



## **Week In Action Newsletter**

January 25, 2019

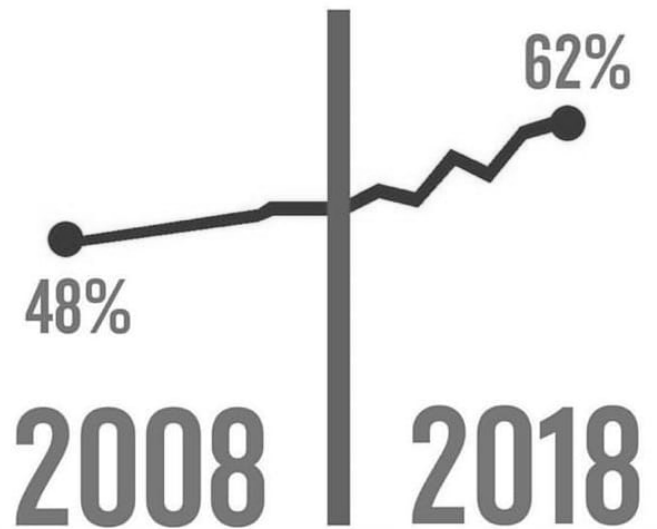
Read the full newsletter with links and more content on [VSEA.org](http://VSEA.org)

### **VSEA Looks To Budget Adjustment Process To Fund Recent Employee Reclassifications & Woodside**

VSEA Policy Analyst Adam Norton shared his thoughts this week with members about what VSEA can expect to see coming out of the 2019 budget adjustment process, which is taking place right now at the State House. Norton explains that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have allocated an additional \$9 million to the FY2019 budget, and a bulk of this appropriation will go to:

- Fund the reclassification of Corrections Officers 1 and 2, who recently prevailed in a class-action request for reclassification. Norton estimates the one-grade-up reclassifications to account for \$2 million of the newly added \$9 million;
- Fund a one-grade-up reclassification for State Trooper sergeants, lieutenants and captains, who were also successful in a recent reclassification effort. Norton estimates their reclassification will require \$1.8 million of the \$9 million; and
- Add an additional \$2.7 million to the beleaguered Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center's budget to keep the facility operating through June 2019.

### **TEN YEAR CHALLENGE: PUBLIC APPROVAL OF LABOR UNIONS**



The national AFL-CIO produced this image in response to Facebook's recent "Ten-Year Challenge," which asked users to post pictures of themselves from 2008 and 2018.

### **VSEA Legal Victory Opens New Doors For Corrections Officers Who Want To Bump Across Agencies & Departments**

VSEA's legal team is cheering a decision this week by the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) to approve a corrections officer's bid to bump into a new position with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

The DOC employee was a Correctional Officer II who was on a RIF, but, while out, decided he

***Continued...***



wanted to bump into a vacant job as a Motor Vehicles Customer Service Specialist. But he was denied his requested bump, with reason being he needed an additional nine months of office clerical experience with significant public contact. VSEA argued that CO's deal with the public all the time, are trained to communicate effectively with inmates and others who are in distress, and that CO's spend an enormous amount of their time doing tasks that qualify as clerical work. One DOC member provided VSEA with pictures he took of the office equipment and furniture, and he then testified about it. Another testified about making the transition from CO to MVCSS successfully, and yet another testified about DOC's emphasis on training correctional staff to communicate effectively and to treat inmates and others with respect as professionals.

"The VLRB's decision will force DHR to revamp how it uses minimum qualifications against people who are using RIF rights, and it opens up significant bumping opportunities for correctional officers who are displaced for one reason or another," explains VSEA General Counsel Tim Belcher, who argued the case.

Read VLRB Decision on [VSEA.org](http://VSEA.org)

## **Reminder: State Employees Who Are Threatened On The Job Should File "eAlert" Form**

In the wake of this week's bomb threat at the Springfield Probation and Parole Office, VSEA is reminding members that there is an online form to fill out if you are threatened while at work.

Find The State's "eAlert" Homepage Here:  
<https://sov.d3securityonline.com/VSOC/ealert/default.aspx>

Important: Once you land on the eAlert page, you will see an entry labeled "threat" in the menu provided. Click on it and you land on a page with written instructions and fields to complete.

In November 2017, the current Secretary of the Administration sent the State's "Workplace Safety and Security" policy to state employees, and VSEA members are encouraged to read through the different policies, examples and responses, prior to an actual event occurring.

## **VSEA Lobbying For Main Street Alliance's Proposal On Paid Family Leave**

Thanks to negotiated contract language, VSEA members already are eligible to request paid, federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits if needed, but now Vermont is engaged in a renewed debate about offering FMLA benefits to all Vermonters, and there are currently two proposals on the table at the State House to accomplish the task.

### **State of Vermont's FMLA Proposal**

Pool Vermont and New Hampshire state employees into one collective body of 18,000+ workers to sustain the plan (the State would cover any employee payroll tax). Officials wanted the set pool because they feared making the proposal voluntary was far too risky and most likely would not work; and

### **Main Street Alliance's Proposal (VSEA Supported)**

A coalition of Vermont small businesses, calling itself the Main Street Alliance—and including VSEA—is proposing an across-the-board payroll tax to sustain its FMLA plan. The group's proposal passed in the legislature last year but was vetoed by the Governor. Supporters of the proposal hope a veto override might be possible this session.

### **FMLA Proposal Comparison Chart:**

<https://www.vsea.org/node/10089>



## **Save The Date! VSEA Heading To Okemo For Annual Meeting 2019!**

VSEA's Special Events Committee is thanking every member and retiree who took time to complete an Annual Meeting survey, developed by the Committee.

"The Committee values your feedback and is working hard to incorporate what we can into this year's Annual Meeting, explains Special Events Committee Chair Victoria Thorpe. "The Board of Trustees listened to your suggestions, and I am pleased to announce that VSEA will be holding its 75th Annual Meeting at Okemo Mountain's Jackson Gore Inn. This is in response to many survey respondents asking VSEA to conduct this important meeting in southern Vermont. Please save the date of Saturday, September 14, 2019, to attend."

Thorpe says more details about the meeting will be released as they become available. She is urging members to register early to aid the Committee's planning.

## **"Protect Your Pension" Meeting Now On Video**

Prior to the legislative 2019 session kicking off, VSEA Executive Director Steve Howard was conducting an education tour around the state, talking with VSEA members and retirees about an expected attack on your pension, who is behind it and how to help prevent it from happening.

If you weren't able to attend a presentation in your area, VSEA is pleased to now share this link to Steve's December 2018 St. Albans presentation.

This video is for VSEA members only. To view it you must be logged into your VSEA.org user account. If you do not have a VSEA.org account, please sign up for a free account here. Watch the presentation online here: <http://bit.ly/ProtectPension>

## **Register Today For State House Day 2019! *VSEA State House Day Is February 28!***

At State House Day, VSEA members are afforded an opportunity to talk with legislators about the services you provide and the issues and challenges you and your colleagues face.

### **Join us for the legislative reception!**

At 4:30 in the Cedar Creek room of the State House your union will be hosting its annual legislative reception where you can talk with your lawmakers over drinks and horderves. This is a fun, casual way to meet with lawmakers about the issues important to you. Join us when you can - leave when you must.

Register today and help make this VSEA's most successful State House Day ever. Let's show lawmakers and State officials at the State House what real collective power looks like!

Register By Emailing [VSEA@VSEA.org](mailto:VSEA@VSEA.org)

## **2019 VSEA Legislative Dinners Continue**

VSEA's Legislative Committee is again hosting hosting a series of informal dinner meetings, where VSEA members and retirees can talk with invited lawmakers about the issues important to them. Please RSVP by emailing [VSEA@VSEA.org](mailto:VSEA@VSEA.org)

Upcoming dinners and topics:

**Thursday, January 31** - Employee Rights: Safe Staffing, Temps, Security, and Privatization

**Wednesday, February 6** - Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center

Please note: The legislative dinner for January 24 (Mental Health and Youth Services) was postponed due to weather. Please stay tuned for a rescheduled dinner date.



## AFSCME Members At Howard Center Ratify New Agreement

After nine, tough months of bargaining with Howard Center management, AFSCME Local 1674-represented employees at the non-profit mental health agency in Burlington celebrated the ratification this week of a new, three-year agreement that awards a majority of the unit with a 7.8% raise over term. Other improvements include an increase in step values, shift differentials, the dental benefit and more.

VSEA congratulates the Howard Center's AFSCME members for their perseverance and solidarity.

## VSEA Membership Drive 2019 Now Underway!

**Between January 1, 2019, and September 1, 2019**, VSEA is calling on all members to become active recruiters—and you might be rewarded for your efforts. Here's how:

- Members who recruit two members will receive a **Dunkin' Donuts gift card**;
- Members who recruit five new members will receive a **VSEA insulated coffee mug**; and
- Members who recruit ten new members will receive a **\$50 Visa gift card**.

Every time you recruit a new member during the designated period, your name is entered into a drawing to be conducted at VSEA's 2019 Annual Meeting. **Four names will be pulled at random and winners will receive a check for \$300!**

If you have any questions, or want a list of non-members in your area, please contact VSEA Director of Operations and Organizing Ray Stout by email: [rstout@vsea.org](mailto:rstout@vsea.org)

## VSEA Announces March Trip To Foxwoods Casino!

The VSEA Membership Recruitment Committee is pleased to announce a return trip to the Foxwoods Casino in March.

### Dates:

Saturday, March 23 to Sunday, March 24, 2019

### Travel Cost:

\$69 per person

We will depart from Waterbury at 8:00 a.m. and from the Wilder Exit (I-91, Exit 12) at 9:00 a.m.

### Lodging (One Night/Two Trees Inn):

\$133/single occupancy

\$78 per person/double occupancy

\$70 per person/triple occupancy

### Questions?

Please contact VSEA Union Rep Bob South ([bsouth@vsea.org](mailto:bsouth@vsea.org)) or Administrative Assistant Sue DeVoid ([sdevoid@vsea.org](mailto:sdevoid@vsea.org)). Each can be reached by phone at 802-223-5247.

Register For VSEA's Trip To Foxwoods Casino Here: <https://form.jotform.com/vsea/Foxwoods>

### Important Information!

**Payment is non-refundable and must be received within one week of registering or you will lose your spot. Cash, check and credit card payments accepted. To pay, please contact VSEA Union Representative Bob South by email ([bsouth@vsea.org](mailto:bsouth@vsea.org)) or phone 802-223-5247. Thank You!**





## QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

***"This is already the longest government shutdown in the history of the United States and there is no end in sight. In our risk averse industry, we cannot even calculate the level of risk currently at play, nor predict the point at which the entire system will break."***

Joint and dire warning about public safety issued this week by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, the Air Line Pilots Association, and the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA.

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

### **New Bureau Of Labor Statistics (BLS) Data Finds Unions Holding Their Own, Despite Anti-Worker Janus Ruling**

From a January 18 AFSCME press release: (<https://bit.ly/2FViJJw>)

*The vicious anti-worker assault on American public sector unions—epitomized by the Janus Supreme Court case—has failed to gain traction, new data released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics confirm.*

*Despite a multimillion-dollar, decades-long war waged by special interests on public sector workers' right to join together for a better life—culminating in Janus, which was meant to "defund and defang" unions—official statistics show 2018 public sector membership held strong at 7,167,000, a marginal 0.5 percent decline, with total U.S. union membership at 14,721,000 million. Public service unions have all seen more membership joins than drops since the decision.*

*Since Janus was decided in June, its funders have poured millions of dollars into deceptive campaigns*

*encouraging public service workers to quit their unions, while continuing to manipulate the judicial system to attack the rights and freedoms of working people. But courts are increasingly siding with workers over special interests in the face of attempts to further disenfranchise working families by asking judges to reverse pre-existing and sound law.*

*The legal merits, the facts and public opinion have always been on the side of working people.*

Note: VSEA is also not experiencing the union abandonment that Vermont Janus supporters were hoping to see. Instead, VSEA membership is up, as opposed to down, which is a testament to VSEA members and retirees working hard to educate their co-workers about VSEA and the dangers of Janus. Thanks and keep up the great work VSEA!"

### **Los Angeles Teachers Reach Agreement & End Six-Day Strike**

More than 30,000 United Teachers Los Angeles members ended their six-day strike this week, after reaching a tentative agreement with city leaders. The deal is said to include a 6% wage increase, a commitment to reduce class sizes over four years and increased resources

"We were nervous, we were hopeful, but we were determined," teacher Cecilia Hamilton tells the *LA Times*. "I'm proud that our union was able to have gotten across the real message and that it wasn't about pay, but it was about what we need to help our children."

"We can't help our children with nothing," she adds.

Union representatives say members will vote Tuesday and that they expect the agreement to be approved. Teachers planned to meet with union representatives to familiarize themselves with the agreement before casting ballots later in the day.



## **Mississippi Child Welfare & Protection Agency Chief Says He's Very Concerned About State Layoffs Coming Soon Due To Federal Shutdown**

*Magnolia State Live* reports yesterday that Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director John Davis testified to lawmakers this week that state agencies charged with child protection and welfare may soon "have to begin furloughing state employees without pay because federal welfare money has been interrupted by the federal government shutdown."

Davis tells lawmakers he "needs to know by Feb. 15 if federal money will resume." If not, Davis he says he'll have to begin planning for furloughs at the agency beginning in March.

Child Protection Services Executive Director Jess Dickinson adds that his agency, which also spends money from the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, could also have to send workers home without pay at some point.

Note: VSEA has been in discussions with the State about what might happen, and who would be impacted, if the federal government shutdown drags on much longer.

## **NEXT VSEA MEETINGS/ TRAININGS/ EVENTS:**

### **Upcoming VSEA Organizer Worksite Meeting:**

#### **Burlington P&P Monday, January 28**

12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Burlington Probation & Parole

Conference Room

50 Cherry St., Burlington

**Questions:** Contact VSEA Organizer

David Oppenheimer: [doppenheimer@vsea.org](mailto:doppenheimer@vsea.org)

## **VSEA CALENDAR:**

### **January 29**

Child & Elder Care Committee Meeting

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

9:00 a.m.

### **January 29**

Benefits Advisory Committee Meeting

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

1:00 p.m.

### **January 31**

Dinner Meeting w/Legislators - Employee Rights

VSEA HQ

155 State Street

Montpelier

6:00 p.m.

## **Getting Ready To Retire? Retired Already? Join The VSEA Retired Members' Chapter!**

Long-time VSEA activist and leader Terry Lefebvre asked Council members getting ready to retire to join the VSEA Retirees' Chapter to continue to be an active and engaged union member, even in retirement. Lefebvre also appealed to Council members to talk up the Chapter to co-workers they know who might be preparing to retire.

With a possible fight looming on retirement security, Lefebvre stressed the importance to build the Chapter to be able to mobilize large numbers of past state workers to protect and defend the benefits they bargained to win over decades.

If you already belong to the Retired Members' Chapter, a big thanks to you. [Learn More Here About The VSEA Retired Members' Chapter:](#) [vsea.org/retirees](http://vsea.org/retirees)



## **Told You're Being Investigated? Watch This Video!**

In response to requests from members for information about an employee's rights in investigatory meetings, VSEA's Communications Department posted a video this week, featuring VSEA activist Robin Rieske talking to members about their rights.

It is important that every VSEA member knows his or her rights when it comes to union representation in investigatory meetings. Union representation at these meetings is a cornerstone of the labor movement. Your right to representation—as outlined in your contract and, in some cases, labor law—can be complicated.

Please take a few minutes on a break to watch the video, and know that the information being relayed could very well save your job someday. Remember, as a VSEA member, you are entitled to no-cost representation in investigatory meetings that may lead to discipline. Non-members, however, must now pay a rate of \$250 to \$350 per-hour for the same level of representation!

**Watch Online Here:**

**<https://www.vsea.org/video>**

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

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

## **What is the VSEA Advantage Program?**

### **Did you know?**

The average VSEA member can save hundreds of dollars a year by taking advantage of some of the Members Only benefits offered through their union.

### **GET EXCLUSIVE OFFERS, DISCOUNTS & MORE**

It's free, just for being a Vermont State Employees' Association PerksConnect member!

**Learn More! Visit [vsea.org/advantageprogram](https://vsea.org/advantageprogram)**

## **Guaranteed Issue Term and Whole Life Insurance for VSEA Members!** Learn More: [vsea.org/vsea-insurance](https://vsea.org/vsea-insurance)

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