

- ▶▶ AFT Connecticut
- ▶▶ American Association of University Professors – Connecticut State University
- ▶▶ American Association of University Professors – UCONN
- ▶▶ American Federation of State, County, & Municipal Employees - Council 4
- ▶▶ Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges/ SEIU Local 1973
- ▶▶ Connecticut Association of Prosecutors
- ▶▶ Connecticut Employees Union Independent/ SEIU Local 511
- ▶▶ Connecticut Federations of School Administrators Local 61
- ▶▶ Connecticut Police and Fire Union/IAFF-IUPA
- ▶▶ Connecticut State Police Union
- ▶▶ CSEA SEIU Local 2001
- ▶▶ International Brotherhood of Police Officers/SEIU Local 731
- ▶▶ New England Healthcare Employees Union, District 1199/SEIU

Media Advisory for Wednesday, April 28, 2010:

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Governor's Agents Storm Out After Failing to Produce Analysis of Impact to Services, Costs to Pension Plan of Latest Retirement Incentive

Rell Administration representatives abruptly left a planned meeting with leaders of the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) this evening to discuss the governor's latest Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP). Union leaders noted that the governor's plan could cost taxpayers over \$1 billion dollars while decimating state services, and pressed for responses to cost savings proposals they made in January that would have improved services and saved more money than is estimated through the ERIP.

Union leaders reiterated the obligation of both parties to negotiate and, if necessary, arbitrate the wisdom of any retirement incentive program, and pressed for information on the impact the governor's ERIP would have on public services and the state's already underfunded pension plan. The response of Administration representatives was to storm out of the meeting.

"We're terribly understaffed already," said Carmen Boudier, President of New England Healthcare Employees Union, District 1199/SEIU. "We have healthcare workers and corrections officers struggling through mandatory double shifts, and the state trooper force is below its statutory minimum. When bridges are found to need repairs, we don't even have enough maintenance professionals to repair them," she said.

Dave Walsh, President of the American Association of University Professors – CCSU, noted that, "college students are struggling to find courses they need to graduate, and we have backups and waiting lists for workers needing job services, and for businesses needing permits to create jobs. Why would the governor want to make a bad situation worse?"

The governor has argued that her ERIP will save the state budget \$65 million in the next fiscal year. A drop in the state's \$17 billion annual budget, it would dramatically increase the unfunded liability of the pension plan. The promised savings are also less than the state would save from the coalition's 'Jobs for All Working Families' proposals, which actually improve public services and reduce the unfunded liability.

"I sit on the governor's Post Employment Benefits Commission, which she created because of her concern over the underfunded pension as well as other costs, such as retiree healthcare," said Sal Luciano, Executive Director of Council 4 AFSCME. "I'm stunned that now she proposes to make that liability much worse. It will cost the state at least \$1.2 billion in the long-run -- clearly not a plan to help the state out of this financial mess," he said.

In 2009, Governor Rell justified a retirement program by claiming it was a better alternative to layoffs. SEBAC members went on to ratify an agreement that will provide over \$900 million in savings to the state before the end of the current budget, and includes concessions in healthcare, wage freezes and furloughs, as well as a retirement incentive. That agreement was by far the greatest contribution by any group towards helping with the state's budget woes, but needs to be followed by real action by political leaders to address the economic problems that plague the people of our state.

"The governor's call for another ERIP further destabilizes the economy by putting younger pre-retirement workers back into the workforce with incomes that cannot sustain them," said Ron McLellan, President of CEUI/SEIU Local 511. "Connecticut's people need more jobs, not more jobseekers," he said.

District 1199, AAUP, Council 4, and CEUI are four of the thirteen unions in the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC), which serves to unite approximately 45,000 Connecticut State Employees to address issues of common concern. To learn more about the coalition's campaign for a fair budget and a livable state with great public services visit www.InThisTogetherCT.org.

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Attached:
State Workers 'Jobs for All Working Families' Proposals