

2017 Legislative Agenda: Our Fight for Fairness

Last May, Governor Malloy negotiated a state budget with members of the General Assembly that assumed thousands of state employee layoffs and included deep cuts to vital public services across state government, including public education, mental healthcare and court services.

While public sector workers were heavily impacted, no changes were made to our broken revenue system to ensure corporations and the wealthy contribute their fair share in taxes. The result was an austerity budget balanced on the backs of working families and our state's most vulnerable residents.

Since then, more than 2,000 state workers have lost their jobs, contributing to further loss of revenue to state coffers.

Today, executive and legislative branch analysts predict further deficits of \$1.5 billion in FY 2017-2018 and \$1.6 billion in FY 2018-19. These estimated budget shortfalls, coupled with the growing fixed retirement costs stemming from the state's decades-long failure to save for pension commitments, is adding pressure to make further program reductions.

Working with the Connecticut AFL-CIO, Council 4 will encourage legislators to adopt a state budget that grows the state's economy by focusing on investment in the workforce and infrastructure, fair taxation and revenue (raising taxes on the extremely wealthy, closing corporate tax loopholes) and economic opportunities for working people.



Some of the specific issues for our members include full funding of state aid to cities and towns; enforcement of standards to prevent the reckless contracting out of public services; and legislative approval of any state bargaining unit agreements that may be reached.

Council 4 will vehemently oppose any efforts to erode workers' rights and benefits. Already, several bills have been raised that would negatively impact our bargaining rights and take money out of our members' pockets. We have to be ready for a continual battle on this front.

It's important to remember that Connecticut ultimately has a revenue problem. Rich people have lobbied massive tax cuts for themselves. This has unfairly shifted their tax burden onto middle class and working poor family backs.

Meanwhile, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, the Yankee Institute and other mouth pieces for the rich and big corporations are scapegoating public employees as the cause of middle class decline. Fully and fairly fund public services requires that we restore taxes on the bloated and excessive incomes of corporate CEOs and billionaires who pay little or no taxes.

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