MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT  Richard Gulla, SEA/SEIU 1984 President
Celebrating Women’s History Month

Throughout March, we celebrate women’s achievements and continue the fight for women’s rights. The theme for 2021 is #ChoosetoChallenge. The idea is that from challenge comes change, so the theme urges the calling out of gender bias and inequality with the goal of making a major change to make things more inclusive.

This speaks volumes to us here at the SEA, whereas part of our mission, we fight for and challenge the status quo for good with the intent to make change happen for the betterment of our members and the public overall.

Within the SEA, we have strong leadership in our Board of Directors, in our chapters, and throughout our membership. Your dedication to the many causes we fight and the good that we do is what makes us stronger together, and we thank you and applaud all of your efforts.

Here in New Hampshire, our own State Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) is the only woman to sit on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She also introduced a bill called the Women, Peace and Security Act in 2017 along with Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), which was signed into law. She has also led well through this pandemic, ensuring her team's safety and putting the public's safety first throughout this crisis.

New Hampshire is lucky enough to have several firsts in women's history. At one point in time, Custer, Shaheen, and Hassan's delegation was the first in the nation leading the way for many more to come.
Update on the ULP, by Randy Hunneyman

The contract negotiations process for NH State employees is governed by the Public Employee Labor Relations Act or RSA 273-A. This law establishes several key standards for how the State of New Hampshire will negotiate labor contracts with unionized state employees.

When negotiating labor contracts, it is a fundamental rule that the employer meets with the union representatives to exchange proposals and refrain from presenting these proposals to any other group outside of bargaining.

A large majority of NH State employees have been without a labor contract since July 2020. This is due to a bargaining dispute over a fact finder’s report issued in November 2019. In this report, the fact-finder made specific recommendations on settlements to the parties, such as the amounts of an acceptable cost of living adjustment. The union bargaining teams accepted the report, while the State team rejected the report. When this happened, NH law required that parties submit the report to their respective sides for a vote to either accept or reject the report. For the unions, this is their affected union members; for the State, it is the Executive Council.

In December 2019, several procedural disagreements occurred between the parties that resulted in the unions filling two unfair labor practice complaints against the State.

On December 3, 2019, while the union was conducting the required vote on the fact finder’s report, a workplace email was sent to all union-represented State employees that contained detailed descriptions of the State’s bargaining proposals as well as an explanation of why the Governor thought employees should accept the State’s offer. The unions believed this email to be a violation of NH labor law and filed the first complaint with the labor board.

In December of 2021 and again in January 2020, the Governor stated to the union teams and members of the NH Executive Council that he would not present the fact finder’s report to the council for a vote. The unions believed this to be another violation of NH labor law and filed a second complaint.

On Friday, February 26, 2021, the NH Public Employees Labor Relations Board released its decision on both complaints and found in favor of the unions. The State Employees Association of NH is encouraged by the ruling and believes the board’s decision supports the law’s intent and assists the parties with negotiations by clearly defining the bargaining requirements on both sides of the table.

The State and unions are again at a bargaining impasse over the 2021-2023 contract and are scheduled for mediation.
STATEMENT REGARDING ALLEGATIONS AT NH YOUTH CENTER

We are incredibly disheartened to learn about the allegations surrounding the state’s youth detention center.

Facilities that serve children within the juvenile justice system are responsible for young offenders’ care and custody. These facilities and the staff working in them are expected to provide for the safety of both the youth and the public. We believe that a full and thorough investigation is warranted and necessary to determine exactly what took place. We also need to remember that this lawsuit needs to be tried in a court of law and not in public headlines.

This lawsuit is being filed against the NH Youth Center for actions purportedly committed in the ’80s and ‘90s. While the allegations are genuinely horrific, we need to let the process play out in court first before condemning the system.

Many dedicated employees have provided incredible services for children in crisis throughout the years. Many clients in this same system have turned their lives around to become productive adults because of the services they received at this facility.

We join the call to investigate all allegations, and we ask our elected leaders to refrain from calling for closure before we get an accurate accounting of that system.

CHAPTER ELECTIONS UPDATE

Chapter Elections

As you know we are in the middle of Chapter Elections and as a member-driven organization, the work that we do and the efforts we take on are directly related to your involvement in your Chapter.

The Chapter nomination deadline was February 26 and now Nominating Committees have until 3/12/21 to nominate members for vacant positions in their chapters.

If you have any questions, or would like more information please reach out to your organizer.
The American Rescue Act, as you know, is an Emergency Legislative Package to fund vaccinations, provide immediate, direct relief to families bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis, and support struggling communities.

President Biden’s $1.9 trillion stimulus package marking a crucial step toward passage of the White House’s first major piece of legislation. The president unveiled his proposal, the American Rescue Plan, last month, with hundreds of billions of dollars going to vaccination programs, expanded unemployment insurance, $1,400 stimulus checks, state and local governments, school re-openings, and more.

This bill passed in the House on February 27, 2021, and passed in the Senate with modifications over this past weekend. In an effort to hold Senate Democratic moderates, Senate leaders made some limited modifications to the House-passed bill prior to the vote. These changes include reducing the number of people who would receive direct payments and adding guardrails and a new capital fund to the state and local aid. To pass this bill in the Senate, leadership had to hold all 50 Senate Democrats, some of whom have been vocal about wanting a less robust package. A document on some Senate improvements to the House bill can be found HERE.

Now, the next round of COVID-19 relief is almost here. We expect the President to sign it when it reaches his desk later this week. This $1.9 trillion package is a reminder that elections have consequences. The American Rescue Plan will provide $350 billion for states, local governments and contains about $130 billion for schools. It also includes funding for colleges and universities, transit agencies, child care providers, and food assistance. Sadly, a federal $15 minimum wage was not included in this bill, and we need to continue fighting until that happens. American Rescue Plan is a strong first step towards real relief for working families. But this relief is incomplete without a $15 minimum wage. Congress has more work to do for essential workers. We need to keep fighting until we win a raise to $15 for 32 million people. You can read SEIU President Mary Kay’s statement on Senate passage HERE.

Next, the bill will go back to the House to vote again on the Senate-passed bill, which could happen anytime this week. The goal remains to pass the bill in both chambers prior to the expiration of enhanced unemployment benefits on March 14th.
LEGISLATIVE UPDATES AND POLITICAL INSIGHTS

WHY I LEFT LAST WEEK’S HOUSE SESSION  by Dianne Schuett

Not everyone has a social media profile. Not all of our members follow us or read all of the local papers, so we thought we’d share this interesting article with you of an insider's perspective on the NH House events that took place last week here in the Granite State.

House representative Dianne Schuett was in attendance during the house session, and she details her experience in a letter to the Concord Monitor that you can read here.

SEA CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS

SEA Conservatives Are in an Excellent Position to be a Powerful Influence

New Hampshire voters selected Republican candidates to lead the legislature. With a clear majority in the New Hampshire House and Senate, Republicans will take over leadership in both chambers. The takeover means that it is less likely Governor Sununu will veto as many legislative efforts and may allow SEA conservatives an opportunity to move on some of the SEA legislative priorities, not to mention our ability to secure a contract.

Here’s How You Can Help.
1. Join our next Conservative Members Committee meeting on Zoom on 4/13/21 at 5:00 PM.
2. Connect with legislators in your district. If you don’t know who they are, you can find them here.
3. Donate to SEAPAC, our Political Action Fund. As little as $1.00 a month helps. The link is here.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Mason Petit, mpetit@seiu1984.org.

SHARE YOUR STORY CAMPAIGN

The NH Retirement Security Coalition is looking for active and retired members to participate in our "Share Your Story" Campaign.

We are looking for members willing to share their story in writing to help educate legislators, political leaders, and the public on the importance of pension and security in retirement.

To participate and help us grow our campaign, all you need to do is to follow the link below and fill out the form with some information about who you are, what you do/did for work, the importance of public service, and anything else you'd like to include.

You can also include a photo to go along with your story! If you have any questions or would like further information, please feel free to contact our Coordinator Casey McCabe at info@nhretirementsecuritycoalition.com
Health Coach Highlights and the Diabetes Prevention Program

Although we have had many cold days and nights there is a slow warm up starting to occur. Soon flowers will be starting to bloom through the left over snow and ice and many of us will be able to increase our time we spend outside doing projects in our yards and gardens, physical activities, and sports. I welcome this time of year as it always reminds me of new beginnings and fresh starts.

This is also the time of year when some of us recognize we have put on a few extra pounds over the winter and holiday months and we are looking to put plans and goals in place to lose weight become more active and make some life style changes.

Being overweight and having decreased physical activity are risk factors that make our bodies more prone to developing Diabetes. Diabetes is a disease process where our body has a problem regulating the sugar we consume. Diabetes is a disease that inhibits healing and makes our body more at risk for acquiring many other healthcare concerns.

Type II Diabetes is a type of Diabetes many acquire later in life. For those over the age of 60 years old, 1 in 2 people will acquire diabetes. There are many risk factors that impact acquiring diabetes. Some risk factors we have the ability to impact such weight, diet, physical activity, but others are predetermined by who we are.

Age, race, and family history are some of the risk factors that we have no control over. Understand the risk factors, the ability you have to impact them, and how to set goals for success, are key factors in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Please see the attached flyer which helps explain Diabetes and the risk factors that impact us the most.

The DPP program is a 100% covered service for qualified subscribers and their qualified dependents that participate with the state health plan. To find out if you qualify for this amazing program go to www.solera4me.com/stateofnh and take the brief 1-minute quiz.

Wellness Webinars are also available Tuesdays and Wednesdays through March from 12-12:30 pm.

March: How to prevent Diabetes
April: A Healthier You
Wellness Webinar Log in Information:
Microsoft Teams meeting
Join on your computer or mobile app
Join with a video conferencing device anthem@m.webex.com
Video Conference ID: 119 854 225 8

More Resources on Diabetes from Anthem

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April: A Healthier You
Wellness Webinar Log in Information:
Microsoft Teams meeting
Join on your computer or mobile app
Join with a video conferencing device anthem@m.webex.com
Video Conference ID: 119 854 225 8

More Resources on Diabetes from Anthem
SEA/SEIU 1984 Resource Availability

We understand that the last year has been difficult for many of our members due to COVID-19. If you know someone who could use the below resources provided by the State of NH and the SEIU, please pass this information along.

FUEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

If you or someone you know is having trouble paying for heat during the winter season, the Fuel Assistance Program (FAP) may be able to provide some relief.

The Fuel Assistance Program in New Hampshire’s arm of the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is funded through the US Department of Health and Human Services. While OSI administers the program, the on-the-ground work is done by local Community Action Agencies with whom OSI contracts.

As funds become available, the Fuel Assistance Program benefits qualified New Hampshire households to assist with heating costs. The Fuel Assistance Program can also help families during a heating emergency by securing an emergency delivery of fuel, delaying a shut-off notice, or referring clients to another source of assistance.

Fuel Assistance benefits are a grant and do not have to be paid back. Fuel Assistance benefits range from $158 to $1,575, depending on household income and energy costs. Benefits are calculated considering household income, energy costs, number of heating degree days within a region, and housing type. This targeting allows FAP to provide those households with the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs with the highest benefits. (See the eligibility guidelines.) The average benefit is $889.00. Fuel Assistance benefits are not counted as income when applying for other assistance programs.

For information on how to apply, please visit [https://www.nh.gov/osi/energy/programs/fuel-assistance/index.htm](https://www.nh.gov/osi/energy/programs/fuel-assistance/index.htm) or call 211.

If you or someone you know is having difficulty paying for home heating fuel or utilities, please call your local Community Action Agency. If you need help locating the agency in your area, click on the Community Action Agencies link or call 211 for additional information.

FREE COLLEGE DEGREES PROGRAMS

Open to eligible SEIU members and their families. You can choose from several online programs offered by Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC) and Central State University (CSU).

Your college degree is within reach! Federal, state, and employer grants don’t always cover the full cost of earning a degree online. SEIU is proud to partner with Eastern Gateway Community College and Central State University to help eligible students fill the financial gap.

Associate’s Degree or Certificate

EGCC welcomes anyone with a high school diploma or GED regardless of past academic performance. Associate’s degrees or certificates available in Accounting, Business Management (with certificates in Advertising, Cyber Security, Data Science, Digital and Social Media, and many more.

Eligible SEIU members and family members may also enroll in other online programs at EGCC, such as Medical Coding, Health Information Management, IT, Fire Science, and more.

Bachelor’s Degree available in Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Education – Early Childhood Education, Education – Intervention Specialist, Interdisciplinary Studies/Humanities

Please find out how to apply or read our Frequently Asked Questions at [https://www.seiumb.com/education/seiu-free-college-benefit-faq](https://www.seiumb.com/education/seiu-free-college-benefit-faq) or call 1-855-469-SEIU (7348) toll-free to talk to an advisor.

Take the next step toward your future—apply now!
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, BOOK CLUB

The SEA Book Club had another great meeting on Monday, March 1, with a deep conversation about Second Glance by Jodi Picoult. The next read on the list is The Night Circus by Erin Morganstern.

_The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called Le Cirque des Rêves, and it is only open at night._

_But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway—a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. Unbeknownst to them, this is a game in which only one can be left standing, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will._

_Despite themselves, however, Celia and Marco tumble headfirst into love—a deep, magical love that makes the lights flicker and the room grow warm whenever they so much as brush hands. True love or not, the game must play out, and the fates of everyone involved, from the cast of extraordinary circus performers to the patrons, hang in the balance, suspended as precariously as the daring acrobats overhead._

http://erinmorgenstern.com/writing/the-night-circus/

The book club will meet again on **Monday, April 5**, to discuss it and anyone still interested is welcome to join! Contact dholt@seiu1984.org if you'd like to join or have any questions.

SEIU 1984 ROAD RACE COMMITTEE

The Road Race Committee has scheduled its next meeting for March 18th from 5-6 pm. Join with Google Meet @ meet.google.com/emx-hswn-fdv.

It takes a lot of preparation and many volunteers to make this fun and exciting race such a wonderful fundraising effort for Operation Santa Claus.

The SEA 5K Road Race and Fitness Walk has run has taken place for over 20 years on the first Saturday of April. With the uncertainty of the pandemic, we have moved our race to Saturday, September 18th @ 9:00. This fast, flat, family-friendly 5K loops through the state office park and along Hazen Drive.

The SEA 5k is registered online with Millennium Running at RunReg.com. Online Registration Deadline: Thursday, Sep 16, 2021, at 9:00 AM ET.

Here is the link to your registration page: https://www.RunReg.com/sea-5k