



## SERVING THE WORKING PERSON

### March 2003

If any settlement is reached expect it in the summer. Printed to the right of this column is SEBAC's February 20, 2003 offer amounting to \$1 billion in savings. Here are some of the reasons why the summer:

As recent as March 5, the Governor stated a settlement could be reached returning all 2800 workers back immediately, and job security through June 2007 (which are the two most important issues needed to reach settlement). The money issues the members and Governor said were needed, SEBAC has proposed --again listed to the right, except for changes in the health insurance issues. No one is sure what the Governor is seeking in that area, because every time SEBAC has met with the Governor and/or his designees, their issues always changed. Cost shifting of health insurance requiring members to pay a greater percentage than present, overall is the third most important issue to members and SEBAC. If you disagree on these three issues please contact me and we can discuss your ideas.

Yes, after hearing the Governor make his statements on the radio talk show, his designees were contacted and asked to meet. The response given was the remarks made were general in nature and meeting would not change anything. Bad faith negotiation tactics have been the constant theme over the last five months and will continue until summer.

The Democratic leadership in the General Assembly have also been disingenuous and lacking when it comes to having a backbone....No help whatsoever is putting it lightly!

The recent budget approved dealing with the deficit through June 2003, is a perfect example of the leadership's sellout of State workers, municipalities, and social services. Having the first chance in eight years to take on the Governor, due to the deficit created by business tax cuts, leadership not only bullied legislators in approving the budget, it undercut SEBAC's negotiating position by passing an illegal Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP).

Let's see how the democratic leaders will justify their actions when they ask for election help and contributions. In fact, the Special Election to be held on April 8 in Bridgeport to fill a vacant democratic senatorial seat, CEUI has again endorsed, and will actively support the election of union activist Ed Gomes. The General Assembly democratic leadership has put their support and money behind another contender.

The sellout of 44,000 unionized State workers and their families by the AAUP UConn Faculty (please don't confuse with the faculty at Community Technical Colleges or Central, Eastern, Southern, or Western Universities who are in different bargaining units and rejected similar offers) was not management initiated.

Additionally, issuing of a press release to announce its withdrawal from the federal law suit filed against the Governor and the OPM Secretary, was tantamount to "royal buttock kissing" of the Governor. Fortunately, UConn AAUP has not chosen to be present for any SEBAC discussions since, and I will object to their presence in the foreseeable future. UConn AAUP, not facing any layoffs now or in the future, harmed the future of every unionized State worker and their families by their knee crawling to management and initiating a pay freeze.

My final reason for the earliest settlement being in the summer, the Governor, following in the footsteps of President Bush, has an even bigger goal for workers and the public service they proudly performed, which is permanently downsizing State government by privatizing work and the services rendered. To accomplish his goal, his biannual budget (outlined on page 4), if passed by the General Assembly in its present form, will do just that. But the democratically controlled General Assembly will not finish a budget before the session ends on Wednesday, June 4. A Special Session that will actually begin in late June or early July will decide if the State's largest businesses will pay more taxes than a Custodian presently pays, and if millionaires who are scheduled to receive a federal income tax cut of \$24,000 for every million dollars they earn will be asked to pay their fair share, or if municipalities, social services, education and State workers are better to cut. Only with the continued help of laid-off workers and members, will the proposed cuts fail!

***Expect a slowdown/lull over the next several months in regard to new layoffs and contracting out. The present session of the General Assembly ends June 4th. Summer session begins June 21 and ends September 23. During that period, it will be nastier than the last 4 months have been until a budget is finalized.***