

# THE CSC SENTINEL



Volume 1, Issue 1

Correction Supervisors Council, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001

October, 2011



"I appreciate all the hard work by our council leaders and union staff to get my co-workers and I back to work. The strength and influence of our Union made the difference when we needed it most."

**Eva Agathos**

Correctional Captain,  
York CI  
Member, CSC Council

## Restoring the Jobs of Laid-Off Members

As of Friday, October 14, **all of the members of our CSC Council were back on the job.** Doing so took a lot of work by many of CSEA's professional staff and member leaders, but proved to be worth the effort.

**Bringing back the 21 correctional captains, lieutenants, and counselor supervisors** laid-off in July and August has been our Union's top priority. We can all be proud of

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## Contract Surveys

Members of CSEA's NP-8 bargaining unit will soon begin **contract negotiations** with representatives of the administration of Governor Dan Malloy. We need **your input** on what is important to you for your next contract.

Survey forms will be mailed to members at their homes and available online at the CSC Council page at our Union's website -- **[www.csea-ct.com](http://www.csea-ct.com)**.

## The IRS 415 (b) Federal Pension Cap

Our Union has been working to resolve a dispute that has the potential to impact retirement income for correctional employees in hazardous duty job classifications. A federally mandated cap on the pension benefits in the Internal Revenue Service code sets the maximum amount a retiree can collect based on age. Despite an exception for police and firefighters, correction personnel are subject to the limitation because of their age and size of their pensions.

While a federal tax issue, the cap is a **unique problem for correction supervisors in Connecticut that is the product of our own success.**

Before gaining collective bargaining rights and joining CSEA, our pension benefits didn't rise to the level of the federal pension cap. But since then, our Union has negotiated a **25% accumulated general wage increase for our members** in three successive contracts. We also **won overtime with "time and a half" earnings included in retirement pension calculations** in our first CSEA contract.

These two factors significantly impacted our members' final average earnings, and thus brought on the imposition of the cap.

The cap was first raised this past year when certain higher education administrators were earning pension benefits that exceeded \$195,000 per year. A review of the 415 (b)

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the way our members conducted themselves during this very difficult time.

Our Union made sure that laid-off employees could put their names on the transfer list. Members returning to work can put a transfer form in for another shift/facility if the one they were assigned to is not their first choice. Those should be faxed to Jim Faulkner in DOC's Human Resources recruitment office:  
(860) 692-7615

Also, our Union worked hard to make sure that laid-off members would have their "time" restored upon their re-employment.

## Upcoming CSC Events

### CSC Council Leaders Meeting

November 4 from 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM  
Room I, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001  
760 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

**Agenda:** Meeting of CSC Council officers and stewards to prepare for contract negotiations

### DOC Correctional Captain Exam

Application period open until October 27  
Exam date is November 17

**Info:** Access the "Employment Connection" link at the CT Dept of Administrative Services website -- <http://das.ct.gov/>

### CSC Council Membership Meeting

December 6 from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM &  
7:00PM - 8:30PM

Room I, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001  
760 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT

**Agenda:** Bi-monthly meeting for all members of our CSC Council

Check our website's "**Events Calendar**" for more union activities -- [www.csea-ct.com](http://www.csea-ct.com)

limits by the State Comptroller's Retirement Division showed that the \$195,000 maximum was indexed by age so that the earlier you retired, the lower the maximum benefit cap.

The SEBAC 2011 agreement ratified in August reflects the current federal maximum salary limit for pension purposes. But it **does not affect the separate federal issue of which hazardous duty employees are covered by the "police and fire exemption"** in section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code. That's why our Union has been seeking to apply the exemption to *all* hazardous duty employees -- including correction supervisors -- to the maximum extent allowed by federal law.

First, **CSEA filed grievances** on behalf of a recently retired CSC Council member to address the exemption under our contract as well as our pension and healthcare agreement.

Second, CSEA has requested that the **Connecticut State Employees Retirement Commission take on this issue**. The commission is expected to hire an individual or firm with expertise in this area in the next month. Their charge will be to address the federal pension limit's impact on correction and other hazardous duty employees.

They must also make sure that any action taken does not put the state pension fund at risk of being treated as a non-qualified plan. A non-qualified plan treats pension contributions as an employee's income -- for which they would be taxed annually.

Finally, our Union has also **engaged the pension experts at SEIU**, our international body, for support and assistance.

Further updates on this important issue will be provided in the weeks and months ahead. In the meantime, be sure to send any questions to CSC Council President Chuck Lemelin at [clemelin@csea760.com](mailto:clemelin@csea760.com).