

**This Q & A is in response to the many questionnaires that members returned to the Union. Thank you for responding. We will also have additional Q & A posted on our website, [www.ceui.org](http://www.ceui.org)**



**Q: *Why didn't we poll members or get them involved before discussions with the Governor?***

A: We did. Union leaders presented the Malloy Administration with hundreds of cost savings proposals worth more than a billion dollars that came directly from rank-and-file state workers. These were the ideas for increasing efficiencies, reducing unnecessary costs, and eliminating redundancies that we started gathering from CEUI members last year. The final tentative agreement included nearly 300 million dollars in recommendations for transforming government put forward by union members. That was a big part of how we ended up with an agreement where less than half the savings came from actual concessions given back by union members. Before the discussions started, members communicated with staff and leadership via email, phone, and direct conversation as to priorities. We could not send a survey that the press would make public as to what CEUI members were willing to give up. That would put us in a very weak position before discussions even started. We had a good sense of the importance of job security, pensions and healthcare to members. The disagreement is about what we should do to keep what is important to us.

**Q: *How can the State expect me to work until age 65, 66 or 67?***

A: The current Tier II and Tier IIA plans have a normal retirement age of 60 with 25 years of service and age 62 with 10 years of service. There is no change for current employees who retire before 2022. Current employees who would retire after 2022 can opt in 2013 to contribute between .002 and .0072 of pensionable earnings to keep their current retirement ages of 60 with 25 years, and 62 with 10 years. Example: someone making \$50,000 per year x .0072 would contribute \$360 per year until retirement. On the low end .002 x \$50,000 would be \$100 per year. Tier III would increase all retirement ages by 3 years (new hires only).

\*Note .. as of now we have no expectation of what the rules would be after 2017.

**Q: *When I was hired, the agency explained my pension benefits, and those are the benefits I expect to receive. How can this be changed?***

A: It is true that the agencies did not do a good job of explaining that the future pension and healthcare benefit we would receive is whatever the plan provides at the time of retirement. The 1997-2017 pension and healthcare agreement gave all of us a false sense of security, and created a sense of entitlement. The Union could have done a better job educating members that pension and healthcare agreements expire, and have to be re-negotiated like any other contract.

**Q: *The cost of healthcare is already too high. Why should we have to pay more?***

A: The cost of healthcare has risen at an alarming rate for everyone and we are not immune to those costs. The pool of uninsured continues to grow putting a burden on those with insurance to pay for everyone's care. In fact, the cost of our plan has increased at a lower rate than most other plans, and we have been able to keep our plan benefits intact. The health enhancement plan is an effort to lower the cost of claims in our plan to provide some relief for the State and our members.

**Q: How could the State put us in Sustinet or some other universal health plan?**

A: They can't. The Union has always been an advocate of health insurance for all workers. Our current health plan has specific protections against changes in benefits or plan design until 2017. The agreement would extend those contractual protections until 2022. Anyone who is concerned about the impact of any state or federal universal health plan would want the contract extended to 2022. The health enhancement plan is your current Anthem or United plan; the same benefits, doctors, and hospitals. It is not part of Sustinet or any universal health plan.

**Q: We shouldn't have to make concessions--why can't we just vote for the status quo?**

A: There is no status quo. Connecticut and the country are barely recovering from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The state's budget deficit is real, and if we're not part of the solution, politicians and the public will make us part of the problem. Without an agreement, we can expect up to 1,000 CEUI members to lose their jobs now. The rest can expect gutted health and pension benefits in six years. That's why we need an agreement with job security that preserves healthcare and pension benefits through 2022.

**Q: Is the Union's only concern about layoffs that it will be a loss of dues money?**

A: Our union's top priority is to protect every member's family, job, benefits, and rights. That's why we're working hard to manage the impact of Connecticut's budget deficit and attacks on public employees across the country. It's why we need real job security to get us through the recovery from the recession. It's why we need to stabilize benefits like retiree healthcare, which are at serious risk. It's why we need to preserve our health and pension benefits beyond 2017.

**Q: We already voted "no" on the SEBAC agreement -- why should we vote on another agreement?**

A: There are 2 simple reasons:

- First, CEUI members' votes didn't even count under SEBAC's outdated bylaws. Because of its size, AFSCME has veto power over every agreement that comes before SEBAC, including the one we just voted on. That has to change or our members' voices will always be silenced.
- Second, up to 1,000 CEUI members could lose their jobs to lay-offs or low-bid contractors, and the rest face cuts to our benefits and negotiating rights.

We've heard from many members who thought that voting "no" would keep things the way they are. Many others have told us they were misinformed by reports in the press, agency managers, or even some of their co-workers. There were a lot of myths out there, and our members deserve to know the facts before voting on an agreement.

**Q: SEBAC has had the same bylaws for a long time, so why do we need to change them?**

A: Because our members' votes didn't count under SEBAC's outdated bylaws. Right now, one other union has ultimate veto authority over any SEBAC agreement. No matter what SEBAC's 14 other unions -- including CEUI -- decide, AFSCME has the final say. That's not fair and it's not democratic. We need to update the SEBAC bylaws so every unionized state employee vote counts and all our voices are heard.