$137.35 million toward total project costs of \$495.34 million and reauthorizes one technical high school project with an additional state grant commitment of \$59.55 million.

Para Educator Legislation

The Education Committee raised [HB 5321](#) An Act Implementing Certain Recommendations of the School Paraeducator Advisory Council. This bill had a public hearing and passed both the Education Committee and the Appropriations Committee in different forms. This bill technically "died" on the House Calendar, but different sections of the bill were passed in both the Budget and a different bill HB 5466.

Two recommendations of the School Paraeducator Advisory Council were passed into law:

Professional Development for Para Educators (Section 259-260)

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#)

- Includes \$1.8 million to provide professional development to paraeducators. The bill makes the following changes in the education laws relating to paraeducators:
 - requires school districts' professional development and evaluation committees to develop, evaluate, and annually update a comprehensive local professional development plan for district paraeducators beginning in the 2022-23 school year and
 - requires paraeducators employed by a local or regional board of education to annually participate in professional development beginning in the 2022-23 school year of at least 18 hours.

Planning and Placement Team Meetings (PA 22-166)

Section 9 of [HB 5466](#) would prior to any planning and placement team meeting for a child in which an educational program is developed, reviewed or revised, if the parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent has requested that the school paraprofessional assigned to such child attend such meeting, then the responsible local or regional board of education shall provide (i) adequate notice of such meeting to such school paraprofessional so that such school paraprofessional may adequately prepare for such meeting, and (ii) training, upon request of such school paraprofessional, on the role of such school

paraprofessional at such meeting. Following such meeting, such school paraprofessional, or any other paraprofessional who is providing special education or related services to such child, shall be permitted to view such educational program to be able to provide special education or related services to such child or pupil in accordance with such educational program.

Retiree Legislation

Reemployment and the Municipal Employees' Retirement System (PA 22-39)

[HB 5172](#) removes restrictions on the amount of time that a retiree of the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS) may be re-employed with a CMERS town and continue to receive his or her pension payments.

In the State Budget, [HB 5660](#):

- ❖ Requires the Teachers' Retirement System to have an actuarial valuation performed annually, rather than biennially.
- ❖ Narrows the definition of "teacher" in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) statutes; increases the monthly health insurance subsidy to boards of education for retirees and their spouses meeting certain conditions; and changes the general TRS subsidy to boards of education.
- ❖ Prescribes the order in which the State Treasurer must transfer excess surplus funds to reduce the state's unfunded pension liability: (1) State Employee Retirement System (SERS) (up to 5% of unfunded liability); (2) Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) (up to 5% of unfunded liability); and (3) any remaining funds shall be distributed to SERS.
- ❖ Increases subsidy for Medicare ineligible retirees from \$110 to \$220 for those under 65 and from \$220 to \$440 for those over 65.
- ❖ Eliminates CRSA and makes the Office of the State Comptroller its successor; converts CRSA's board of directors to an advisory board; requires that money spent on the program from the General Fund be reimbursed by October 1, 2023
- ❖ Requires certain pension cost recoveries to be deposited in the SERS pension fund as an additional employer contribution
- ❖ Accelerates the pension and annuity income tax exemption phase-in by allowing qualifying taxpayers to deduct 100% of this income beginning with the 2022 tax year

Hospital and HealthCare Worker Legislation

An Act Expanding Training Programs for Careers in Health Care (SA 22-9)

[SB 251](#) requires the Office of Workforce Strategy to develop an initiative with other state agencies to address the state's health care workforce shortage and the Chief Workforce Officer to develop a plan with various organizations and associations to encourage high school students to pursue health care careers.

Elimination of Mandatory Overtime in Hospitals (DIED)

[HB 5357](#) would have:

- Prohibited mandatory overtime from being permitted in future collective bargaining agreements;
- Guarantee nurses receive at least 10 hours of rest between shifts (unless nurse volunteers);

- Ensure hospitals only use mandatory overtime in the event of an emergency if there is no reasonable alternative and
- Does not prohibit nurses from volunteering to work additional hours

Strengthening the Certificates of Need Process

The Insurance Committee had a public hearing and voted out [HB 5449](#). We were able to get the following legislation in the Budget - [HB 5660](#).

❖ Four New Positions to Support Agency Responsibilities - General Fund (281k)

Funds will support four additional positions to manage and respond to increasing numbers of Certificate of Need applications and healthcare policy implementation and evaluation activities.

❖ Certificate of Need Task Force (Section 124)

The bill establishes a 16-member task force to study and make recommendations on certificates of need (CONs). The task force must study and make recommendations on the following matters:

- instituting a price increase cap tied to the cost growth benchmark for consolidations;
- guaranteed local community representation on hospital boards;
- changes to the Office of Health Strategy's (OHS) long-term, statewide health plan to include an analysis of services and facilities and their impact on equity and underserved populations;
- setting standards to measure quality due to a consolidation;
- enacting higher penalties for noncompliance and increasing the staff needed for enforcement;
- the attorney general's authority to stop activities as the result of a CON application or complaint;
- the ability of workforce and community representatives to intervene or appeal decisions;
- authorizing OHS to require an ongoing investment to address community needs;
- capturing lost property taxes from hospitals that have converted to nonprofit entities; and
- the timeliness of decisions or approvals relating to the CON process and relief available through that process.

❖ CON Application Fees Increase (Section 227)

Also, under the certificate of need (CON) law, health care institutions (e.g., hospitals, freestanding emergency departments, outpatient surgical facilities) must generally receive state approval when establishing new facilities or services, changing ownership, acquiring certain equipment, or terminating services. The bill increases the nonrefundable CON application fee from \$500 to a range of \$1,000 to \$10,000 depending on the proposed project's cost.

❖ CON Termination of Services (Section 228)

For purposes of applying the CON requirements, the bill defines "termination of services" to mean ending services for more than 180 days.

Hospital Community Benefit Programs

[HB 5500](#) (Section 50) makes various changes to the law on hospital community benefit programs. Principally, it:

1. conforms to existing practice by shifting oversight of this law from the Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA) to the Office of Health Strategy (OHS);
2. requires hospitals to submit, on a specified schedule, their community health needs assessments, related implementation strategies, and community benefit status reports, and specifies several matters that hospitals must include in this reporting;

3. requires for-profit acute care hospitals to submit community benefit program reporting consistent with the bill's reporting schedules and reasonably similar to what they would report to the IRS, where applicable;
4. requires OHS to make data from the state's all-payer claims database available to hospitals to fulfill these requirements; and
5. requires OHS to annually summarize and analyze community benefit program reporting data and solicit stakeholder input through a public comment period.

The bill also removes managed care organizations (MCOs) from this law and makes several minor, technical, and conforming changes.

To maintain tax-exempt status under federal law, a nonprofit hospital must, among other things, (1) conduct a community health needs assessment at least once every three years and (2) adopt an implementation strategy to meet the needs identified in the assessment. Federal regulations set various steps that hospitals must take in completing these requirements (26 C.F.R. § 1.501(r)-3).

Medical Assistants Giving Vaccines (PA 22-58 and PA 22-93)

[HB 5500](#) (section 47 & 48) Allows clinical medical assistants meeting specified certification, education, and training requirements to administer vaccines in any setting other than a hospital if acting under the supervision, control, and responsibility of a physician, PA, or APRN. This bill was amended in [SB 457](#) which removes the requirement that the person must have done so on or after January 1, 202. So, there is no date specific when a clinical medical assistant could get their education.

Children's Mental Health (PA 22-47)

[HB 5001](#) would do the following (healthcare:

- **DPH PLAN FOR WAIVER OF LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN PROVIDERS (Section 1)**
Requires DPH, in consultation with DCF, to develop and implement a plan to waive licensure requirements for mental or behavioral health care providers licensed in other states (with priority given to children's providers)
- **EXPEDITED LICENSURE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS (Section 2)**
Expands an existing law on expedited licensure for health care providers licensed in other states by eliminating current provisions limiting it only to state residents or spouses of active-duty military members stationed in Connecticut
- **SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATIONS (Section 3)**
Requires the DPH commissioner to notify clinical and master social worker license applicants that they may be eligible for certain testing accommodations
- **MASTER SOCIAL WORK LICENSE TEMPORARY PERMITS (Section 4)**
Extends, until June 30, 2024, the duration of temporary master social worker permits from 120 days to one year after attaining a master's degree and specifies that they are not void solely because the applicant fails the examination
- **TELEHEALTH SERVICES BY OUT-OF-STATE SOCIAL WORKERS (Section 5)**
Allows out-of-state social workers, under certain conditions, to provide telehealth services to residents of other states while the residents are in Connecticut, until July 1, 2024
- **NEED-BASED ASSISTANCE FOR MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE LICENSURE APPLICANTS (Section 6)**

Requires DPH, within available appropriations, to establish a need-based program that waives application and licensure fees for certain applicants who will provide children's mental or behavioral health services

- CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD (Section 7)
Changes the composition of the Children's Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board by adding 11 new members and specifying the required credentials of the DCF commissioner's appointees
- DCF REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSULTATION AND CARE COORDINATION PROGRAM (Section 10)
Expands DCF's regional behavioral health consultation and care coordinating program by, among other things, including mental health consultations and coordination and generally requiring it to refer the program's pediatric patients with up to three follow-up telehealth or in-person appointments
- OFFICE OF HEALTHCARE ADVOCATE EMPLOYEE (Section 11)
Requires the healthcare advocate to designate an employee to be responsible for Office of Healthcare Advocate services that are specific to minors
- CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES (Section 31)
Temporarily exempts, from CON requirements, increases in the licensed bed capacity of mental health facilities under certain conditions and (2) requires OHS to report on any recommendations for establishing an expedited CON process for mental health facilities
- DCF GRANT PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT COSTS (Section 32)
Establishes a Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment Fund, with funds the DCF commissioner must use to assist families with the costs of obtaining prescribed drugs or treatments and intensive services for children with mental and behavioral health conditions if insurance or Medicaid does not cover them
- PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING TOOL (Section 33)
By January 1, 2023, requires DPH to develop or procure a screening tool to help pediatricians and emergency room doctors diagnose mental health, behavioral health, or substance use disorders in children
- DCF IN-HOME RESPITE CARE SERVICES PROGRAM (Section 37)
Requires the DCF commissioner to set up an in-home respite care services program to help parents and guardians of children with behavioral health needs and creates a General Fund account dedicated to the program
- CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIST GRANT PROGRAM (Section 38)
Requires DPH to establish a child and adolescent psychiatrist grant program, providing incentive grants to employers for recruiting, hiring, and retaining these psychiatrists
- DMHAS ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN (Section 39)
Requires DMHAS, in collaboration with DCF, to (1) plan and implement a statewide advertising campaign on the availability of mental or behavioral health and substance use disorder services in the state and (2) set up a comprehensive website with related information
- PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR CAREGIVERS (Section 40)
Requires the DCF-contracted peer-to-peer support program for parents and caregivers of children with behavioral health needs to use allocated state funds to provide services to those who are not covered for these services under HUSKY Health or a health insurance policy
- MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS EXAMS (Section 41-42)

Requires certain health insurance policies to cover two mental health wellness examinations per year with no patient cost sharing or prior authorization requirements

- HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR INTENSIVE SERVICES FOR MENTAL CONDITIONS (Section 43-44)
Requires certain health insurance policies to cover intensive evidence-based, rather than home-based, services to treat children’s mental or nervous conditions and expands coverage to include adolescents
- CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY WORKING GROUP (Section 68)
Creates a working group to develop a plan to increase the number of psychiatry residency and child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship placements in the state
- BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (Section 70)
Establishes a Behavioral and Mental Health Policy and Oversight Committee; requires the committee to evaluate and report on various matters related to the mental health system for children and develop a related strategic plan

In the State Budget, [HB 5506](#):

- ❖ Requires OHE, by January 1, 2023, to establish a program to provide loan reimbursement grants to certain health care providers
- ❖ Requires OHS to establish health care cost growth benchmarks, health care quality benchmarks, and primary care spending targets; allows OHS to identify entities that do not meet these benchmarks or targets
- ❖ Requires providers participating in DPH’s Student Loan Repayment Program to provide behavioral health services and expands the types of clinicians that the program may recruit

Connecticut’s FY 2023 State Budget Midterm Adjustments

The General Assembly adopted [HB 5506](#), a \$24 billion FY 2023 budget and implementer bill, before adjourning at midnight on Wednesday, May 4th. Robust revenue collections exceeded projections, creating an estimated \$4.8 billion surplus, allowing for a boost in spending by 6.5% above current levels. That allowed for \$600 million in tax cuts and made new investments in childcare, mental health and other social services. The Rainy Day Fund remains at its statutory maximum of more than \$3 billion, positioning the state to devote \$3.5 billion of surplus funds to pay down pension debt at the end of the fiscal year.

[SB 9](#) was amended and passed on the last day of session to make technical amendments and corrections to HB 5506.

The Office of Fiscal Analysis is projecting a budget deficit of \$541 million in FY 24 and \$354 million in FY 25. This bill requires the Comptroller to transfer \$125 million of FY 22 surplus funds for use in FY 23.

REVENUE (Taxes and Tax Credits)

- Requires future biennial tax incidence reports prepared by the Department of Revenue Services to include (1) separate analysis for the top 1 percent and top 5 percent of earners; (2) incidence data from past 10 years; and (3) forecasting for the next 5 years. This allows policymakers to

understand who shoulders the greatest tax burdens in the state and how to develop equitable tax policy.

- Increases the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low-income families to 41.5% of the federal credit.
- Increases the property tax credit from \$200 to \$300 and extends it to all property taxpayers.
- Fully exempts pension/annuity income from the income tax.
- Establishes a one-year \$250 Child Tax Credit for a maximum of three children for single filers earning \$100,000 or less and married filers earning \$200,000 or less.
- Caps the municipal car tax at 32.45 mills beginning with assessment year October 1, 2021.
- Expands the loans eligible for the employer student loan payment tax credit.
- Establishes the JobsCT tax rebate program under which companies in specified industries may earn rebates against the insurance premiums, corporation business, and PE taxes for reaching certain job creation targets.
- Repeals the 6% movie theater admissions tax.
- Extends the 25-cent-per-gallon motor vehicle tax holiday on gasoline and gasohol through November 30, 2022.
- Establishes a \$2,500 income tax credit for parents of a stillborn child.
- Allows the State Treasurer to automatically pay abandoned property amounts of less than \$2,500 to the owner and makes other changes about how abandoned property is noticed and returned.
- Reduces the unemployment tax rate that certain new employers must pay by 0.2% and lowers the maximum fund balance tax rate from 1.4% to 1.2%.
- Extends the manufacturing apprenticeship tax credit to small businesses.

APPROPRIATIONS

- Requires Governors' budget proposals to explain how they address equity and defines "equity" as efforts, regulations, policies, programs, standards, processes and any other functions of government or principles of law and governance intended to: (A) Identify and remedy past and present patterns of discrimination or inequality against and disparities in outcome for any class protected in chapter 814c; (B) ensure that such patterns of discrimination, inequality and disparities in outcome, whether intentional or unintentional, are neither reinforced nor perpetuated; and (C) prevent the emergence and persistence of foreseeable future patterns of discrimination against or disparities in outcome for any class protected in chapter 814c.
- Prohibits employers from taking certain retaliatory actions against employees under the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave law.
- Adds \$40 million to reduce employer debt in the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

AFT-CT RETIREE DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2022

The Retiree Division consists of those Chartered Locals for retirees. The Retiree Council is comprised of the Presidents, other officers or their delegates of those chartered retiree locals. The Council meets monthly, currently virtually via Zoom. Additionally members of Local 8006R At Large are invited to those meetings.

The leadership of the Retiree Division changed in September of 2021 with the resignation of Laila Mandour from the Chair of the Retiree Council as well as her Divisional Vice Presidency. Walter O'Connor was chosen by the Retiree Council to be the new Chair of that Council. He was subsequently voted to succeed Laila Mandour as Divisional Vice President by the Delegate assembly in September of 2021. In another Local Leadership change Walter O'Connor assumed the Presidency of Local 8006r and John Brady was unopposed to be the Vice President of 8006r. June Pinkin will not run for another term as President Hartford Retiree Local in June of 2022 after serving for 17 years in that position.

Mary Moniger Elia continued to spearhead the effort to repeal the WEP-GPO which effects the social security benefits of many of AFT members in several states. She continues to coordinate these efforts with the Association of Retired Americans with lobbying efforts with the CT delegation but also throughout the nation. There was a demonstration in Washington DC followed by lobbying meetings on May 18th 2022.

The Retiree Council continues to work with AFT Retiree staff (Bernadette Aguirre, Meghan Rosier, Calvin MacDowell and Chris Walkup) on increasing the membership of all retiree locals, the benefits off joining a retiree local for recent retirees members and the education of the in service members the important work that the retiree locals provide for them. A sub-committee was formed to continue this long term organization al effort.

The Retiree PPC has meet three times the last in Wash. DC as well as a hybrid version. Work on several committees continues as well as the organization of the PPC.

AFTafterburners continues their work on contacting members throughout the nation on several topics. Currently they are contacting members re voter registration.

Respectfully submitted
Walter O'Connor
Retiree Division Vice President