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Capitol Monitor

A Report on Activity at the State Capitol

Vol. 7, Issue 11 | June 5, 2017

Stand Up to Attacks on Working Families from GOP:

Senate Republicans ramped up their attack on state workers by releasing their budget and calling for even greater concessions than the \$1.5 billion of state employee concessions that were agreed during months of talks between SEBAC and the governor's administration. This is nothing but a text book example of bad faith bargaining. And to throw salt in the wound, it comes after state worker sacrifices have already save Connecticut billions of dollars since the 2011 SEBAC Agreement.

Speaking to reporters, Senate Republican President Pro Tempore Len Fasano said if the Republican's budget proposals and demands for further SEBAC concessions were refused, then his party would move onto Plan B: changing state statutes to end collective bargaining rights for Connecticut workers. Fasano claimed the plan would achieve nearly \$2.2 billion in savings without union consent once state statutes are changed to suit their agenda that would hurt tens of thousands of Connecticut working families.

The Senate Republican plan would:

- **Suspend or eliminate** arbitration of wages for unionized employees;
- **Require greater increases** (than what has already been agreed to with SEBAC leaders) in worker contributions toward retirement health care and require more years of service before receiving the benefit;
- **Triple all employees'** pension contributions;
- **Replace** overtime pay with comp time.

Join SEBAC union members tonight and Tuesday evening from 5 p.m. at the Capitol to stand up against these attacks to our collective bargaining rights. No testimony is needed. We will make our presence known as legislators discuss bills on the floor of the House and Senate. Please wear your red CSU-AAUP shirt if you can attend. To see a video of the Republican press conference on CT-N, [click here.](#)

Posturing and Obscenities?:

House Republican Minority Leader Themis Klarides, a lawyer who represents Derby, echoed Senate Republican's calls for statutory changes to eliminate collective bargaining. The House Minority Leader went further to say that no House Republicans would support a budget that contained an extension of the SEBAC agreement from 2022 to 2027— five more years that SEBAC unions insisted on before even discussing concessions with the administration.

This Republican response disregards months of negotiations by SEBAC leaders and the administration and brought some to question how serious Republicans actually are about reaching a budget solution versus pure political posturing.

That question grew even more resonant when Klarides commented in a press availability on June 1 with Capitol reporters. The question was if the real goal behind her caucuses' legislative positions was to pick up more seats in the 2018 elections. "Isn't the goal always to get more members in your party?" the Republican House Minority Leader asked rhetorically.

Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz, himself a union organizer representing Berlin, deemed Klarides' answer "an obscene political statement."

"That is an outrageous, obscene political statement that is insulting to every family and business in Connecticut," Aresimowicz said. "If the House minority is truly putting their political goals ahead of the needs of the state, we have a serious fundamental problem with how we are going to govern and meet the challenges the entire state faces. To say you are making political calculations your top priority is a stunning revelation and a total abdication of real leadership."

Legislators are unlikely to reach a budget agreement before the end of the regular session, which ends at midnight on June 7. A special session will be called to complete work on the state's budget, but an exact date is yet to be confirmed. Leaders said they expect to reach a budget agreement before June 30, which is the end of the fiscal year. If a new budget is not adopted by that time, the Governor could manage the state according to the previous budget and could additionally exercise rescission authority to cut certain individual line items. While Republicans have been involved all along in bi-partisan budget negotiations, it is unclear if they will participate going forward.

Time's a Thief— Special Session Here We Come:

A Dream Turned PR Nightmare:

A dream turned into a public relations nightmare after the arrest in early May of a key CT Students for a Dream organizer. Eric Cruz-Lopez, a DACA student from Mexico was charged with 103 counts of criminal mischief after he was videotaped spraying anti-Trump graffiti around UConn. As news of the arrest spread, bi-partisan support that had been building for HB7000 and SB 17 – two institutional financial aid bills that would allow all students access to aid regardless of immigration status – [soon evaporated.](#) The bill was set to be called for a vote on the House floor but as Republicans withdrew their support, the bill was pulled. However, over the weekend SB 17 was discussed in the Senate for two hours. [The bill was tabled, however, and is now dead.](#) CSU-AAUP remains a supporter of Dreamers and everyone's right to access quality public higher education.

DACA students pay full in-state tuition, which includes an amount set aside for institutional financial aid. However, these students do not have access to these funds. Given the federal government's position on the undocumented, it's understandable that that money would not be available, but there's no reason for denying the students access to the remaining pool.

[Click here for a list of all bills reported out of the Higher Education Committee this session.](#)