



WORKERS, COLLECTIVE POWER IN THE PANDEMIC

LABOR DAY 2020

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The Communicator PEF

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# The President's Message By WAYNE SPENCE

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## Labor Day

During this Labor Day period I ask you to remember that, as a union with more than 50,000 members, we have more in common than in differences. Raising wages, improving working conditions, increasing benefits for you and your families, upgrading terms and conditions of employment – sound familiar? As union members, we should try to focus on our similarities rather than our differences. And as New York State employees we are all connected through PEF.

Our collective union influence is used daily, but this power was demonstrated and amplified throughout the current COVID crisis. From [telecommuting](#) to leave accruals, PEF does it. From hard fought [health and safety protections](#) to the unfair delay of the [April 1 paycheck](#), PEF does it. And from providing [daily information updates](#) to assisting members with a multitude of grievances, PEF does it. As you have probably experienced, state agencies are constantly seeking to shed responsibility and circumvent contractual protections. As your President, I will not sit idly by and permit any union member to return to a dangerous work atmosphere or allow management to take advantage, especially while the state-of-emergency is in effect. People's lives are at stake.

A union's survival depends on cooperation between all of our members. We share duties and look out for each other. With that said, there is a group of PEF members who do not receive the proper daily credit that they should. Within PEF, there is a dedicated group of volunteers with the titles of [stewards, council leaders, regional coordinators and executive board members](#) who work tirelessly on your behalf. These volunteers — almost 1,000 in number — work all across the state. They are the protective wall between you and overzealous management. Think of them as sentries on duty with their hands on their swords, ready to protect you. These stewards, council leaders, regional coordinators and executive board members spend countless hours of their own time to make sure the business of the union is accomplished and that your issues are properly addressed. From my executive team and I, we would like to say thank you to all our volunteers across the state. PEF is greater because you enforce the contract and protect members locally. We are PEF strong and this is what we do.

### Political endorsements

I know this may surprise some, but I am not one to ever tell someone how to vote. However, I would ask that you please exercise your right and vote this upcoming election. It is important for all elected officials to know that you are politically active and that you are a member of a union. Each collective voice is important, and I want yours to count. Would I like for you to consider voting for the elected officials your local union leaders recommended for a full PEF endorsement? Of course, but I am realistic and understand that we all have personal ideologies. The only thing I ask is that you look at the legislators who have allowed or enabled attacks on unions and decide whether they stand with you and your family or with the corporations and interests that hold down working people.

### How do PEF endorsements work?

Prior to receiving a PEF endorsement, each potential candidate is sent a labor questionnaire from your local political action committees (PAC). Your PAC then attempts to interview each candidate in person and makes recommendations for endorsement to the PEF statewide political action committee (SWPAC). These recommendations are based on the candidates support for PEF policies and previous voting records. The SWPAC reviews all local recommendations to ensure those recommendations correspond with PEF legislative initiatives and bolster union interests. The Executive Board then votes on the SWPAC recommendation. On August 28 and 29, your executive board representatives met, conferred, and voted on those endorsements. Again, all I ask is that prior to voting you [look at the elected officials who moved through the many steps to earn a coveted PEF endorsement](#).

Although diverse in titles, regions and state agencies, we have so much in common as a union. We all share a desire to financially provide for ourselves and our families, to work in a safe environment, to be free from overly aggressive management and to be treated with respect. As a union, we must focus on our similarities rather than our differences. We are PEF strong and this is what we do.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Spence". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



# COVID response, Convention, member engagement updates at PEF Executive Board

By KATE MOSTACCIO

The PEF Executive Board met virtually Aug. 27 and 28 to conduct important business of the union, including political endorsements, approval of statewide and federal legislative agendas for 2021, hashing out details of the upcoming 2020 Convention and seating the Triennial Convention Committee.

To start the meeting, PEF President Wayne Spence asked for a moment of silence for PEF members who had passed away since the last meeting, including Mary Plevinsky, who died of COVID, as well as Giurlene Armand, Odel Burke, Fazlul Haque, Heather Hibbert, Charles "Budd" Koss, Franklin Tinklepaugh and Michael DelPiano, former Region 6 coordinator and retiree director.

## Health and safety update

PEF Health and Safety Director Geraldine Stella shared some of the latest news concerning COVID-19 public health response, detailed changes in quarantine guidance, talked about occupational stress, and urged members to spread the word about reporting workers' compensation claims, among other health and safety issues.

The Centers for Disease Control recently rescinded guidance recommending 14 days of quarantine after travel, opening the door for a drop in diligence.

"We have some concerns that people will take that as an indication that they don't have to take precautions or quarantine," Stella said. "Gov. Cuomo has issued his own statement on that and New York state is very much still having that requirement for 14 days of quarantine."

She directed people to check the NY Forward website for a list of states on the quarantine list and for more information about New York's response to COVID.

"It's really important for people to recognize that the quarantine is not just for your safety but for the safety of everyone you have contact with," she said. "New York is requiring it and they are enforcing it."

Also on the health and safety department's radar are workplace violence and high stress issues, Stella said. PEF members have been working in airports, screening travelers



for quarantine. Members at the State Liquor Authority have been working in the community ensuring COVID compliance at bars and restaurants.

"There are some violence issues if people are upset or angry, they may take it out on the people doing screening or working with the State Liquor Authority," Stella said. "Occupational stress issues, tension, these are concerns for our members."

She said members on these kinds of details should have proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and a strong mechanism for reporting incidents or exposure concerns. Health and safety staff are also monitoring workers' compensation claims.

"We are asking members and leaders to send us information if you or your workers have a workers' compensation claim," she said. "Email us at [healthandsafety@pef.org](mailto:healthandsafety@pef.org). We want to keep in touch with those injured members." In addition, the AFL-CIO is collecting information on denied or controverted COVID workers' compensation, which may be helpful in fighting for legislation.

Stella also updated the board on revisions to the CDC guidelines on COVID testing, which now advise that some people without symptoms may not need to undergo testing, even if they have come in close contact with someone known to have had the virus.

"The CDC also quietly made a change to their language on testing, saying those who come in contact for more than 15 minutes and within six feet, unless you or someone in your household are at risk, may not need to get tested," Stella said. "That's a big change from previous language, and goes against everything those in the Public Health and medical field have been saying. They also added language describing asymptomatic as healthy people. By definition of infection, they are not healthy."

The changing parameters and less testing could jeopardize employees returning to work. Stella said very strong contact tracing and testing have been vital to identifying and slowing the spread of the virus and people without symptoms account for 50 percent of the transmission.

"Watch out for this at your agencies," she said. "Contact tracing and testing are integral parts of a COVID plan." The Wadsworth Lab, where PEF members are on the frontlines of COVID research, has developed a new, less intrusive test using a saliva sample and shorter nasal swab expected to make testing much easier.

Stella gave an overview of where vaccine development stands, with six candidates in phase three of clinical trials between the end of August and the end of September. "Any availability will have a significant impact on New York

state workplaces and our members' health and safety," she said. "Normally, trials follow participants for one to two years to look at long-term effects. Right now, there is a great pressure to produce a vaccine so we believe the FDA is likely to use emergency use authorization sooner rather than later." Stella said the pressure to develop a vaccine quickly may leave vulnerable populations at a disadvantage.

"There is a limited demographic of trial participants," she said. "CNN has said there is a low number of blacks and Latinos signing up for the trials even though they are the large percentage of cases. Their participation in studies is lower than expected. We'll continue to monitor this and report back to you."

Air quality and filtration continues to be a concern in health and safety circles as workers return to the workplace. PEF Health and Safety is staying up to date on the current discussions and, right now, that's COVID transmission by small aerosols.

"Small aerosols stay in the air longer than larger droplet transmission," Stella said. Larger droplet controls can include social distancing, masks and barriers, but aerosol is becoming a larger concern.

"We talked about high efficiency filters and increasing air exchange," Stella said. "As we talk to agencies, we are finding that not all can handle MERV 13 filters. Agencies are saying they are where they can, but we want to make sure you aren't getting lost in the filter number fight and forgetting the air exchange."

According to studies, engineering controls like air exchange, barriers, and ventilation, can increase risk reduction from wearing face coverings from 10 percent to 90 percent.

"There is less risk when you have increased air exchange than when you have just a face covering," Stella said.

President Spence noted that some agencies are facing more than 50 percent of their workforce returning to the office in the coming weeks, staggered or fully.

"These are all important things that folks need to be aware of and having conversations at the table about," he said.

### **Field services supporting members**

Statewide Director of Field Services Katie Vorwald reported on myriad issues PEF field staff are tackling, from quarantine leave issues, to scheduling issues, to overtime issues.

Vorwald said members have had to use quarantine leave more than once and have run up against the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) guidance allowing for only one use. Federal assistance provides additional assistance – but

only if their agency allows them to use it. Vorwald said PEF has filed grievances on the issue.

Short staffing has led to denial of vacation time, Vorwald said. Many agencies are also adjusting schedules to avoid paying overtime. Other agencies are mandating overtime. And still others are mandating overtime but paying it out at rates other than a member's appropriate salary rate.

Field staff are monitoring the return to work process at some agencies and are fighting for reasonable accommodations for members who need them due to their health, the health of a loved one, or for child care concerns.

"These are labor intensive for us because each is based on individual needs," Vorwald said. "There is no one size fits all solution for these folks. We have had some success getting reasonable accommodations, largely in places where telecommuting is already available."

Some agencies are less accommodating or just not giving reasons why they are bringing back their workforce ahead of the Oct. 2 termination of the temporary emergency telecommuting agreement PEF and the state formulated. PEF continues to advocate for telecommuting wherever possible and is targeting the state Office of Information Technology Services with a ground level grievance campaign as that agency begins to bring some staff back to the office without a solid reason why.

"In our opinion, this is the right thing to do in order to ensure community safety and not lose the gains we've made during the crisis in New York state," Vorwald said. "Additionally, there are costs to bring everybody back to the office."

### **Member engagement actions**

PEF Organizing staff have been hard at work supporting members throughout New York state, from a rally for COVID pay on Long Island, to continuing mask deliveries, to legislative actions and working with Divisions on how best to support their members and boost morale.

"During COVID, member engagement face to face has been challenging," said Director of Organizing Dan Carpenter. "Organizing is working with Divisions and Division Finance to talk about how best to use funds to promote membership engagement and the union."

In August, PEF joined CSEA, SEIU and UUP for a multi-union rally at SUNY Stony Brook to advocate for COVID pay for health care workers, who have been on the frontlines of COVID response since the very beginning of the pandemic. At the height of the rally, nearly 350 union members stood together to urge SUNY to come through for them. Private hospitals on Long Island and in the surrounding area have already recognized the efforts and sacrifices of their

employees with COVID pay bonuses and additional vacation time.

SUNY Downstate is circulating petitions calling for COVID pay recognition as well, Carpenter said.

Staff also worked with members at Capital District Psychiatric Center, where short-staffing led to redeployment during COVID. PEF sent a petition out statewide to call for the state to stop redeployments and also for the hiring of the proper staff needed to do the work.

Carpenter said the department is working on streamlining virtual new member orientations and recently held its first one with interns at New York State Psychiatric Center in Region 10. "Now that we have held that, we are going to build on that success," Carpenter said. There are plans to create a general video for use across the state but a worksite specific component will still be crucial for orientations.

COVID has made member engagement in the traditional sense difficult or impossible, but PEF Vice President Randi DiAntonio said PEF has still been making strides.

"While this whole last six months have proven to be challenging, a lot of it has motivated us to look for creative ways to engage in orientations and member contact," she said. "We've done so many Zoom meetings with elected officials. We've done surveys on a statewide basis with Survey Monkey. Technology, while not as rewarding as being in the same room as everybody and having that rapport, has opened up an opportunity for some members."

### **Union finances**

Secretary-Treasurer Kay Alison Wilkie provided an overview of PEF's first quarter financial statements, from April 1 to June 30, 2020, which reflect the impact of COVID on the union and union operations.

The income statements show total dues and fees income running at \$458,000 over budget, totaling \$10.2 million. Wilkie said these results reflect salary step increases, despite worrying decreasing membership trends in recent months, primarily due to New York state's hiring freeze on any jobs not COVID-related, attrition, and a comparative lack of seasonal employment.

Total expenses were under budget by about \$1.4 million. "We are at about \$8.3 million in total expenses," Wilkie said. "That's much less than the \$9.7 million that had been budgeted." She cited fewer meeting expenses amidst the COVID-19 crisis as a significant part of the reason for the difference. She added that the Finance team is working closely with Organizing to assist Divisions and Regions with their budgeting for effective outreach to members during disruptions created by the COVID pandemic.



Net income for the first quarter was \$1.9 million.

On the balance sheet, PEF's total assets increased from \$22.8 million at the end of the prior fiscal year to \$24.2 million at the end of June's financial statement due to increased investments and fixed assets. Wilkie said PEF's headquarters renovations and IT upgrades are adding value to PEF assets.

### **IT upgrades, HQ construction**

Wilkie said PEF is living its union values and using unionized workers and firms whenever possible for both the IT upgrades and the construction at PEF Headquarters in Latham. "We want that unionized, skilled, qualified labor and we are proud to be supporting workers at our headquarters that are doing great work for us," she said.

Wilkie said PEF so far spent \$1.4 million, or about 40 percent, of the \$3.4 million in estimated costs for infrastructure upgrades. She noted that the total combined commitment for the IT and HQ infrastructure project is \$3.75 million, and hopes to come in under budget.

MIS now has enhanced disaster recovery and business continuity capabilities. As part of the building renovations, a new data security center will afford tighter controls for information systems.

Building upgrades paved the way for much-needed repairs, Wilkie said, presenting a slideshow of photos highlighting aged and damaged areas revealed as construction peeled back layers of the building.

### **Setting agenda, rules for Convention**

There will be 449 delegates tuning in for this year's virtual Convention and the production company, CMI, is working to develop a microsite where delegates will access all Convention information, meetings and content, reported Convention Committee Co-Chair Jeanette Santos.

In formulating the Convention Rules of Procedures, Santos said the committee looked to the recent AFT Convention held virtually at the end of July.

"Our goal was to make the process as transparent as possible but also using AFT's strong advice to keep the virtual process as simple as possible," she said. "It is not an easy task. President Spence has a saying: 'You can't build a plane while flying it.' That is so true."

The proposed agenda for Convention sticks to business of the union.

"Our primary goal was to identify items that needed to be addressed and build in time to address them," Santos said.

"We are focusing on things that absolutely need to be done," said Director of Special Events Kim Partridge. "Although we would really love to do the things we would normally do." Virtual meetings require a lot of behind-the-scenes assistance and technical support and are quite costly and time-consuming, she explained.

Two more differences this year include orientation sessions Sunday morning, so delegates could familiarize themselves with the virtual platform, and state and federal legislative agenda review and discussion sessions prior to the start of Convention.

Since this is an apportionment year, several blocks of time are set aside for Department meetings.

The Executive Board made adjustments to the proposed agenda, changing committee meeting and legislative agenda discussion times so that delegates could attend multiple meetings. The board then adopted the amended agenda and Rules of Procedures.

### **Political endorsements**

To ensure commonality of PEF goals and many steps prior to receiving a PEF endorsement, each potential candidate is sent a labor questionnaire from local political action committees (PACs) and the local PAC attempts to interview each candidate in person.

This year presented logistical issues and local PACs adapted by using alternative interview methods. Local PACs then made recommendations based on the candidates' support for PEF policies and previous voting records. The local PAC recommendations were sent to the PEF Statewide Political Action Committee (SWPAC) for review.

The SWPAC reviews all local recommendations to ensure they correspond with PEF legislative initiatives and overall strategy for attaining the objectives of the union.

The final step in the process is the Executive Board vote on whether to accept the SWPAC recommendation. The board adopted the SWPAC's [New York State Senate](#), [New York State Assembly](#), and [U.S. Congressional endorsements](#) with some minor changes.

The PEF Executive Board voted to support the endorsement of Joe Biden for President in the upcoming November elections. There was discussion prior to the vote, with some members arguing for a "no endorsement at this time" position, but ultimately the board sided with the motion to support.

## Legislative update

PEF's Legislative Department continues to monitor the legislative landscape as the state struggles through the economic and public health fallout of COVID-19.

"Unfortunately, the state budget continues to deteriorate," Legislative Director Patrick Lyons said, noting the deficit has risen to \$14.5 billion. "We continue to hammer our federal representatives through membership actions and our national and international affiliates to take up some type of significant action on the HEROES Act. That legislation is going to be critical for us in New York state, not only in terms of meeting our operating needs, but also meeting the needs of our members."

Lyons said the department has been working on letter-writing campaigns to increase support in both houses for critical legislation that would provide needed aid to New Yorkers. Visit the PEF website's [Political Action page](#) and select the "Legislative Action is needed Today" tab to send a pre-written letter on a number of issues.

Legislation on workplace emergency planning passed in both houses, Lyons reported, and now waits for the governor's signature. This would include ensuring that future emergency plans require clarity on essential/nonessential designation, details of telecommuting, and would require agencies to secure and maintain PPE, among other details.

## Guest attendance

The board also considered the adoption of a policy to allow Council Leaders to attend virtual executive board meetings. "There are some issues to be considered," Spence said. "This is a webinar; there is no waiting room. They will enter the queue as a participant and staff will need to make sure they can't speak or vote. Guests will be Council Leaders only and will not be allowed to use the Zoom app; they will only be able to call in."

Members rose in favor of the motion, stating Executive Board meetings have traditionally been open to all who wished to attend as long as they notified the board in advance. Others questioned how to accommodate executive sessions with guests in attendance. Some members felt limiting the policy to Council Leaders was too restrictive. Others felt letting any guests in was a slippery slope that could end in unauthorized recordings of board meetings.

The board eventually approved the policy.

## Addendum to PEF Retirees administrative agreement

PEF entered into an administrative agreement with the PEF Retirees organization in 1996, formally acknowledging and continuing the relationship between the two organizations.

That agreement requires the PEF Executive Board approve changes to the PEF Retiree Constitution. Retiree Representative Bob Harms came before the board to ask for an addendum to remove that requirement and allow the retirees to make changes without Executive Board approval. The PEF Retiree Board strongly encouraged the PEF Executive Board to approve the change.

Opinions were split. Some members said the two organizations were separate and the retirees should operate as they see fit. Others felt oversight was meant to ensure continuing alignment of the organizations' agendas. Harms assured the board the retirees were not looking to distance themselves from PEF.

The board voted to approve the addendum.

## Triennial election committee seated

President Spence presented 12 names to the Executive Board to serve on the Triennial Election Committee – Anne Friedman, John Ingram, Kelli Everett, Valencia Metcalf, Ellen Fuller, Marc Smith, Fred Bulmer, Albert Demarco, Chris Lanz, Michelle Maldonado, Debra Konstantakis, and retiree, Angel Cook.

Rules require a minimum of nine committee members and a maximum of 12. Seating a committee of 12 allows for leeway should there be drop-offs or difficulty meeting, Spence said. This election cycle will present new challenges and that was part of the decision-making process when selecting candidates for the committee.

"We looked at their experience in PEF in terms of what they've done," Spence said. "Their understanding of PEF's mission. We looked at who served in the past. They might be tasked with making major changes in the rules. We might have to do things different due to the pandemic.

"They have had to deal with the Department of Labor and deal with the attorneys when decisions have been questioned in the past," he said. "They have an understanding of the importance of the work they are doing."

The board approved the committee by unanimous consent.

## Staff recognitions

Three retiring PEF staff members were recognized and thanked for their service – Jane Briggs, who retired from her post as director of communications Aug. 31 after 8 years; Priscilla Marco, a longtime field representative who retired after 23 years; and Robin Cammans, who retired from her position as a travel administrator/manager after 17 years. Since the last Executive Board meeting, PEF also saw the retirement of longtime labor management assistant, Nancy





Holford, and longtime health benefits specialist, Lorraine Simpkins.

### **President Spence joins working groups**

The American Federation of Teachers, the New York State AFL-CIO, and SEIU, among other union groups, have reached out to President Spence to participate in police reform and social justice reform working groups and task force initiatives. During the SEIU Executive Board meeting, Spence voiced his opinion when discussion turned to defunding police and that caught people's attention. "PEF reps over 1,000 peace officers," he said. Those calling to defund and disband police are not seeing the big picture. "That's not real," he said. "That's not reality."

"With my experience as a firearms instructor, parole officer and as president of a union, AFT asked me to serve on a committee to address police reform," he said. "AFL-CIO of New York State asked me to serve on a racial justice task force as the Governor and New York City started making major sweeping changes on what police can and cannot do, and what disciplinary records can and cannot show."

### **Contract update: Now is not the time**

Echoing the sentiments at the recent tele-town hall, Spence told the members of the Executive Board that PEF's Contract Team has not returned to the bargaining table with New York state – and for the moment that was the only move.

"There is nothing to negotiate when you consider other unions that had a contract in place, including our own Canal Corp, were asked to temporarily forgo their 2 percent raises that would have come in April," he said. "The state is in bad shape financially. If we were to go to the table now . . . the state has nothing to offer us in terms of money but they had concessions."



[READ MORE ON THE CONTRACT IN THIS RELATED STORY](#)

# Contract Team defending your rights, monitoring fiscal, health crisis before returning to the table

By KATE MOSTACCIO

The PEF Contract Team made steady headway on contract negotiations before COVID-19 reached pandemic proportions in March and forced PEF to shift focus from the contract to dealing with emergency health and safety issues.

The union hosted a widely-attended virtual town hall meeting August 18 so PEF President Wayne Spence, joined by staff and Contract Team members, could update the membership on where contract negotiations stand, what has been going on behind-the-scenes since March, and what happens next.

[VIEW THE FULL VIDEO HERE.](#) [VIEW THE MEMBER Q&A HERE.](#)

"Although we were not at the proverbial table, we've been working daily to protect and fight for our members," Spence said.

The health and safety of members were the union's immediate priority as the virus swept through New York. One of PEF's first moves was to negotiate an emergency temporary telecommuting agreement, allowing many members to work safely from their homes. For essential workers who needed to be in the workplace, the union worked to secure personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure safe contact measures were put in place for interacting with clients.

"That took some heavy-lifting and prodding and calling out managers constantly in those early days in March and April," Spence said. "In March alone, we received over 600 emails seeking help. PEF leaders and staff were on the phone and responding to emails seven days a week."

Fights for members' rights came in many shapes and sizes. For example, the state wanted to inspect the employee's home work stations as part of an emergency telecommuting agreement. PEF fought that provision and prevailed.

"They wanted to come and inspect everybody's home, whether you were using their computers or equipment or your own. They felt they had the right to come and inspect," he said. Mandated telecommuting being a very different situation than voluntary telecommuting on a case-by-case or agency level, PEF leaders felt the proposal for home inspections was out of line. "We told them to go kick rocks. That was not going to happen."



[LEARN MORE: PEF has been hard at work keeping you safe and working for you during the pandemic](#), read about it here Traditional bargaining, sitting across the table and working on contract articles toward a successor agreement, is not taking place right now but that doesn't mean no work is being done.

"We had to first prioritize health and safety," said PEF's chief negotiator, Mark Richard, a lifelong AFT member, professor and attorney who has negotiated hundreds of union contracts over the course of his career. "No one is going to apologize that those had to take priority. I think there is unanimous agreement that safety had to take precedent." Richard said PEF approached the issue of contract negotiations during a pandemic the same way PEF members approach their profession – strategically and with precision.

"The fabric of your professions bleeds into the fabric of your union," he said. You're highly professional. You're ethical. You do your work in a strategic, deliberate way that's smart and conscious of all elements. You approach bargaining the same way."



He said PEF and the Contract Team recognized that direct bargaining at this time would be the wrong move.

“The state had direct instructions that they could not put a penny on the contract,” he said. “They made it clear if you came to the table officially, with [Contract Team Chair] Darlene [Williams] and the team, that they could not put a penny on the table.

“We haven’t lowered our expectations,” he said. “We have had to calibrate them to the reality that we are in the middle of an economic calamity, probably the worst since the Great Depression.”

The team decided to fight on every front available outside of direct bargaining, Richard said. They continue drafting contract language, getting information to use at the bargaining table and working on sunset language.

“They continue fighting, suing, grieving and arbitrating,” he said. “That’s where we’ve been. Bargaining never stops at PEF. File a grievance. Sue the state. You make a call to the Governor or to the head of a department. We bargain every day. Direct bargaining for a contract is only one aspect.”

Richard said other unions that had signed and ratified contracts have not seen their percentage wage increases – but have already felt the sting of their concessions in copays tied to those raises.

“You need to stay smart and fight on every front. The best move right now is to wait until it’s smart to get into direct bargaining again.”

### **Member questions answered**

Staff fielded questions from members submitted in advance. At the top of many members’ minds was the question: Would there be across-the-board raises in a negotiated contract and, if so, would they be retroactive?

Richard said PEF would “fight like heck” but there was no guarantee in bargaining.

“It is a top priority of this bargaining team,” he said. “They are unwavering in it. I have never bargained in this type of a climate but that is at the top of the list.”

Other members asked if contract negotiations were nearly complete.

Contract Team Chair Darlene Williams said agreements were reached on a number of individual contract articles, subject to signing of a full contract. Those include Article 24 (Labor/ Management Process), Article 15 (Professional Development Programs), Article 14 (Quality of Working Life Programs),

and telecommuting. Discussions were also underway on longevity, the Productivity Enhancement Program, improving the grievance process, vacation scheduling and accrual carryover, and requirements for medical documentation for absences, among others.

In response to a member who stated she would rather wait for a contract than take major health insurance concessions, staff provided an explanation on potential health insurance copay concessions.

“Any concessions regarding health insurance would be part of an overall package and it would need to be negotiated,” said Debra Greenberg, PEF Contract Administration associate counsel. “That’s something the state is interested in. The state’s proposal to us, like the agreement they made with other unions, ties salary increases into increased copays.” Greenberg said the state has proposed increasing the most commonly used copays by 25 percent, which would bring the standard office visit from \$20 to \$25 and increase the ER copay from \$70 to \$90.

“We haven’t reached a final agreement,” Greenberg said.

“Other units have acquiesced to those increased copays and now the raises that were tied to those have been postponed, yet those units are still paying the increased copays.” Dental insurance has been outdated and inadequate for years, President Spence said, fielding member questions about that benefit.

“We have heard from membership that dental insurance is a significant concern,” Spence said. “We are actively engaged to achieve improvements to the dental benefit.”

To that end, PEF sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to major national dental carriers seeking a competitive plan for members.

“The state has failed to put the dental plan out to bid for over 20 years,” Spence said. “They keep awarding the contract to GHI knowing they are not giving us much. We are using this time now to carefully analyze the RFPs we’ve put out.”

Staff said an ideal plan would improve access to network dentists in all areas of the state and include coverage of implants and other enhancements.

Members also wanted to know if the contract would offer more telecommuting options.

PEF General Counsel Renee Delgado reported that the union has been advocating for telecommuting for a number of years, and this pandemic has demonstrated what we have always known – it works. She added that state should build upon the experience we’ve gained, and work with PEF to make it permanent, so that it’s not just for COVID or

individuals with school-age children. The union has and will continue to discuss the side-letter in the contract in future negotiations.

Delgado said a great deal of work is also occurring between PEF and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations to analyze possible alternative work arrangements, compressed work weeks, flex start and end times, and other arrangements that might accommodate the needs of members and their families during and post-COVID.

Members asked if Paid Family Leave (PFL) would be part of a successor contract.

PFL is a fully employee-funded program under state law, Greenberg said, and the topic has been under discussion since the beginning of negotiations.

"The state doesn't pay anything for it," she said. "It is funded through payroll deductions. The law did not include public sector employees represented by a union. Instead, public sector employers must negotiate the benefit with the unions. Any agreement would need to be ratified by the entire membership."

Another member asked if fellow members who were denied payroll steps would eventually get them and if they would be retroactive.

Staff members were quick to note that these performance advances, the steps between hiring rate and job rate, do not "sunset" and that should not have happened.

"No one should have been denied steps after contract expiration and we have not heard of any such problems," said PEF Director of Contract Administration Rene Shekerjian. "All eligible members should have received their performance advances when they became due."

Anyone who believes they were due to receive a step and did not should contact their field representative.

Members asked if there would be improvements to the downstate and Mid-Hudson adjustments.

Darlene Williams said downstate equity is important to members and is being addressed during negotiations. "I have heard stories of people working in Brooklyn and having to travel to Staten Island having to pay for the Verrazano Bridge. That's \$19 for those who are not Staten Island residents," she said. "It's a big deal for many who have to travel on bridges mid and downstate."

Longevity pay is also on the table for improvements, and any member who was previously eligible for a longevity payment remains eligible and receives their payment even after contract expiration, said Greenberg, in response to another member inquiry.

The exception is members who become eligible after contract expiration.

"At the table we are fighting very hard to advocate for full retroactivity of performance awards so that employees who first became eligible after the contract expiration will be made whole once there is a new contract," Greenberg said. "We are also seeking to eliminate the sunset for newly eligible members going forward, so that in future contracts retroactivity would no longer be an issue."

Members were also curious about potential layoffs, furloughs or an early retirement incentive in light of the \$14.5 billion deficit in the current fiscal plan and \$60-plus billion deficit expected over the next several years.

PEF's Legislative Director Patrick Lyons addressed all three issues.

"At this time, we do not know," Lyons said of furloughs and layoffs. "What we do know is the state is facing a deteriorating fiscal situation." He said PEF is working alongside AFT and SEIU to lobby for passage of the HEROES Act, which would provide up to \$37 billion in direct financial support to New York state to maintain operations.

In the event the state does implement furloughs or layoffs, PEF has developed legislation to ensure that private contractors would be subject to corresponding cuts in state support. PEF is also working with other labor unions and interest groups to support revenue-generating legislation, such as increasing taxes on billionaires, multi-millionaires and second and third homes valued at \$5 million or more.

"It is important to remember we have an economic and public health national security event and your union is fighting to make sure we have the resources that the state can continue to function," Lyons said.

An early retirement incentive can only be achieved through legislation, Lyons said.

"PEF is the only public union that supports an early retirement incentive," he said. "However, we do not support an incentive that is not available to all eligible members and the state must backfill any position vacated so the state can continue to reopen in a safe and sustainable way. At this point, there is nothing in process and nothing eminent in terms of discussions. As soon as we know anything, the membership will be advised."

### So what's next?

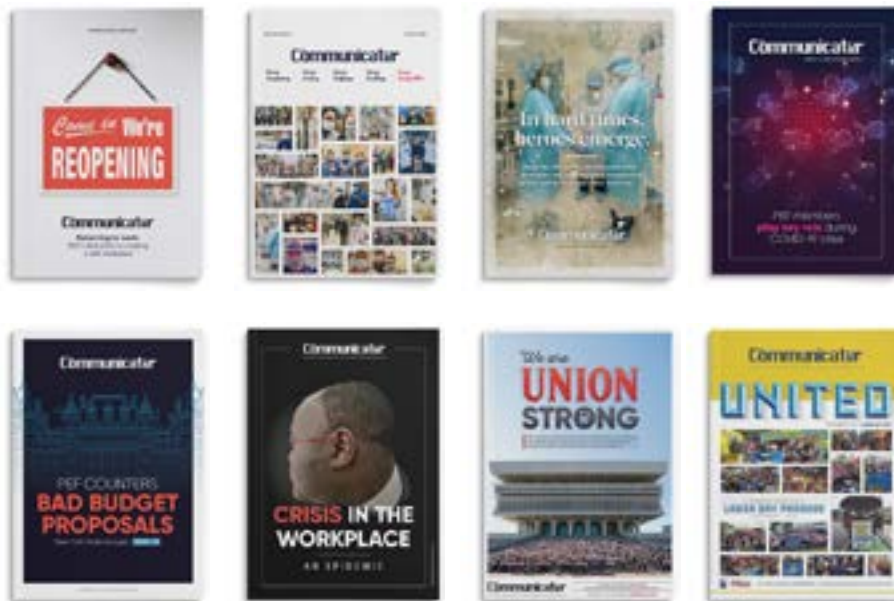
A union gets its strength from unity. PEF is calling on its members to show that they stand united by participating in a contract action.

"We need to demonstrate that we are 52,000 true professionals acting together as one," President Spence said. "We want to send a positive message that we are united, we are one, we are PEF strong, because PEF Does It. I want to make sure Mr. (Mike) Volforte (lead negotiator for New York state) doesn't forget that we are waiting for our contract." Lend your voice to the action by visiting [www.pef.org/contract-action](http://www.pef.org/contract-action) and signing your name to a pre-written letter to Volforte.

"We showed up when others didn't during COVID," Spence said. "We lost some PEF members who showed up when the state wasn't ready. They lost their lives performing their duties and the mission of the state."

Richard said these kinds of actions make a difference in negotiations.

"You have a union leadership that will never give up trying to continue to protect us, to protect our contract," he said. "One of the things that exhibits that is when the employer sees unity, small actions or big, consistent or just one event, something that says we speak in one voice."



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# PEF is all of us

## *But do you really know what that means?*

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

As a PEF member, you know you have a union, and you may know that it negotiates a contract for you that sets your pay and your health care benefits. But do you understand how your union enforces that contract to protect your rights and benefits? Do you know that you have both rights and responsibilities, beyond the dues that are deducted from your pay?

Some members have learned a lot about PEF. For other members, their union is as much mystery as familiar territory. It's likely most members fall somewhere in between very knowledgeable and "not so much."

The most important thing to understand is: You are your union. PEF is as effective in meeting your workplace needs as you make it. It is not one person, it is the combined effort and unified force of every member acting and speaking in unity.

Or as PEF Vice President Randi DiAntonio puts it: "The union is all of us! The best chance to fight bad management decisions is by showing management at the worksite that we are united and working collectively. Our power comes from being a collective force. The union is members, elected stewards, regional and statewide leaders and staff."



“Even when we disagree, there should be no separation or divide, no us-versus-them,” DiAntonio said. “Any types of divides among us, real or not, only serve to benefit management; which will use it as a weapon to take advantage of our frustrations and create an atmosphere where they are better able to separate and agitate us to blame each other and the union, instead of taking responsibility and corrective actions.”

Your union is not like a service company that you hire to provide your internet service or collect and haul away your trash. It is much more personal than that, because it is you and your co-workers standing up for your rights, demanding respect, fairness and reasonable, healthy, safe working conditions.

Your contract documents the rules, rights and benefits that you and your co-workers have negotiated, through your PEF contract committee, with the state.

Every contract is hard fought and difficult to achieve. That is because the state’s Taylor Law makes it illegal for public employees to strike or withhold their services. It takes great determination, patience, imagination and most of all unity and passion to obtain the best contract possible.

PEF has been working constantly on your behalf to help you get through the pandemic and now the reopening of state worksites. Union leaders and staff have been guided by you. They needed to know what was happening to you and your job and your family, so that they could take the necessary actions and work with the state to help you function effectively and safely. It was and is your voice and insights that point the way for the entire union. First you speak, and then when each voice is heard, a consensus must be found and the entire union responds.

With well over 50,000 members in thousands of different job titles, that’s a lot of information for the union to gather quickly, process and convert to forceful, effective action. It requires a vibrant, responsive structure to make that happen.

Understanding that structure is often where things can get a bit blurry and confusing for members. They may wonder why they see the term PS&T used so often and what does it stand for? Why are AFT and SEIU mentioned? Or they may question why they need a PEF division, or what is their PEF region. Why is their PEF region numbered differently than their state agency region?

So, here are some basics:

- The state workforce is divided into different bargaining units that group employees according to their common job and duty related interests.. You are in the PS&T (Professional, Scientific and Technical) unit. PEF is the bargaining agent (union) for that bargaining unit.
- PEF was elected by the employees in the PS&T unit

in 1978 to be their bargaining agent. This vote came after years of organizing by PEF’s two international union parents/ affiliates – the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). PEF did not exist before that vote. And after the vote, AFT and SEIU helped the PS&T employees build PEF from the ground up. More than 40 years later, PEF is still building and evolving to meet the needs of its members.

- The first step was to write and adopt a PEF constitution and bylaws and then elect officers and an Executive Board to represent the PS&T members throughout state service.
- Having officers and board members was a good start, but PEF needed offices and staff to serve a membership spread over the entire state. So the PEF constitution divided the membership into 12 regions – with Region 1 based in Buffalo, Region 8 in Albany, Region 12 on Long Island, and the other nine regions progressing from west to east accordingly.
- Those regions each comprise members, from a wide variety of state agencies, who share certain regional interests, needs and concerns. You can easily see how the downstate regions – 10 Manhattan and the Bronx; 11 Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island; and 12 Long Island – have very urban issues in common relating to high housing costs, public transportation, parking, great population diversity and a generally higher cost of living. In addition, these three regions have also borne the brunt of disasters such as the current pandemic, 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy. The working world and life for these members is significantly different in certain respects from those who work in the Capital District, the Adirondacks or the Southern Tier. Therefore, your PEF region groups you with other members who work there too and who may share some of your key day-to-day challenges and advantages.
- If you are thinking that you have even more in common with members at your own worksite or state employer, you are right. PEF’s founders quickly came to the same conclusion and they addressed that issue in the PEF constitution by establishing a way to create PEF divisions to organize members based on their agency or their worksite. Today PEF has hundreds of divisions, each with its own stewards and officers, and its own constitution. Some divisions comprise members at a single worksite, some have members at multiple worksites, others comprise all of the members at an entire statewide agency, and a few comprise members at more than one agency or even members at several non-state employers. That latter situation arises because PEF has expanded over the years to embrace other much smaller bargaining groups, such as some municipal employees.
- “Your PEF division is the part of our union that is focused most intently on you and your workplace issues,” DiAntonio said. It is positioned to have the best chance to resolve agency or worksite-specific problems quickly and effectively. It can do that when all of its members are fired up, ready to take on division work as officers, stewards, committee chairs or volunteer to help where they are needed.

“Your PEF division is potentially the most powerful force for you when it has a cadre of stewards and PEF Executive Board representatives to give a real and direct voice on the job,” DiAntonio said. “The PEF field representative and the regional coordinator are the local leaders’ primary resources.”

- Your division, with the support of PEF field and health and safety staff, and its statewide labor-management committee, can effectively address workplace concerns in real time with local managers. Without that, divisions are not as powerful or connected to the supports of the PEF organization. It takes ‘all hands on deck’ and working together to make the union in your workplace a force to be reckoned with.”

“If you are part of a PEF division that has difficulty finding members who feel confident standing up to management and are willing to sacrifice some of their personal time and energy to hold office, to be trained as a steward or as a treasurer for the division, or even just attend a division meeting, how effective do you think we will be when we go to fight a management decision or practice?” DiAntonio asked.

PEF has statewide leaders and regional coordinators. PEF has staff with professional expertise and commitment to serving you. But they are not enough. It takes member involvement to effectively resolve your personal workplace issues, your agency-wide issues and the over-arching issues of job security, a strong contract with fair raises, affordable health insurance and a secure retirement.

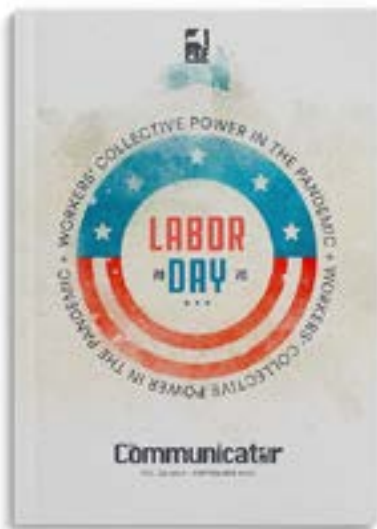
It takes you. Not just two or three of your co-workers. It takes you. You don’t have to do it all, but the union is only as strong and effective as each of you makes it. When everyone picks up their share of the responsibility, stays informed and brings their constructive ideas, information and insights to the discussion, nothing can stop you.

“Management is generally more responsive to the union when the members, elected leaders, and staff work together,” DiAntonio said. The PEF statewide leaders and staff directors do all we can to support the efforts of our local leaders, but efforts from Albany are generally only effective if management believes that the local employees are upset about the same thing and behind the union’s efforts.”

As PEF President Wayne Spence often reminds you: “Together we are union strong. Together we win!”

For more information about the union, check out [PEF orientation information here](#). And if you would like to request help to reinvigorate your division and get a full complement of stewards and officers elected and trained, email PEF Director of Organizing [Dan Carpenter](#). He and Assistant Director of Divisions [Kristie Furman](#) work with [DiAntonio](#) to help divisions stay at optimum levels of participation and effectiveness.

“We are ALL PEF. Making your division stronger, makes us all stronger,” DiAntonio said.



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# PEF hit the ground running for its members as COVID raged

By KATE MOSTACCIO

As the coronavirus surged in New York and the state began to shut down, PEF moved swiftly to implement telecommuting for its own staff and didn't miss a beat kicking into high gear to ensure the health and safety of PEF members amid the growing pandemic.

One of the first orders of business was negotiating an emergency telecommuting plan with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER). PEF also submitted an "Essential Duty Pay" plan to the Governor's office.

Throughout this crisis, PEF stayed strong and kept pushing for what members needed. When personal protective equipment shortages threatened the health and safety of members, PEF negotiated a policy allowing members to wear their own protective masks in the workplace.

The union also didn't take "no" for an answer when PPE was hard to find, following every lead and using every contact to locate protective masks for PEF members and medical masks for health care professionals. PEF distributed more than 20,000 surgical masks, 7,000 KN95s, thousands of face shields, and 42,000 cloth masks to members across the state.

PEF took protecting members and their families a step further when the virus was at its peak, securing blocks of hotel rooms for PEF nurses around major medical centers, including SUNY Stony Brook, SUNY Downstate and SUNY Upstate.

When the state was poised to delay paychecks to state workers, PEF called attention to the unfairness of that move. President Wayne Spence took to the steps of the Capitol and to the media, reminding the Governor and the people of New York that those workers are the very same workers who are putting their lives on the line for New York state.

PEF sent a strongly worded letter to the commissioner of the Department of Health (DOH) opposing a DOH plan to return suspected or confirmed COVID-19 staff to work during staff shortages. PEF has also been diligently tracking new budget legislation and studying how it affects PEF members, keeping a close eye on all facets of COVID response and what it means for you.

And, that's not all. The list of projects goes on, including:

- Hosting tele-town halls where members could get answers to questions they have;
- Filing lawsuits over unfair overtime payments at DOL and other state agencies;



- Working on legislation to ensure the state is prepared for future pandemics/health emergencies;
- Creating a video honoring PEF members' work during COVID-19;
- Working with Lt. Governor Hochul on reopen NYS plan;
- Calling on the governor to ensure state office buildings have same safety measures as other buildings like air filtration systems necessary for re-opening of malls and gyms;
- Designing a virtual 2020 convention to protect the safety of PEF members;
- Placing op-ed in Albany Times Union newspaper supporting Heroes Act;
- Holding multiple trainings on student debt;
- Texting 28,000 members to contact their legislators in support of the Heroes Act;
- Check-in calls with divisional leaders across the state;
- Delivering meals to essential workers in New York City;
- Developing and implementing virtual membership meetings; and
- Creating and maintaining a webpage on PEF.org with COVID-19 information, copies of letters sent to agency commissioners, and a comprehensive, regularly updated FAQ document.

*"The work isn't done," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "As New York reopens, members will face new challenges in workplace environments that are unlike anything we have seen before. PEF will be there every step of the way for its members because we are stronger together."*

# PEF tells state lawmakers of pandemic's effects on state workforce

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF President Wayne Spence zeroed in on some of the most critical issues that have faced PEF members when he was invited to testify at a joint state legislative hearing on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the state workforce.

In the brief time witnesses were allowed to present their oral testimony, Spence told the state legislators that the pandemic revealed how much the public depended on the services of essential state employees.

It also revealed how years of understaffing and under resourcing left the state unprepared to deal with the monumental challenge of serving thousands of New Yorkers suddenly ill with a new and potentially deadly virus, protecting employees and the public from the virus, and processing millions of unemployment claims as the emergency shutdown caused a tidal wave of layoffs.

Some state employees had to try to work effectively from home while others were on the front lines and struggled to stay safe while dealing directly with members of the public who, in many cases, were infected with the virus. Shortages of the crucial personal protective equipment heightened the danger for everyone.

Employees were directed to work many hours of overtime to try to make up for the understaffing, and after they did it many found they were paid based on a lower salary grade than their own. That happened because they were directed to work out-of-title to fill in the gaps that resulted from poor staffing and a greatly heightened demand for services.

The state Labor Department, Health Department and the SUNY Downstate and Stony Brook hospitals were among the agencies where this problem was most prevalent.

Spence said he dreaded the day-to-day scramble he faced because the governor would say one thing at his daily press conferences and then the union would get something very different from state commissioners and agency heads.

"The governor might say that employees were getting a mask every day, and our members were being told to make one mask last a week," Spence told the lawmakers.

The governor might direct agencies to maintain a 90-day supply of PPE, "but what does a 90-day supply actually look like?" Spence asked.

Now, the state workforce will surely see massive furloughs and layoffs if the federal government fails to provide billions of dollars in aid to the state to help it recover, Spence said. The heroic efforts of state employees will be repaid with pink slips and those who remain will feel the crushing burden of understaffing grow dramatically worse.

And when New Yorkers can't get the timely and high quality services they need, agencies will shift the blame to their employees.



"They'll blame our members," Spence predicted. [You can watch a recording of the hearing here.](#)



# Sen. Gillibrand, PEF leaders call for real help with public employees' student debt

By SHERRY HALBROOK

PEF leaders joined U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at a press conference September 2 at PEF headquarters in Latham where she announced her new legislative efforts in Washington to help public employees get the relief from student debt that they were first promised by a federal program more than a decade ago.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, created in 2007, was intended to attract Americans to public service by providing student debt relief after 10 years of public service, but it has denied benefits to 99 percent of the public employees who have tried to apply for it, and the Temporary Expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness program started in 2018 to resolve that issue has still failed to serve public employees. A federal review of the expanded program showed that fewer than 1 percent of applicants are benefitting.

Some members of PEF and its international labor affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers are plaintiffs in a lawsuit against a federal contractor involved in administering the program application process that they contend is responsible for misdirecting applicants.

Now, Gillibrand said she is introducing the What Can You Do For Your Country Act that would close gaps in the current PSLF program, clarify qualifications, and provide guidance to better serve eligible borrowers and help them receive the federal loan forgiveness they've earned.

"Many public service employees — including nurses and first responders — have been working on the frontlines as we combat this pandemic," Gillibrand said. "Unfortunately there is no guarantee that student loans won't hang over their heads for the rest of their lives, despite the promise made in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. They've been denied over clerical errors, over servicing failures, having the wrong type of loan or inadvertently enrolling in the wrong plan," she said.

"This is not right," she said. "Congress has a duty to fix this deeply flawed program and stand up for our current and future essential employees, who are disproportionately people of color, and who are working to keep our communities safe during this crisis. I will keep fighting to make sure they get the relief and support they need. This program needs to work for the people who have given so



much back to their communities. These public servants have lived up to their end of the bargain, now the government has to do the same."

PEF President Wayne Spence said, "There are about 44 million people in the United States saddled with student loan debt. PEF members provide vital public services to New York residents every day and this pandemic has shown just how much New York relies on its public servants.

"Our members have been putting their lives on the line to serve the public during this crisis and student loan debt is an added worry for workers and their families. Expansion of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program would help alleviate financial stress for workers who have given so much of themselves. We strongly support this effort and we're grateful for Sen. Gillibrand's commitment to help public employees gain access to student loan forgiveness and fix the program so it does what it was intended to for workers who enter public service."

"It takes years of learning and experience to provide high quality services," Spence said. "The skills and training needed to provide these services often come with a financial burden that can follow public employees for decades."

PEF Executive Board member Ralph Mabb spoke at the press conference, saying that a need to defer repayment of his student debt had increased that burden to nearly \$100,000 and he believes that he is one of the very few applicants to the loan forgiveness program who is actually being helped by it to repay his student loans.

Among other PEF leaders present to thank the senator for her efforts and voice their support were Secretary-Treasurer Kay Alison Wilkie and Vice President Sharon V. DeSilva.

# PEF calling on state to unfreeze hiring, stop redeploying CDPC staff

By KATE MOSTACCIO

COVID-19 continues to tax every aspect of New York's infrastructure – from finances to the economy to public health. PEF members have risen and continue to rise to the challenges, but many are struggling under staffing shortages brought on by hiring freezes.

At Capital District Psychiatric Center, a state Office of Mental Health facility, PEF members have been working feverishly to maintain the highest level of direct care possible while dealing with numerous staffing vacancies throughout the agency that remain unfilled.

"New York State has restricted spending in this agency by instituting a 'hard freeze' on hiring that has caused a critical shortage of qualified mental health care professionals to deliver direct-care services to our patients," PEF and Civil Service Employees Association members at the facility wrote in a joint letter to the state. "This, in turn, has resulted in higher overtime costs and the forced redeployment of staff to cover positions that have been vacant for months."

PEF Division 231 Council Leader Mary Haltermann said the hiring freeze, coupled with the facility's loss of hiring waivers, has left CDPC with few options to fill much-needed positions and COVID has given the state an avenue to redeploy current staff, instead of hire.

"In the past when we had hiring freezes, we have had waivers to hire direct care staff like nurses and therapy aides," Haltermann said. "You need a minimum number of staff to take care of patients. They took our waivers away and the hiring process you need to go through is very lengthy." Short staffing has been an issue for years and retaining direct-care staff is a real problem.

"We radically underpay our nurses compared to other hospitals like Albany Med and St. Peter's," she said. "Albany Med is right across the parking lot from CDPC. We have a lot of competition for our nurses."

COVID has made it even worse. When New York declared a state of emergency, the state began redeploying staff using COVID as the reason for the moves.



"When they redeployed the staff, it was tough on the redeployed staff because that was not the job they wanted to do and they were hired to do," Haltermann said. "They would put them in therapy aide positions on inpatient units to ease some of the staffing shortages. But we haven't had a COVID case in a while."

There is some concern among staff that the pandemic is being used as an excuse to use redeployments to fill gaps in staffing that should have been filled by hiring new staff. Redeployment has taken a huge toll on morale at CDPC. When rehab programs shuttered to limit activity in the building, PEF Member Quentin Welch, a rehabilitation specialist at CDPC, was redeployed into a mental health therapy aide (MHTA) position. For Welch, who worked as a MHTA for a decade, the redeployment was a blow.

"Throughout that time, I endured a lot. Emotionally, physically, psychologically," he said. "When I was told I had to work the units again, I was not happy, to say the least. Morale was awful and all of us were confused, angry and bitter. We



felt separated from our departments with no answers or explanations as to why this was happening to us. I worked hard for 10 years and finally got a break when I earned my position – only to be thrown back in head-first and deserted.

“CDPC has always had an issue with staffing,” he said. “Most of us feel this had nothing to do with COVID, itself, as we only had a handful of cases in the building. They were blatantly using COVID as an excuse to implement us into the staffing pool because they were so short staffed. Most of us feel that’s the real reason we were redeployed and that if they had better staffing, something else probably would have been done.”

The stresses of being mandated and redeployed are clear at CDPC, Haltermann said.

“Staff members are frustrated and they don’t have time at home with their families,” she said. “It affects their health and mental health. They can’t get time off. It increases the chances of making errors. We have the Justice Center that oversees us and members could get called in for an interrogation, which could impact their license.

“They don’t have a balance between work and personal life,” she said. “They don’t know if they are going to get mandated to work on inpatient units or if they are going to have to work 16 hours. It’s brutal. I don’t know how they manage to do it.”

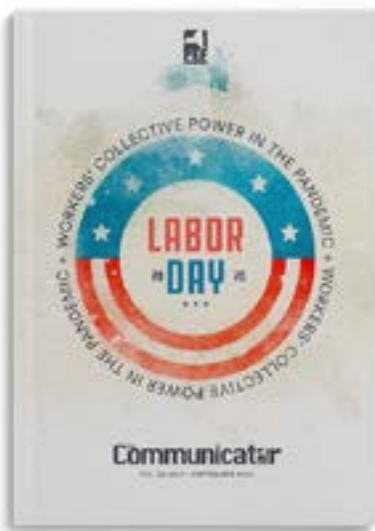
Haltermann said what CDPC needs to ease the burden is straightforward: put the waivers back in place or lift the hiring freeze for direct-care staff.

PEF President Wayne Spence stands with OMH members in calling on the governor to unfreeze hiring at OMH and get them the resources needed to properly serve the people of New York at a time when mental health issues are on the rise.

“The state’s financial woes should not be resolved on the backs of the most vulnerable citizens of New York state,” he said. “We ask that staffing deficits and the understaffing at CDPC be remedied immediately. You must act now to assure the hiring of much needed front-line staff so that PEF and CSEA members can continue to provide quality mental health services.”

Sign the petition asking the state to unfreeze hiring and end redeployments [here](#).

Send a pre-written letter to the state [here](#).



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# NY sues Trump administration over workers' rights; PEF asks state to afford same rights to members

By KATE MOSTACCIO



The Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) promised New Yorkers job protections but when rules put into place by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) jeopardized those protections, New York State Attorney General Letitia James was quick to file a lawsuit to dial back overreach by the Trump administration.

The lawsuit alleged, in part, that the USDOL had stretched the definition of health care provider to encompass an overbroad range of employees, qualifying them for an exemption and thus denying many workers statutorily protected leave benefits. The lawsuit also alleged the USDOL unfairly prohibited intermittent use of protected leave.

On Aug. 3, the U.S. Southern District Court sided with New York State.

With that court victory fresh in mind, why, then, has New York State not been affording PEF members similar protections under similar circumstances?

On July 9, PEF filed a lawsuit against New York on behalf of members asserting many of the same legal arguments as the attorney general in New York's federal FFCRA lawsuit after numerous complaints from members that the state has been irrationally and improperly denying FFCRA leave in several New York State agencies.

The USDOL's guidelines broadly define health care providers as anyone employed at any doctor's office, hospital, health care center, clinic, post-secondary educational institution

offering health care instruction, medical school, local health department or agency, nursing facility, retirement facility nursing home, home health care provider, any facility that performs laboratory or medical testing, pharmacy or any similar institution, employer or entity.

"This broad definition can essentially exempt an entire facility, and all PEF members working within that facility, from the leave provisions afforded to them under the federal legislation, even if their primary duties do not involve frontline COVID response," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "We are fighting for our members to be given the same respect and protections the state is demanding for all New Yorkers. These regulations can be used to deny vital financial support to our members during an unprecedented crisis and exposing workers to unnecessary spread of COVID-19."

The District Court's ruling laid out clear reasoning for why the USDOL regulations are wrong and should provide a roadmap for New York in dealing with its own workforce.

The court ruling stated that USDOL's FFCRA rules wrongfully excluded employees "whose roles bear no nexus whatsoever to the provision of healthcare services, except the identity of their employers" from the protections afforded under the FFCRA.

On the issue of the use of intermittent FFCRA leave, the court rejected a requirement that employees obtain employer consent before taking intermittent leave for qualifying conditions that do not implicate an employee's risk of viral transmission, such as caring for a child whose school has closed due to COVID-19. The court also invalidated the requirement that an employee provide documentation of a qualifying reason prior to taking leave.

"Ultimately, the court's decision underscores PEF's position and only serves to highlight the state of New York's hypocrisy in depriving PEF members of a benefit under a rule the state asserted was invalid," said Spence. "PEF will continue to take all appropriate actions to enforce our members' rights under state and federal law."



# MBP offering open enrollment for life, disability insurances

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught a tough lesson that just when you think things are going great, you can be blindsided by a serious threat that you never saw coming. That's when you really appreciate a personal safety net that you put together before hard times came knocking on your door.

Recognizing that concern, the Membership Benefits Program (MBP) trustees decided to open a window for open enrollment in Short-term disability insurance and Long-term disability insurance, as well as life insurance.

The window of opportunity for open enrollment begins September 1 and ends October 31 of this year. The term "open enrollment" means you may enroll without needing to answer any questions about your health or taking a physical exam to be eligible for coverage.

The MBP Trustees are Stephanie McLean-Beathley, chair; Joseph F. Donahue III; Bernadette O'Connor; Wayne Spence; and Kay Alison Wilkie. The program administrator is Scott T. Harms.

"Did you know that your most valuable asset isn't your house, car, retirement account, or any other large asset you own? "It's the ability to make a living," Harms said. "Most individuals don't insure their most valuable asset — their ability to earn a paycheck.

"You need to have a plan in place to protect your loved ones if the unexpected happens and you become disabled or a death occurs. No matter what stage of life you're in, protect what you love about life—your family," he said. "Now is the time to do it, when you are focused on your family's security and the future, and when we are making it as easy as possible with open enrollment."

MBP provides three plans:

- Short-term disability insurance to protect your paycheck and income when you are unable to work due to a medical disability for up to 26 weeks;
- Long-term disability providing a monthly benefit if you are out of work longer than six months; and
- Group Term Life Insurance to ensure your family can maintain the same quality of life when you can't be there, and they need you most.

Because NYS civil service employees are not eligible for NYS Disability Benefits Law coverage, as a state employee, you must find other sources for your disability coverage. The PEF MBP offers short-term and long-term disability insurances to help you manage your expenses without relying solely on vacation days, sick pay, or your hard-earned savings to stay afloat while out of work. To protect yourself, your loved ones and your paycheck, you must be enrolled in a disability insurance prior to becoming ill, injured, or becoming pregnant. You can't get the coverage if you are already disabled and needing the benefit.

You can get the coverage you need by enrolling for the first time, or increasing your existing coverage in any one or all three of the payroll-deducted insurance programs before the October 31st deadline — with no medical questions asked, up to the amounts approved for this modified open enrollment. All active, dues-paying PEF members may take advantage of the insurances made available through the PEF Membership Benefits Program.

Not yet a PEF member? You can [Join PEF Now](#).

For questions regarding your current coverage, or more information on this special modified open enrollment:

- Call (518) 785-1900 or (800) 342-4306, ext. 243, Option 2,
- Email [MBinsurance@pef.org](mailto:MBinsurance@pef.org); or
- Enroll today by accessing the online enrollment form.

If you miss taking advantage of this special modified open-enrollment period, you may still be able to enroll under the following circumstances:

- New PS&T Unit hires have 120 days from their new hire date to join PEF and enroll up to the maximum issue amount with no medical questions asked;
- After the 120 days has passed, PEF members may apply for coverage in any of the three payroll deducted insurances at any time, but must complete a medical questionnaire (Evidence of Insurability Form—EOI) with their enrollment form.



# PEF members involved in SEFA say campaign needs all hands on deck

By KATE MOSTACCIO

With COVID-19 wreaking havoc on the economy and millions out of work, our country is facing unprecedented times. The role of nonprofit organizations is more vital than ever in supporting low-income, developmentally and physically disabled and other less advantaged members of our communities.

State employees can help by supporting the State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA) campaign – a charitable giving campaign where PEF members are on the frontlines donating their time to helping others.

PEF Retiree Tom Wickerham, a longtime environmental program specialist with the Department of Environmental Conservation, and current chair of the statewide SEFA Council, has been active in SEFA since early in his state service.



“I got involved after being solicited as a newer employee,” Wickerham said. “Charitable giving was always in my blood. My dad was an institutional fundraiser for a local college and later for a retirement home, both of those depend on giving.”

“I have a 29-year-old disabled son,” he said. “After Tyler was born, I realized so many things were supporting us. I was looking through the list of charities and there were over 10 that were directly assisting my family’s life. That was it, I was sold.”

Wickerham has spent the last 30 years helping build the power of SEFA to support its chosen charities.

“SEFA is a statewide charitable campaign for state employees and it is run by state employees and volunteers,” Wickerham said. “It makes available a vetted list of charities and employees have the choice, primarily through payroll deductions, to give to the charity of their choosing.”

A decade ago, SEFA was running campaigns that brought in nearly \$10 million a year. Charitable giving in the years since has dwindled. Last year, SEFA distributed \$3.66 million. And, it is not just SEFA that is struggling.

“That slow decline has been something seen across all charities,” Wickerham said. “Some of the biggest parts of our problems right now is the involvement of state employees and the lack of encouragement of upper levels of the bureaucracy.”

Joining Wickerham at the helm of the campaign is current PEF member and statewide SEFA Council finance chair, Bill Ferguson, who works for the New York State Department of Economic Development. He said that in addition to a decline in giving, SEFA also must pay overhead.

“Our colleagues in our facilities always ask about administrative fees,” Ferguson said. “How much does it cost SEFA to put on this campaign? Admin fees are capped by regulations at 15 percent. So, at no point can somebody’s donated dollar exceed 15 cents for our admin fees. The difficulty is, as our campaign pie continues to shrink from \$10 million to \$3.66 million, that 15 percent continues to put additional pressures on the kinds of ideas, campaigns and creativity we can bring to bear to help.”

SEFA is looking at ways to increase visibility and drive participation. There is a Facebook page and a Twitter account, both of which the organization hopes to use as the campaign gears up for its next go-round of solicitation in September.

This year will be especially challenging with COVID restrictions in the workplace.

United Way, Earthshare and other charitable federations and organizations provide management help and campaign support across New York state but it’s state employee volunteers in the workplace that really make SEFA campaigns a success.





"The most successful campaigns are when a colleague asks a colleague to participate," Ferguson said. "Being able to ask someone face to face," is key.

Wickerham said on-site volunteers sharing and spreading the word about SEFA bridge gaps between coworkers and build leadership skills among state workers.

"Volunteers are gaining teambuilding and leadership skills, project management and professional development" experience, he said. "It also helps the individual grow their own networks. The asking process builds personal relationships and can be a morale builder. It's a way of doing good for somebody else."

By participating in SEFA, employees gain valuable work skills and the state should embrace and encourage its workforce to take part.

"It really is growing them professionally," Ferguson said. "It makes them better employees. We become better leaders and better managers. Ultimately, the skills and experiences that you gather in your work through SEFA make us better professionals and better leaders in our own job functions. Networking, communication, leadership – are all of those things that really are the characteristics of good leaders and good managers."

### Get involved

There are different ways to volunteer within SEFA.

"We have a lot of different levels of volunteers," Wickerham said. "Most of it starts at the local committee level. Those local committees are responsible for the budgeting and planning process."



The best way to get involved is to visit [www.sefanys.org](http://www.sefanys.org) and fill out the online volunteer form. This form will be forwarded to Statewide SEFA Director Alicia Otis or a local coordinator who will match the interested state employee with the best role within the campaign.

"Someone will contact the volunteer and they will have a conversation about the best match,"

Ferguson said. "If they need help at a facility, they will do that. If they need help on a committee, they will do that. Most likely it would be help running a facility campaign, soliciting asks."

Wickerham said there are probably a lot of people who would like to help – they just haven't been encouraged to make the leap.

"There is reticence on the part of management to allow them," he said. "It really doesn't take much time, an hour or two a week maybe. We've been working on some regulatory changes, trying to make the system easier."

He said this is where unions and their leadership can be especially helpful.

"PEF, CSEA and other unions can play a critical role in making this an acceptable work task," Ferguson said. "Unions are encouraged to participate." The SEFA cabinet has traditionally included union presidents or executive level leadership.

### More important than ever

With COVID, this year's campaign is going to be different and more challenging with fewer in-person solicitation opportunities. Ferguson and Wickerham said SEFA is still working out how it is going to jump that hurdle.

But one thing is clear – the importance of giving.

"The state can't and won't pay for everything," Wickerham said. "One thing state workers need to understand is that this is their campaign. They get to support their chosen charities in their communities for their neighbors and for their fellow employees. It's a 'feels good' kind of thing. It's not the government, it's not United Way, it's ours as employees." Ferguson agreed.

"We organize it, manage it, carry it out," he said. "Unions are largely involved in this. We need every bit of help we can get: management, labor, person-to-person, member-to-member. Together we are SEFA strong and New York tough." SEFA is endorsed by PEF, CSEA, UUP, NYSUT, NYSCOPBA, NYSOMCE, and the PBA of NYS.



# PEF Division 180 spurs shift change that yields 3-day workweeks at Buffalo PC

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

There's no better place to start efforts for resolving problems at your worksite than your PEF division. That's what members of PEF Division 180 did at Buffalo Psychiatric Center, and it is paying off for them.

"It's taken 1,000 days of non-stop effort, but we're seeing a real improvement," said Division 180 Council Leader Vincent Ciatello, a psychiatric nurse 3 with 20 years of service. "With the help of our members we came up with a proposal for changing nursing shifts. Management agreed to try it out on a pilot basis, and that has made things better on many levels for our members, for the facility and for patients."

The change has been formalized in a labor-management agreement.

The change switched nursing from three eight-hour shifts daily, to two shifts of 13.5 hours. The shifts overlap and that has extra benefits especially for the patients.

"It works out that a nurse will work two shifts of 13.5 hours and one shift of 13 hours in a week. The shifts run from 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 7:30 a.m.," Ciatello said. "So, twice a day, there's a shift overlap that puts extra staff on duty."

Ciatello said the patients like that shift overlap because it makes it easier for them to get individual attention and it has reduced some of the violent incidents that often coincided with shift changes."

"We just didn't have enough nurses to staff three shifts every day," Ciatello said.

The benefits of the new shift schedules came just in time to help keep the psychiatric center functioning well through all of the added stress and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the statewide shutdown to reduce exposures and infections.

"It's taken leadership, unity and hard work by the members and leaders of Division 180, openness on the part of management to listen to the union and try a new approach, and cooperation by many people," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "Now the positive result may go further than just benefiting them. It may give other PEF divisions and state facilities some data and ideas that could help them solve similar problems.

Like many state facilities, understaffing – especially nursing staff – was a common problem for years at BPC, and competition in the local labor market with better pay offered by nearby hospitals made recruiting and retaining nurses a challenge.

And, again as many other state health care facilities have found, short staffing led to more overtime for the existing staff, and difficulty for them to get permission to use their accrued leave. Those conditions also contributed to other issues such as workplace injuries and higher workers' compensation costs for BPC. It was no morale builder.



The officers and stewards of Division 180 saw and heard and personally experienced some of these issues and they wanted to address it. They began three years ago by surveying their members. What they learned from that survey and the many discussions that followed it set them on the path to proposing the shift change at local labor-management meetings and convincing managers at the center that it was worth a try on a pilot basis.

No one knew or could even have guessed as this proposed experiment moved forward that it would become a critical factor in helping everyone BPC get through the unprecedented stresses and strains, dangers and risks of the COVID-19 pandemic that would grip the state and then the country in 2020..

"We just wanted to make the work and personal lives of our members better," Cicatello said. It turned out to benefit "our members, the patients and management. We couldn't compete very well in attracting nurses when other area hospitals offered higher pay, but offering them a three-day workweek is a draw."

Cicatello said he hopes the lessons learned at BPC may help other PEF divisions at state health care facilities solve some of their problems.

"If they use our model as a starting point, they wouldn't need three years to do it. I think they might pull it off in three to six months," Cicatello added.

The key is member unity and willingness to be active in their PEF divisions, he said, and an openness on the part of management to consider new approaches.

"I have a lot of people to thank for the success we've had at BPC, starting with our PEF members, because PEF did the "grunt work" on this. I especially want to recognize Tracy Smith-Bivins who was our assistant council leader until she retired, her successor in that role, Alexandre do Nascimento, and our PEF field representative Troy Salley. And former PEF member and current Chief Nursing Officer Linda Fonti and CSEA member Mariah Talmon were instrumental in scheduling plans and helping us convince management to allow the pilot to happen. We also needed and had great support from President Spence and the staff in PEF's Department of Contract Administration."

Cicatello said he would be glad to talk with leaders of other PEF divisions who may want to know more about the shift change.



**Safe staffing could have saved  
so many more lives...  
access to proper PPE still can.**

# Community First, Stay Remote: ITS members ask to keep working from home amid lingering COVID concerns

By KATE MOSTACCIO

Social distancing remains critical to keeping the COVID-19 infection rate down and telecommuting has allowed many workers to maintain that distance during the workday. But PEF members at the state Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), who were instrumental in moving as much of the state workforce to a remote working model as possible, are now being ordered to return to offices ahead of the expiration of the emergency statewide telecommuting agreement between PEF and New York state.

The move, Division leaders say, makes no sense and, in fact, only endangers the members, their families and their communities.

“ITS is probably the No. 1 agency to be able to telecommute,” said Division 357 Council Leader Ron O’Bryan. “I am thoroughly confused. We should be leading the telecommuting front. Ninety-seven percent of us can work from home. We know that. They did a survey. We are more effective working from home. I don’t know what the big rush is to bring us back into the office.”

PEF has learned most members impacted by the early returns work in Portfolios, which altogether make up the largest portion of ITS. Conversely, a quarter to a third of employees who work for ITS are in the Chief Operations Office, which isn’t forcing anyone to return to work who can accomplish their duties from home. The same is true for the Chief Technology Office, which employs a smaller but significant portion of ITS members, where management has indicated there is no plan to return to the workplace before October.

Management plans for Portfolios would bring 25 percent of staff back on a rotating basis Aug. 31, 50 percent by Sept. 21 and although concrete plans are not in place for after, Portfolio heads point to the ITS Forward Plan which called for 75 percent then 100 percent of staff returning to the office. For members at ITS, the issue isn’t about not wanting to return to worksites, it’s about protecting their community and avoiding unnecessary density in the workplace. Many members filed Step 1 grievances, raising their voices and objecting to the plan.



“Members have a voice and can say this is wrong,” O’Bryan said. “They can say we are against what you’re doing here.” PEF Field Representative Caitlin Janiszewski said these grievances are a vital component in fighting back against ITS’ plans, backing up what members have been telling ITS leadership all along that this is a huge blow to morale and an insult to the work members put in at the beginning of the pandemic, when they stepped up and worked 100-hour weeks. Members who have had to be on site to work the entire pandemic largely feel safe because there are not hundreds of other employees there, she said.

O’Bryan said supervisors he has spoken to agree with PEF members – there should be no hurry to return to worksites. Much of what ITS does is via remote access and can be done effectively from any location. Work product has not suffered while ITS staff was out of the office.

“We’ve created some pretty wild stuff and it all happened when we were working from home,” O’Bryan said. “Even at the office, a lot of our work is still working remotely. I’m doing the same job sitting at my desk as I am doing at home. The majority of people at ITS remote into servers. We don’t have to be sitting at our desk to do that.”



PEF leaders are also uneasy with the lack of criteria to determine whether it's safe to move from the first phase on Aug. 31, at 25 percent staffing on a rotating basis, to phase 2, at 50 percent on a rotating basis. Grievance meetings have revealed ITS management had not received any direction on the issue, as of Sept. 2.

"Somebody is pushing this but it just doesn't make any sense," O'Bryan said. Janiszewski believes ITS executive management is calling the shots and they should be more concerned with ensuring safety than bringing everyone back to the office right now.

She asked about the process by which safety protocol violations get from the ground level supervisor up to the people making the decisions to move onto new phases, but ITS refused to discuss criteria or the decision-making process. Janiszewski said as members return to the workplace, they should report any safety protocol violation to management and copy or forward the notice to PEF so staff can keep a log of concerns for future discussions with management. Janiszewski said as members return to the workplace, they should report any safety protocol violations to management

and copy or forward the notice to PEF so staff can keep a log of concerns for future discussions with management.

Increasing in-person density has backfired for colleges. [SUNY Oneonta](#) resumed in-person classes Aug. 24 and by Sept. 3, the college campus had 434 confirmed COVID-19 cases, according to the local department of health. The school has since moved to all-remote learning for the remainder of the fall semester.

PEF President Wayne Spence said what is happening at ITS is representative of a larger issue across state agencies and PEF will advocate for members to continue to be allowed to work from home.

"The state continues to urge social distancing, and some areas of the public sector remain banned, like arts and recreation," he said. "We see no reason why the state should be unnecessarily exposing more people to each other via the workplace. There is no economic benefit, only risk, with this move."

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# ‘Heroes Don’t Get Zeros’: Hundreds turn out to rally for COVID pay at Stony Brook

By KATE MOSTACCIO

Over the course of the day, 400 health care workers from multiple unions joined forces July 22 to raise the same rallying cry at Stony Brook University Hospital – heroes don’t get zeroes and they deserve the same benefits as their private-sector colleagues amid the challenges and risks of COVID-19.

At its peak, the multi-union rally saw 275 union members from PEF, United University Professions (UUP), 1199 SEIU United Health Care Workers East, and Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) gathered around the hospital entrance with signs and banners calling for COVID pay commensurate with what other area hospital workers were given earlier this year.

PEF President Wayne Spence expressed his full support for the hardworking heroes at Stony Brook.

“As COVID-19 surged on Long Island, these brave men and women continued to work tirelessly every day, risking their own lives, to care for the people of this community,” Spence said. “The work they did was no different than the work of their counterparts at neighboring hospitals. These dedicated professionals deserve the same respect.”

For PEF leaders and members at Stony Brook, pay inequities are nothing new and they have stood outside the hospital asking for fair treatment on numerous other occasions.

“This is the third time many of us are here, for many of the same reasons, and it all comes down to respect,” said Region 12 Coordinator and Stony Brook nurse, Nora Higgins. “The first event was to essentially beg to save our staff from leaving to significantly higher pay at other local hospitals. The second came after giving testimony to the SUNY Board of Trustees asking for increased geographic pay to again recruit and retain staff.

“Now, we are challenged to the extreme with a pandemic,” Higgins said. “As proclaimed in many a Lobby Day for safe staffing, we will and we did face this crisis head on. We showed up! Our management can and must do better to respect all employees at Stony Brook facilities in Suffolk County.

“We need consistent supplies to protect our patients and ourselves,” Higgins said. “We need management that will uphold evidence-based infection control standards and not what the CDC or the DOH waters down. We seek, similar to our neighboring hospitals, paid time off and \$2,500 for the brave union brothers and sisters who put the job before all to make Stony Brook what it is today!”

Health care workers in New York City and on Long Island have withstood the worst of the COVID pandemic. In recognition of their sacrifices, the Northwell Health system gave its health care workers a \$2,500 lump sum bonus and a week of paid vacation. Stony Brook has not followed suit and not because they can’t. SUNY hospital administration can petition the SUNY Board of Trustees for funds to provide hospital employees with similar benefits. The rally sought to urge administrators to exercise that right.

PEF Division 225 Council Leader Tony Tirella said the rally was a unique show of solidarity across multiple unions and served as a way of putting the issue in the public eye.

“On July 22 at Stony Brook Medical Center, an unprecedented event occurred. Four unions, CSEA, PEF, UUP and 1199, united in solidarity to rally for some sort of financial benefit for their frontline workers (a.k.a heroes) who risked their lives to care for COVID-19 patients,” Tirella said. “If it wasn’t for their selflessness many of these patients would not have survived. All other

hospitals in the area rewarded their frontline workers. All but one – Stony Brook.

“It is time that Stony Brook made some sort of monetary reward for its heroes,” he said. “This rally, done on a sweltering hot day, was to make management and the community aware of this injustice.”

PEF Field Representative Lisa Pinkard, who helped organize the rally with Field Representative Teddy Vazquez, said the rally was a powerful day of action.

“I am proud to be part of the movement that is taking place at Stony Brook hospital,” Pinkard said. “Make no mistake, that is what this is – a movement. The nurses are coming together to lift their voices for what they deserve. They are standing up for their own self worth as professionals. They are demanding dignity.

“Now, we want to see it materialize,” she said. “This is about more than money – it’s about respect. It is a new era for Stony Brook. The members should be proud of themselves for how far they’ve come.”

Pinkard said it is challenging for nurses with only 30-minute breaks to make it to a rally. That didn’t stop them. She saw nurses come out, sign petitions, cheer on the rally, and race back to work. But they showed up and that was exciting.

“Just the fact that they came out,” she said. “They are realizing their own self worth.”

Vazquez said the unions had tried talking with hospital management before turning to a rally.

“We had numerous discussions with management about getting COVID pay for our members,” he said. “We were given the runaround. It was time. The group of unions all decided we were going to do it unified. That’s the way we had been negotiating.”

In the days leading up to the rally, the participating unions did a lot of member engagement – leafleting, texting campaigns and reaching out to health care workers through a variety of means. It seems to have paid off.

“We had a good time,” Vazquez said. “I think the members appreciated it. They were also cheering themselves. It’s an accomplishment what they’ve done, saving peoples’ lives while risking their own. They’re very dedicated like that.”

Long Island and Suffolk County legislators stand behind these vital health care workers.

“Our essential workers have done the unimaginable over the last four months, carrying us through this crisis and making sure we were able to come out the other side,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. “Their sacrifices should not go unrecognized. These heroes deserve hazard pay for everything they did to support our communities throughout this crisis.”

Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer Rob Calarco praised the workers for the work they have done and will do in the coming days.

“Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our health care heroes and essential workers have been putting their lives on the line to protect and support others,” Calarco said. “Giving these workers pandemic pay is the right thing to do. They have already earned it, and we know that until there is a vaccine these men and women will continue to put their own health and safety at risk to help others survive the challenges thrust upon them by this public health emergency. These workers have never hesitated to do what is necessary, and neither should we.”

Statewide legislators are also lending their voice to the fight.

“In the midst of a deadly pandemic the risks that health care workers take daily is an amazing display of professionalism, compassion, and courage,” said State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, representing Assembly District 4, which includes Stony Brook. “Less amazing is the lack of market competitive compensation for this dangerous work. I applaud their brave commitment to the care of our families and loved ones whenever they are stricken with the COVID-19 virus and call upon our public institutions to reciprocate with appropriate pay so that these remarkable employees will be predictably retained and enabled to continue their essential work.”

New York State Sen. Monica R. Martinez said health care workers and essential employees have been, and continue to be, on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. “They have worked day in and day out, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week putting their lives on the line,” she said. “During this time, we cannot and should not turn our backs on them. They deserve hazard pay and it’s our turn to take care of them just like they took care of us and continue to do so.”

Laura Ahearn, a Democrat for Senate District 1, supports the workers’ calls for fair compensation.

“I am proud to stand with Suffolk’s hardworking essential public workers who have put their lives on the line in order to help us all survive during this pandemic,” Ahearn said. “I strongly believe that we must provide these heroes with COVID-19 financial and medical benefits to show solidarity and appreciation for their amazing work during such unprecedented and dangerous times.”

The rally at Stony Brook comes at a time when the hospital was among [25 hospitals out of 395 that received the largest slices of a \\$12 billion federal funding payout in May](#), part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act. Stony Brook’s share of that payout was \$83.3 million.

Regional news media also picked up the story. See reports [here](#) and [here](#).



# Keeping your college student covered

By **ERIKA FRASIER**

PEF members with students attending college during the pandemic may be wondering how the confusion at schools about how in-person or virtual/online instruction and on-campus or off-campus living will affect their child's health coverage.

With regard to dependent student coverage under The Empire Plan, HMO's, and the NYS Dental and Vision Plans, the same eligibility rules apply during the pandemic as applied before it.

There is no distinction between a full-time student taking on-line courses, versus a full-time student attending classes in person on campus. If your dependent returns to school as a full-time student taking online courses, the same benefit eligibility guidelines apply.

Emblem Health, which administers the NYS Dental Plan, verifies full-time student status via direct outreach to enrollees.

Effective July 1, Davis Vision, administrator of the NYS Vision Plan, ceased to require student verification paper work from enrollees.

There will be no change regarding premium rates until at least the start of the 2021 plan year, following the standard rate renewal process and negotiations.

## **Losing eligibility**

If your child is age 19 or older, but under age 25, and has completed or is completing his or her studies, then he or she may lose eligibility for coverage as a dependent child under your dental and vision plans for the upcoming semester.

You must notify your state agency's health benefits administrator (HBA) of your child's change in student status, and you should request information about how to continue their dental and vision coverage, with completing a Student Verification Form if necessary. The form can be submitted directly to your HBA and/or carrier.

The federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires insurers to offer children coverage as dependents on their parents' health insurance plan up to age 26, but that only applies to medical care, not to dental or vision care.

## **When coverage ends**

Under the United Health Care (UHC) Empire Plan or any of the HMO Plans your unmarried dependent children until age 26, are eligible for coverage whether they attend college or not. For families enrolled in an HMO who have a student attending

college outside of their HMO's service area, the HMO still covers that college student. Enrollees need to contact the HMO to get details on how to access care and any referrals needed. They continue to be eligible until the end of the month in which they reach age 26.

Under the EmblemHealth (formerly GHI) Preferred Dental Plan and the NYS Vision Plan, your unmarried dependent children age 19 or older, but under age 25, are eligible for coverage if they are full-time students. They continue to be eligible until the first of the following dates:

- The end of the third month following the month in which they completed the semester as a full-time student;
- The end of the month in which attendance at school ends, if the semester is not completed and proof of the last day of attendance for the semester is provided, or the end of the third month following the month that the last semester was completed, whichever is later;
- The starting date of the semester if the semester is not completed and no proof of attendance is provided, or the end of the third month following the month that the last semester was completed, whichever is later;
- The end of the third month following the month in which they complete course requirements for graduation; or
- The end of the month in which they reach age 25.

## **How to extend coverage**

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) requires most employers sponsoring group health plans to offer employees and their covered dependents the opportunity for temporary "continuation coverage" at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the employer-sponsored plan would otherwise end.

The dental and vision care benefits your dependent may continue are the same benefits you receive as an active employee. COBRA requires that your child have the opportunity to continue coverage for up to 36 months. The cost of COBRA coverage is the full premium (both the employer and employee shares) plus a 2 percent administrative fee.

Under COBRA, the employee or dependent is responsible for informing the Employee Benefits Division (EBD) of the state Department of Civil Service (DCS) within 60 days of when the dependent loses eligibility. If you do not notify EBD within that time, regardless of the reason, the dependent will not be entitled to COBRA continuation coverage.

For more information about COBRA continuation coverage, visit the DCS web site at [www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits](http://www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits). Follow the prompts to NYSHIP Online, and then select Other Benefits to access the Dental Plan Certificate Book and NYS Vision Plan Book, or you may call the DCS at 518-457-5754 or 1-800-833-4344.





# Thank You for All You Do: Region 6 hosts Member Appreciation Days

By KATE MOSTACCIO

PEF members are willing to go above and beyond for the people of New York during the current public health and economic crises.

Now it's time to show them some appreciation.

PEF Organizing and Divisions, joined by PEF leaders, hosted two Member Appreciation Days September 2 and 3 in Region 6, bringing in food trucks, setting up tables at four locations throughout the region and inviting members to come out and enjoy well-deserved thanks for all they do.

"Connecting with our members in person and in a safe way was such a wonderful experience," said PEF Vice-President Randi DiAntonio. "It was rewarding to show them our gratitude and gave us an opportunity to hear their issues around workplace safety, reopening and redeployments, telecommuting and much more."

Region 6 Advocate Vicky Stockton said members were grateful PEF made the effort to show its appreciation.

"This was really nice," she said. "It was a very nice appreciation. I thought the food truck was a brilliant idea."

She acknowledged that the large geographic area that Region 6 presents made it difficult for some members to reach a location during their lunch break and leaders are looking at ways to reach more members with future events. "We really appreciate all the feedback," she said.

"We acknowledge the feedback regarding the difficulties members had getting to the locations and will consider their feedback for future membership engagement activities," said PEF Director of Organizing Dan Carpenter. "Issues like that and others highlight the need for a regional event/planning committee and we would hope that members would consider joining one once they are created."



Membership engagement has been difficult during the pandemic, with offices shutdown, limits on large gatherings and the need for social distancing. Getting out and meeting with members face-to-face in a safe way was rewarding for union leaders and PEF staff alike.

"It was great to see our members again," Carpenter said. "The local leaders we worked with really thought this would be a great way to show our appreciation for the continued commitment their members make each and every day for their communities and to allow us to be safe and practice social distancing and masking guidelines."

Additionally, it was a chance to brainstorm ideas for future use of division finances in ways that would be beneficial and meaningful to members in Region 6.

"This opportunity was a great way to thank our members," said PEF Assistant Director of Divisions Kristie Furman. "It also allowed us the opportunity to speak with and strategize with local leadership on how to effectively use PEF financial resources allocated to each division to continue to engage with their divisional membership during this time and into the future."

# Advocating fairness, justice for all in Reg. 1

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**



As the police killing of Minneapolis man George Floyd spotlighted issues of racism and sparked protests throughout the country, PEF Region 1 leaders have stepped up in a variety of ways to speak out for equality and justice for all people.

PEF Region 1 Coordinator Michele Silsby said she is grateful to PEF Division leaders Stephanie McLean-Beathley, Vincent Ciatello and Joe McCann among others for their efforts to stimulate discussion and concern for those who experience racial bias.

"It's important to have these conversations and to stand up against discrimination," Silsby said.

The need for social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic has made bringing members safely together for meetings and other events more challenging, Silsby said.

McLean-Beathley, who chairs the Region 1 Women's Committee and leads PEF Division 167, asked Ciatello to speak on the race issue during a June meeting of the group.

Ciatello, a PEF Executive Board member and leader of PEF Division 180 at Buffalo Psychiatric Center, said he was surprised by the request, but was glad to speak to the group.

"I was honored to be asked, and it felt natural and easy to talk about it," he said, even though the issue has been a sensitive one. Regarding the Black Lives Matter movement, Ciatello told the members that "while all lives matter, right now the focus is on black lives. I think it is time to raise awareness of this on a bigger scale. Silence on the issue is complacency. It is important to speak up." The more people who do speak up to protest injustice, the better the chances of stopping it, he added.

"We need to help any oppressed people. We have to speak up individually. As unionists we must come together to support social justice," Ciatello said.

McCann, who leads PEF Division 332 at the state Gaming Commission, expressed similar feelings and said he was glad to participate in a George Floyd-related vigil in June that was organized by the local AFL-CIO in collaboration with religious leaders in the area, including Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths. He described the vigil as very "peaceful, solemn and moving."

"I'm an active member of our Area Labor Federation, which has great support here and I see great diversity at their events," McCann said. "I see the human struggle as interconnected through all of these activities."

# Roswell Park among top 15 cancer centers in the U.S.

By KATE MOSTACCIO

U.S. News and World Report places Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in the top 1.5 percent of cancer hospitals across the nation – and names it one of only two facilities in New York state among the top 15 cancer centers in the country.

PEF Division 196 members are integral in all facets of care within the center and helped make this prestigious ranking possible, working every day to provide top-notch care to every patient that comes through the doors.

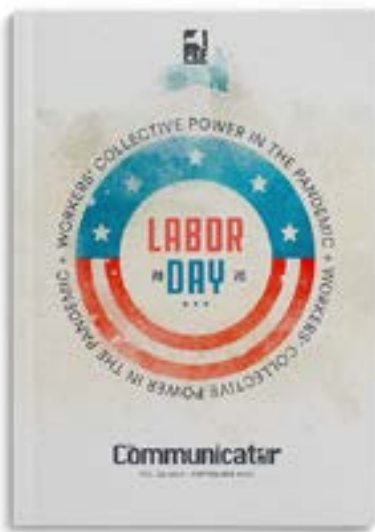
"I am very proud to be employed as one of the more than 1,500 PEF members who contribute their expertise, working as a team to improve patient care and outcomes at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center," said Region 1 Coordinator and Roswell Park Senior Case Manager Michele Silsby.

"It is an honor to be a PEF member and part of the Roswell Park nursing team," said Division 196 Council Leader Claudia Ames-Smith. "We strive to provide the best care to our patients."

Roswell Park earned special recognition in two subspecialty areas — colon cancer surgery and lung cancer surgery — and received top scores in patient survival, patient experience, patients going home after hospitalization and advanced technologies, according to a press release from the center.



"PEF members at Roswell Park are changing lives," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "It is their knowledge and dedication to providing the best possible treatment to their patients that makes a difference every day. Thank you for all that you do."



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# Labor movement loses strong advocate: John Lewis passes away at 80

By KATE MOSTACCIO

The Civil Rights movement lost an icon July 17 when Congressman John Robert Lewis passed away from pancreatic cancer at age 80. Lewis stood firm for what he believed in, working tirelessly to help organize the 1963 March on Washington and instrumental in many key actions that would eventually lead to the end of legalized racial segregation in the United States.

While he was perhaps best known for his civil rights activism, he was also a strong advocate for the labor movement and often lent his considerable political strength and stalwart advocacy to fighting for the rights of workers.

For that legacy, his voice will also be sorely missed. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1987, Lewis stood behind many labor matters over the years – from fighting attempts to weaken minimum wage laws, to modernizing family, sick and vacation leave, to supporting the Employee Free Choice Act and the rights of workers to organize collectively.

In 2014, Lewis merged his civil rights activism and his labor activism, introducing a bill that would make union organizing a civil right. Working alongside U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, Lewis fought for a bill that would make labor organizing a basic freedom no different than freedom from racial discrimination. The legislation would have amended the National Labor Relations Act to include protections found under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to include labor organizing as a fundamental right, giving workers a broader range of legal options if they feel discriminated against for trying to form a union. While the bill didn't proceed to a vote, it was still a strong showing of support for labor and collective bargaining.

Lewis believed in the idea of a livable wage -- that no matter how hard a person works, unless they earn a livable wage anyone is at risk of being impoverished overnight.

Early on in his congressional career he threw his support behind the workers of Eastern Airlines during a labor dispute and 20 years later, he was still at it, standing up for workers on the ground, this time for 55,000 Delta Airlines employees in Georgia who were toiling through years of bankruptcy.



"He taught us how to be justice warriors – how to fight for freedom and justice for a better life for all," said the American Federation of Teachers in a tribute to Lewis on Facebook. "He was a giant in every sense of the word, and all of us who work to repair the world owe him an enormous debt."



# Union condemns parole of man convicted in parole officer's murder

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF President Wayne Spence spoke out August 31, stating, "The NYS Public Employees Federation is vehemently opposed to the parole of Perry Bellamy, who in 1985 lured Parole Officer Brian Rooney to his death by mob hit men." PEF represents more than 1,000 state parole officers.

The state Parole Board ordered Bellamy to be released August 28 from Elmira Correctional Facility on parole.

"Releasing Bellamy is breaking the trust and united resolve that must exist between the board and parole officers. Instead of standing by us, the board has sent a signal that it does not have our backs, that our professionalism and our lives don't matter," said Spence, who is a NYS parole officer.

Bellamy was convicted of second degree murder in January 1987 for his role in the cold-blooded murder of Officer Rooney. He was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison.

"Bellamy showed no mercy for this dedicated parole officer," Spence said. "The \$5,000 Mr. Bellamy was paid for this heinous act mattered more to him than human life.

"It is completely irresponsible for the NYS Parole Board to have granted parole to this man who actively conspired and participated in ending the life of a brave officer, whose only fault was that he was courageous enough to charge a notorious Queens drug lord, Lorenzo (Fat Cat) Nichols, with a parole violation that sent him back to state prison."

Nichols ordered Rooney killed by two of his lieutenants, Howard "Pappy" Mason and Chris Williams. The "contract" was executed the evening of October 10, 1985. Rooney was lured by Bellamy to the Baisley Park in Queens where Mason and Williams drove up to Rooney's vehicle. Mason drew a gun and fired repeatedly until Rooney was dead.

"By ordering Rooney's murder, Nichols was sending a message to all parole and law enforcement officers that they would pay with their lives if they dared to act against Nichols or his organization," Spence said.

Despite the dangers of the job, parole officers' courage has never failed. We go on doing our jobs protecting the public, and that is what the Parole Board should do, too."



Spence said, "Brian Rooney was a great officer. He was a skilled professional, dedicated and courageous. And he continues to inspire all of us today. For the Parole Board to fail him in this way, fails us all. The only people inspired by Bellamy's parole are criminals who hold our authority and our lives in contempt."

Now another officer must take responsibility for supervising the man who lured Rooney to his death.

# PEF members volunteer with Capital District Area Labor Federation at drive-thru food pantry

By KATE MOSTACCIO

Many hands make light work.

That was one of the reasons Cheryl Robinson and Sheryl Sperry, PEF members from the Office of the New York State Comptroller and the New York State Insurance Fund respectively, volunteered to assist the Capital District Area Labor Federation (CDALF) at a drive-thru food pantry event it hosted earlier this summer at the Albany Labor Temple. "I believe in helping whenever possible," said Robinson. "I believe in volunteerism. Volunteering helps the community, the families in that community and the volunteer."

CDALF collaborated with the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY to host the drive-thru pantry. The food bank has been hosting similar events all over the region, where working people in need can come to a location and receive food for their entire family. In order for the drive-thru pantries to be successful, the food bank needs partners – which is where CDALF and union members like Robinson and Sperry come in.

"I felt an obligation to volunteer, as a member of PEF, and also being chair of the Region 8 Charitable Committee," said Sperry. "I was surprised by the amount of volunteers from various labor unions."

Sperry said CDALF had everything set up which made volunteering simple and streamlined.

"The jobs consisted of placing already packed bags of food and separate containers of eggs and milk in families' vehicles," she said. "There were several staging areas where up to four vehicles could be taken care of at once. There was also a group leader who would ask the people in the vehicles how many family members and how many families as there were several people in most vehicles."



While some volunteers worked at the cars, others kept the perishable food out of direct sunlight and replenished stations with milk and eggs. It was a well-organized system. When cars slowed, volunteers took to their social media accounts to try to drum up more traffic.

Families were grateful for the support. Sperry and Robinson interacted with one elderly woman at the end of the drive who said it was hard to get out and find places that were giving out food.

The experience was rewarding for both. "I think we become better people when we take the time to serve others," Robinson said.



# Division 179 announces 2020 scholarship winners

By KATE MOSTACCIO

Nine students are the recipients of one-time \$500 scholarships for the upcoming school year, awarded by [PEF Division 179](#), which includes members from the state Office of General Services (OGS) and Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (DHSES).

"The scholarship has been in place for quite some time to invest in our future, our children and our family members, who sacrifice for the added duties our members face each day," said Division 179 Council Leader John Buttino. "Over the years, a very rewarding group of individuals have won the award. We trust in this investment in the future and look forward to seeing what the future holds."

Each scholarship is awarded to a student for attendance at a two- or four-year college or university working toward an associate or bachelor's degree starting with the fall 2020 semester.

In the interest of reaching the most division members, only one winner is permitted per member family (although multiple students in the same family may apply), and each applicant may only win one award per his or her college career.

The winners this year are:

- **Henry Wooster**, the son of OGS member Charles Wooster, who is attending Hartwick College;
- **Rishi Shankar**, the son of OGS member Ajai Shankar, who is attending Temple University;



- **Bobbi Brill**, the daughter of OGS member Allyson Youdsavage, who is attending SUNY Buffalo State College;
- **Rachel Clark**, the daughter of OGS member Will Clark, who is attending SUNY Albany;
- **Jaeda Curtis**, the daughter of DHSES member Tammy Leone-Curtis, who is attending Ithaca College;
- **Daniel Bloomer**, the son of DHSES member Valerie Bloomer, who is attending the University of New England;
- **Jaskiran Dhinsa**, the daughter of OGS member Sukhjit Singh, who is attending Cornell University;
- **Elizabeth Buttino**, daughter of DHSES member John Buttino, who is attending Trocaire College; and
- **Julia Guiton**, the daughter of OGS Bob Guiton, who is attending SUNY Brockport.



# PEF fire protection specialist first on scene of Thruway accident with fuel leak puts specialized training to use

By KATE MOSTACCIO

In the course of his four and a half years of state service, PEF Fire Protection Specialist 1 Joseph Marini has received training on how to deal with hazardous materials incidents, including plugging and patching spills, and he knows what to do if faced with a hazmat situation.

Returning to Rochester on July 11 after a standby assignment on Long Island for Tropical Storm Fay, Marini was nearly home and didn't expect to have to put those skills to use but as he reached Exit 45 on the New York State Thruway his "right place at the right time moment" came.

"I went to get off the exit to go home and to my surprise there was a tractor-trailer in the way," he said. "It was jackknifed on the right shoulder and in the ditch, blocking the right lane, the shoulder and sticking part-way into the left lane."

Marini arrived on scene before emergency responders, finding only the uninjured driver and a man who had seen the whole thing and stopped, but who soon left as he was unable to render assistance. Neither had called 911 and Marini made the call himself.

"I put my vehicle in a blocking position and put my traffic safety vest on," Marini said. "I found out what was going on and asked if anybody had called 911 yet. At that point, I called 911 and informed dispatch where the accident was. As I was on the phone, I walked around the scene and I noticed both fuel tanks were leaking diesel fuel."

Marini carries some equipment on his truck to deal with leaking fuel tanks but unfortunately, the kit he had on hand wasn't the proper size for the tractor-trailer.

"But I also carry a snow shovel so I took some loose soil to build a dam to keep the diesel from going any further," he said.

That's when the State Police and the Fishers Fire Department began to arrive on scene. Marini was able to brief them on the leaking fuel tanks and the measures he had taken to stem the spread of the leak.

He was also met with a few familiar faces from the state's fire academy.

"I knew a couple firemen that got off the truck," he said. "I talked to the fire department and gave them tips about using wooden wedges to slow the fuel leak. We also built up the dam more to slow the leak. Once they felt they were good, I headed home."

For Marini, this was the first time he was able to put his skills to use in the community during an emergency he wasn't called to but happened upon outside of work.

"It genuinely feels great to use the training that I have," he said. "It was an, 'All right, let's go to work situation,' for me, not a, 'Holy crap, what do I do?' like it might be for someone else. It's one of those things I practice time and time again."

"It's nice to use those skills and it felt great being in the right place at the right time and to do some environmental protection," he said. "Thankfully, there were no injuries and I didn't have to use any of my EMT training."



# Loss of longtime PEF activist, Region 6 leader mourned

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF members and retirees are grieving the loss of Michael (Mike) DelPiano, 76, who died August 16 in Rome, NY.

He had served PEF in many leadership roles over the years including stints as Region 6 (Utica) coordinator, president of the Utica Chapter of PEF Retirees, a member of the PEF Executive Board, a member of a PEF contract team, in division leadership and steward roles, and as a convention delegate. He also served for a time as PEF's director of retiree services – a staff position.

A “union man” to the core, DelPiano was a recipient of the Samuel L. Gompers Award from the AFL-CIO for outstanding union service and dedication.

But it was the friendships he made and the personal effort he made to help his fellow PEF members that will keep his memory vivid in the hearts of many who knew him.

“Mike was devoted to his family and to the union,” said PEF President Wayne Spence. “Working with Mike on union issues, I saw that he was committed to serving Region 6 members and later to helping his fellow PEF Retirees. His activism and his friendship will be missed by many of those who knew him.”

Dee Clement recalled that, “He helped me when I had some issues (at work). He gave me great advice while I had my ‘boxing gloves’ on.”





# Letters to the Editor

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## Thank you, PEF, for informing members

### To the Editor:

Thank you for keeping NYS State PEF-represented employees informed. Without you guys giving us the information, we employees would be totally in the dark.

As far as the HVAC and air filters issue, you are right on the money. I feel until this equipment has been properly installed in all New York State offices and facilities in NY City and throughout New York state, no NYS employees should be working in these offices.

I applaud and thank you for your efforts and hard work in addressing these very important issues. Please know that as a NYS employee and PEF member you have my full support.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do. Best wishes to everyone for good health and safety during these critical and difficult days.

**FRANCIS J. DE MARTINI**  
Staten Island

## Decontaminating air isn't simple

### To the Editor:

You can not simply install "HEPA" filters in an HVAC system. You'd be smarter to ask for UV lights and increase air changes.

Simply adding more resistance to air flow (that's what a HEPA filter is) will be detrimental to systems that are not designed to operate at a higher static pressure.

**DAN BLAIR**  
Oxford

**Editor's note:** *The writer is correct about not just putting HEPA filters in any system, although they are used in hospitals. PEF is not asking for HEPA filters (which are MERV 17-20). PEF recommends the state go by the ASHRAE recommendations for high-efficiency filters of MERV 13. It's not a one-size-fits-all blanket recommendation. PEF members of health and safety committees have engaged agency management to discuss which locations have systems that can support MERV 13s. In some cases they can, and where they can't they may be able to install MERV 11s. Other alternatives are also being discussed and considered, such as UV lights or multi-level filtration systems.*

*Most importantly the filtration alone will not protect people. It must be part of a comprehensive COVID control plan including air exchange, terminal cleaning/disinfection, low density occupancy, masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene.*



# Thinks contract should have been settled before pandemic

## To the Editor:

I am convinced we would have had a pre-COVID contract if President Spence and the contract team were not set on wresting control of the dental benefit plan from the state and saving our members a lousy \$5 on health care copayments.

Now, here we are 18 months later, with the state in a dire financial situation, making any negotiations for our membership more difficult than they had to be!

Please convince me I am wrong.

**RON HOLBROOK**  
Delanson

**Editor's note:** *Neither President Spence, nor the PEF Contract Team were seeking to wrest control of the dental benefit from the state. To the contrary, based on membership input, they were seeking a better dental benefit with assurances of a network that would be accessible to all PEF members, including those in less populated areas of the state.*

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*The PEF PS&T Contract Team is trying to navigate a pandemic and economic calamity. When there will be a full reopening of the state and the economy is unknown. Tax revenues are in crisis and the virus threat remains.*

*Against this reality, the state has indicated that there is no meaningful way to conduct negotiations. The Governor's Office of Employee Relations has informed those other state-employee unions that previously agreed to a 2 percent raise in exchange, in part, for health care concessions, that their raises have been postponed, perhaps indefinitely. However, their health care concessions are not postponed. They already went into effect. That is not the case for PEF members, because PEF has made no concessions.*

*PEF is being very deliberate in its analysis as to when and how to best re-engage in negotiations during the pandemic. The union is monitoring economic conditions and the health care crisis. As soon as the bargaining landscape changes, the PEF Contract Team will swiftly set its next negotiations date, which it looks forward to being sooner than later.*



**The Communicator** PEF

**Email your letters to:**  
[thecomunicator@pef.org](mailto:thecomunicator@pef.org)

## **Grateful for PEF's efforts to protect members**

### **To the Editor:**

Thank you, President Wayne Spence and PEF, for all you have done and continue to do.

So many PEF members have shared concerns about the lack of a pay raise over the past three years, no PPEs and intentional retaliation against PEF members during the COVID-19 crisis, and refusals to allow teleworking for high risk PEF members and PEF stewards.

NYS Health Commissioner Howard Zucker held a department teleconference yesterday and stated that HR and the managers should research and review all requests and do everything possible to approve such requests per NYS DOH policy for all state workers (our PEF heroes). An effort by managers continues to recall high risk PEF members and stewards who were originally approved (to work from home). The PEF members continue to share their concerns and retaliation accounts.

In terms of positives concerning the COVID-19 crisis, Oxford, Pfizer, Astra Zeneca, and Gilead have treatments as well as other pharmaceutical firms. And the positive HEPA filters and UV lighting (are available).

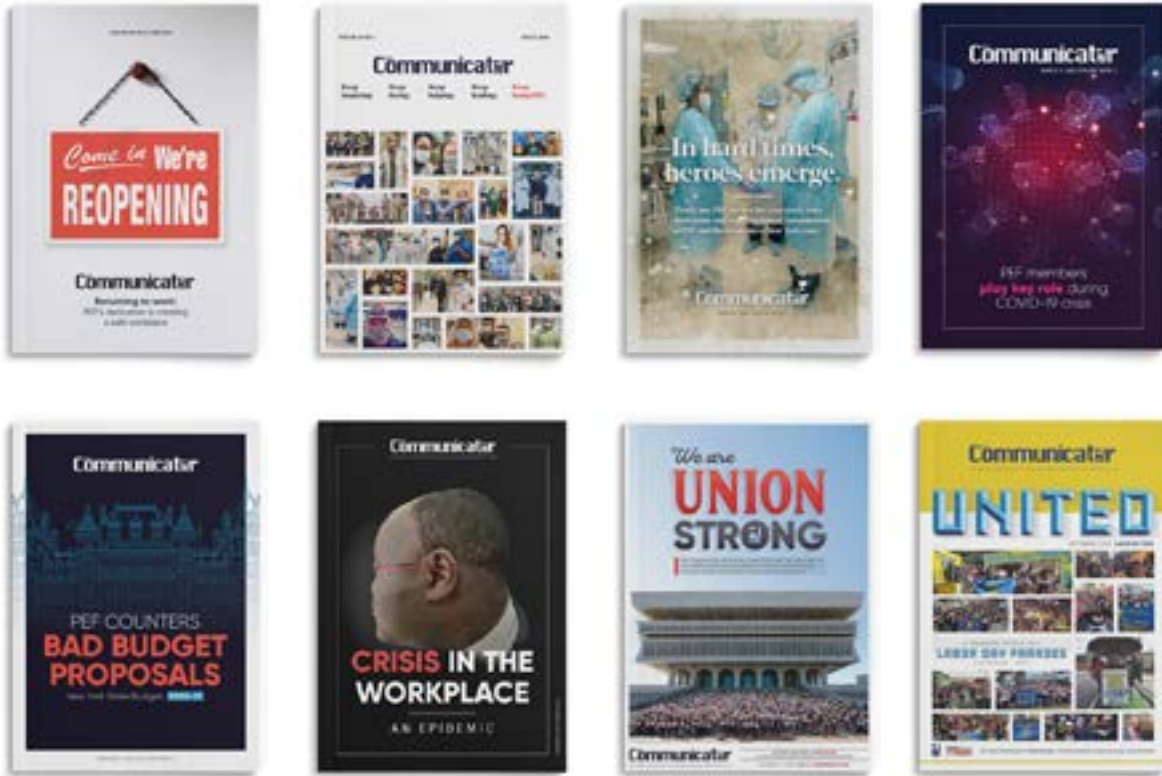
The NYS commissioner of health stated that public servants have researched , shared medically evidenced-based best practices, offered treatments, air filtration and UV lighting, and are turning NYS from the worst immunization rates and hospitalizations, ICU and intubations, and the worst death rates in the world to the best now in the world.

Much credit to PEF heroes and to PEF. Great work! Never have so few, done so much for so many, with so little.

Thank you and PEF for all you are doing.

**ED DOMBROSKI**  
Latham





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# Uncommon times are upon us

It is late July and I am writing this article for the September issue of The Communicator. September brings us to the end of summer and a transition to fall. In early September we celebrate Labor Day. This year, because of COVID, Labor Day will be unlike years past. We will need to find new and creative ways to celebrate in 2020.

I believe a historical perspective is in order because we need to appreciate the meaning of this important holiday. When America was founded, most people were either farmers, men of the sea, or involved in some related fields. As people moved inland, people were becoming more aware of how enormous America really was, and it was natural for people to choose other professions, even that of the discerner.

As the world developed, mining of the many natural resources our country became a way of life which helped build the country. As technology was refined, labor took on a new face.

The more traditional modes of work remained, but the American thirst for innovation became prominent. Labor became organized, unions found their niche in society; and there was a greater emphasis on the dignity of the working person.

Labor Day developed as a way to search for showcasing the back-breaking labor that made America strong, independent, self-sufficient, and the provider for the world.

The early Labor Day parades were made up of the common Joe who went to work, took pride in what he did, was paid a fair wage, and reminded the country of her pride in her citizens.

Today, there is a tendency to forget about these basic qualities of our everyday lives. If this COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that workers are “essential” including doctors, nurses, teachers, police, firefighters, grocery store workers, and all the dedicated public servants who work for the good of the public.

I am including below a letter we sent out in July to all PEF Retirees members for whom we have valid email addresses. I hope you find this information useful and I also you to provide us with a current email address. So we can keep you informed about issues that affect us all. You may send your current email address to our staff at [rmango@pef.org](mailto:rmango@pef.org).

Please stay safe, be well, stay informed and engaged!  
Happy Labor Day!

Dear Retirees,  
I hope this letter finds you doing well during these unprecedented times of pandemic from COVID-19. The PEF Retirees staff has been working from home in order to stay safe and continue to serve the needs of our retirees.

Our Board has met by using Zoom video conferencing. Some of our chapters have made wellness calls to their membership. We continue to stay engaged at the state and federal level in order to fight to maintain our earned benefits such as affordable quality health insurance, pensions with COLA, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

We can't do it alone. That's one reason we are affiliated with organizations such as The New York State Alliance for Retired Americans. When you are a dues-paying member of The PEF Retirees, you are also a member of NYSARA. It sends out a weekly electronic newsletter with great information for seniors. You can check them out at their website for the latest edition of the “Monday Alert”: Go to <https://nystate.retiredamericans.org/>.

You can also email them at [president@newyorkstateara.org](mailto:president@newyorkstateara.org) with your own email if you want to sign up for the “Monday Alert.”

We have also been engaged politically with the PEF Statewide PAC.

Please share this information with other retirees who we may not have email addresses on file. Email is the fastest, most efficient and economical way to share important information with our members. To update your email address contact: [rmango@pef.org](mailto:rmango@pef.org).

During these difficult times and this new normal, we will continue to represent retirees' interests and advocate for a secure, well deserved retirement for all working Americans!

Please stay safe, healthy, informed and engaged!  
Together we are stronger!!

UPDATES: PEF HQ is still closed while renovations are ongoing and all staff are working remotely including our retiree staff. The Retiree Executive Board held a ZOOM virtual meeting June 29, 2020. All chapter presidents were on this call. A decision was made that due to COVID 19, for the protection and safety of our members and with social distancing



requirements in place, we are suspending all meetings and chapter elections of officers until further notice. All officers will remain in place until such time as an in-person meeting or a virtual meeting with a proper quorum present can be scheduled and held. This was a unanimous vote with no abstentions.

IMPORTANT NOTE: On behalf of PEF President Wayne Spence and the entire PEF leadership team, I hope this finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe!

As you know, New York is facing a \$13 billion deficit this year and a projected \$60 billion shortfall over the next four years.

The HEROES Act – already passed by the U.S. House and sitting on U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s desk, would provide New York \$36 billion in operating aid, \$3 billion in school aid and another \$11.1 billion in resources to protect the health and safety of workers, to provide hazard pay and child care options for essential workers, and to continue Medicaid services and unemployment insurance benefits for struggling New Yorkers.

We need Sen. McConnell and the entire U.S. Senate to pass this critical bill now!

Today is a national union day of action to make our collective voices heard! Please take a moment to make your voice heard by contacting your Congressional Representatives regarding the HEROES Act pending consideration in the U.S. Senate.

Your representative can be found at [www.house.gov/representatives](http://www.house.gov/representatives) or by telephone at the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Want to learn more about the HEROES Act and share additional information with other members and friends in New York and in other states? Go to <http://allin.rtp.aft.org/heroesact>.

Please help us make a difference today!

In solidarity,  
Randi DiAntonio  
PEF vice president and PAC chair

#### INFORMATION ON EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE (ERI)

-- “There are several bills pending that would provide an early retirement incentive for certain state employees, but to date, no legislation providing such benefit(s) is under active consideration by the relevant committees or has passed either house of the state Legislature.

The most comprehensive legislation introduced to date is A.10595 by Assembly Member Abinati. This legislation, if enacted, would provide:

- PART A: certain members or certain titles designated by management would be eligible for up to three years of additional service credit for an early retirement (one month of extra service up to an additional 36 months of pension credit); and
- PART B: eligible members who are age 55 and have 25 or more years of service would be eligible to self-select retirement without penalty during a specified window.

There is no NYS Senate bill at this time.

As you know, there are layoffs occurring in school districts and municipalities across the state. However, in the near term, given the expense for the benefits provided, we only see the Early Retirement Incentive being enacted and implemented for state employees if the state and Washington, DC are unable to address the state’s \$13 billion budget gap effectively and if the governor advances layoffs for state employees.

The minute that we have any clarity on this legislation, we will advise the membership immediately.”



## Ailing members need your leave donations

The following PEF members have reported a need for leave donations due to the need for medical treatment or recuperation from illness or injury.

Donations are made from annual leave and donors must retain at least 10 days of annual leave after donating. To donate leave, obtain a leave-donation form from your personnel or human resources office and submit it to that office. You may donate leave to employees at both the agency where you work and to those working at other state agencies.

To help facilitate donations, we list an HR contact number for each person needing donations on the list below.

- **Stephen Bailey** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Linda Deserto** is a nurse 2 at Wallkill Correctional Facility in Wallkill. Call 845-895-2021;
- **Theresa Fernandez** is a utility consumer assistance specialist 3 at the state Department of Public Service in New York City. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Marlene Garrett** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. Call 315-464-4943;
- **Gina Hallmark** is a nurse 2 at Lakeview Shock Correctional Facility in Brockton. Call 716-792-7115;
- **Tracy Jensen** is a business services center analyst trainee 1 at the state Office of General Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Sara Kneaskern** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. Call 315-464-4943;
- **Joseph Mbotchahawo** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **John Morano** is a vocational instructor 4 at Wende Correctional Facility in Alden. Call 716-937-4000;
- **Roxeen Mundy** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Katherine Neely** is an associate psychologist at Buffalo Psychiatric Center in Buffalo. Call 716-816-2554;
- **Lucas Rathke** is an information technology specialist 2, programing at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272;
- **Brian Squadere** is a senior accountant at the state Gaming Commission in Schenectady. Call 518-457-4272; and
- **Naomi Van Deinse** is an information technology specialist 2 at the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. Call 518-457-4272.

The rules for making and receiving leave donations (such as leave recipients may not have had any disciplinary actions or unsatisfactory performance evaluations within their last three years of state employment) are set forth on pages 181 and 182 of the 2016-19 PS&T Contract. If you, or a PEF member you know, need leave donations because of a medical issue, you may contact The Communicator to request publication of that need. Send requests to [thecomunicator@pef.org](mailto:thecomunicator@pef.org), or call 800-342-4306, ext. 271. Be sure to provide your contact information.







**Thank you PEF heroes!**

[Watch video](#)

# 2020 Convention Delegate List



## 42<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL PEF CONVENTION DELEGATE INFORMATION Virtual • October 18-21, 2020

Name	Reg.	Div.	Title	Name	Reg.	Div.	Title	Name	Reg.	Div.	Title	Name	Reg.	Div.	Title
<b>AGRICUL MARKETS</b>				<b>DOCCS GREEN HAVEN COR FAC</b>				BARBARA GAFFNEY	10	376	N	MICHAEL A DREIBELBIS	08	205	D
KAREN J TAYLOR	08	275	F	SABU CHERIAN	09	184	C	JACQUELINE J HARNETT	08	194	C	KENNETH FERRO	08	205	P
<b>AUDIT CONTROL</b>				<b>DOCCS LAKEVIEW COR FAC</b>				CAROLE I JARVIE	03	372	N	ERIKA L FLOOD	08	205	D
MICHAEL BLUE	08	263	K	CYNTHIA L HAHN	01	378	A	KIMBERLY A KAIN	06	230	N	MARLENE F GRIMSHAW	08	205	D
ALPHONSO BOYD	08	263	K	<b>DOCCS MOHAWK COR FAC</b>				YANDE S MCMILLAN FALODU	11	376	N	JOHN A INGRAM	01	220	D
DANIELLE K BRIDGER	08	263	P	STEVEN DRAKE	06	379	C	AUDREY MYERS	12	376	K	RICHARD P KAPPES	08	205	P
PATRICIA D COONROD	08	263	P	JOHN TAVERNE	06	379	A	PETER J NASTASI	08	194	C	PETER A LAVENIA	08	205	P
MICHAEL P CRAIG	08	263	P	<b>DOCCS OTISVILLE COR FAC</b>				ANGELINA RODRIGUEZ	11	376	K	ILANYE LONGJOHN	12	317	P
TROY DECKER	05	263	P	BRYAN S BARBER	09	210	H	MARY K SAPP	08	194	C	TRACY L MANN	10	199	E
CATHERINE DELL'ANGELO	08	263	U	<b>DOCCS SING SING COR FAC</b>				STEPHANIE M SHAW	01	215	N	JEANETTE SANTOS	08	205	E
SARAH K LAUSER	08	263	K	TAMBOURA LITTLE	09	323	H	VED SHRVAH	08	194	C	HAROLD G STONE	04	312	M
PAUL LENZ	08	263	K	<b>DOCCS WENDE COR FAC</b>				PATRICK WHALEN	08	194	E	BRYAN J TARR	08	205	P
WENDY S MECCARIELLO	08	263	U	BRANDON E SEEBAUER	01	348	C	<b>ENVIR CONS M/O</b>				<b>HOMELAND SECURITY</b>			
DENISE J MONTEFORTE	09	263	P	<b>DOCCS WYOMING COR FAC</b>				KEITH A BROWNE	09	169	B	LISA M CAPONE	08	179	S
RAYMOND M MOROZ	08	263	K	MELANIE R PORTER	01	356	C	TODD M CAFFOE	03	169	B	BRENDA L GAUSBY	08	179	F
KELLY A NADEAU	08	263	P	<b>DOT MAIN OFFICE</b>				HOLLY CLARK	08	169	B	JOHN T THOMSEN	08	179	C
JAMES E RAPPAPORT	08	263	P	RUFUS S BANKS	08	177	B	RICHARD R CORIALE JR	06	169	B	<b>HSC BRKLN P/R</b>			
CHERYL L ROBINSON	08	263	K	JOHN J BISHOP	08	177	B	KATHRYN DIECK	12	385	Q	ABDALLAH DIOP	11	198	A
JOSEPH F UGINO	08	263	K	MARION BROWN	08	177	B	ERIN M DONHAUSER	07	169	B	ANDREA G HARRY	11	198	A
<b>CIVIL SERVICE</b>				MICHAEL R CRANNELL	08	177	B	DENSFORD D ESCARPETA	09	169	B	SHERRON HUNTE	11	198	A
RUTH E BRUINS	08	250	A	JAMES M ERCOLANO	08	177	B	GINA M FANELLI	12	385	Q	NICHOLIN MCMILLAN	11	198	A
<b>CORRL SRVCS M/O</b>				PAUL R LYONS	08	177	B	BRUCE C GIDDINGS	08	169	B	JOAN P ROSEGREEN	11	198	A
DOUGLAS A WILBURN	08	229	H	GUSTAVO SANTOS	08	177	O	PRADEEP K JANGBARI	03	169	B	CYNTHIA WALKER	11	198	A
<b>DEPT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				LISA A SNYDER	08	177	F	AASEM KUMAR	08	169	B	<b>HSC SYR HOSP PR</b>			
FLETCHER C BARNES	08	268	K	<b>DOT REGION 1</b>				SARA H LATESSA	08	169	B	JOHN F HORAN	04	320	A
HESHAM M EL MELIGY	10	260	P	PETER J REA	08	258	B	ERIK J LATREMORE	04	169	Q	ERIN C KING	04	320	A
SERGEY K GARANIN	10	174	C	MERCY E SENGER	08	258	B	DONALD J NELSON	04	169	B	SCOTT MARSLAND	04	320	A
SUZETTE GRANT	10	174	P	<b>DOT REGION 10</b>				ANTOINETTE NORFLEET	08	169	B	BRENDA L ONDERKO	04	320	A
JOLEVETTE MITCHELL	10	260	G	WILLIAM A HOLTHAUSEN	12	170	B	CHRISTOPHER M ONEILL	08	169	B	ROBERTA J STAFFORD	04	320	A
MCDAVIS O OJARIKRE	10	260	P	<b>DOT REGION 11</b>				SALVATORE F PRIORE	08	169	B	<b>HUTCHS CHILD SV</b>			
ADEMOLA OLUWO	10	260	P	MAMADOU S DIALLO	11	214	B	JAMES A SACCO JR	01	169	B	LAURA B BAY	04	301	C
ROBERT H OTTAVIANO JR	10	174	F	DEBRA HUNT	11	214	B	NICOLE J SMITH	04	169	B	GINA M CORONA	04	301	E
<b>DOCCS ALTONA COR FAC</b>				<b>DOT REGION 3</b>				RYAN J TOMKO	01	169	B	MARTHA B MACHIN	04	301	C
SANDRA M DERR	07	342	C	THOMAS LUTZ	04	256	B	SCOTT M WELLS	05	169	B	DAURYNE M METZ	04	301	C
<b>DOCCS BARE HILL COR FAC</b>				CHARLES A MCRORIE	04	256	B	BRENDAN WOODRUFF	08	169	B	<b>LABOR</b>			
DAVID J MOSIER	07	377	C	<b>DOT REGION 4</b>				<b>EX CORR COMM</b>				SCARLETT AHMED	11	245	O
<b>DOCCS BEDFRD HILL COR FAC</b>				ROBERT D GORKA II	03	284	B	MARYSUSAN E TIMPSON	10	204	J	KANASHA BLUE	03	278	O
STEVEN FEINSTEIN	09	353	D	COURTNEY L GOULD	03	284	B	<b>EX CRMLN JST SV</b>				WAYNE J BOWERS	08	202	O
DIANE JAULUS	09	353	E	DANIEL F LANDERS	03	284	B	ZACHARY J MORTON	08	204	P	TAMI L CANNON	08	202	N
<b>DOCCS CAPE VINCENT COR FAC</b>				MATTHEW C ORAVEC	03	284	B	<b>EX DIV HUMAN RT</b>				JASON CLARK	07	273	U
LORI A GREENIZEN	04	367	H	COLLEEN M WILLIAMS	03	284	F	MARGARET A JACKSON	12	329	G	WILLIAM H CLINGERSMITH	03	278	S
<b>DOCCS CLINTON COR FAC</b>				<b>DOT REGION 5</b>				BELLEW MCMANUS	10	329	G	HELEN T ESPOSITO	05	281	O
PATRICIA J SCHWARTZ	07	239	C	THOMAS W LOZINSKY JR	01	219	B	JEANNE L ORTIZ	10	329	S	KELLI J EVERETT	02	359	O
<b>DOCCS COLLINS COR FAC</b>				JUSTIN J PRZEPASNAIAK	01	219	U	<b>EX HSG&amp;CMTY RNL</b>				SCOTT K HEKTOR	05	281	O
SHAUN M WENTLAND	01	340	C	PAUL M UEBELHOER	01	219	B	GLADYS FRANCO	10	168	S	MARIA D HERNANDEZ	08	202	S
<b>DOCCS COMMUNITY SUPERVISION</b>				<b>DOT REGION 6</b>				<b>EX OFF GEN SERV</b>				LAVERNE HILLMAN-ADAMS	01	221	O
ADREINA ADAMS	11	236	J	KATHY A BUTTON	02	175	B	GEORGE T BALINDA	08	179	B	KEVIN E JONES	08	202	G
JERRY M BARANSKA	04	236	J	JOHN D EDDY	02	175	B	OWEN G BYRNE II	01	179	B	MICHELE E LASSI	11	245	U
JAMES C HARFORD	10	236	J	ANDREW PULEO	02	175	B	GLORIA FUNG	08	179	B	MICHELLE MALDONADO	11	245	G
ROBERT D HODSON	03	236	J	<b>DOT REGION 8</b>				BE HA	08	179	B	JOYCE P MCALISTER	08	202	G
DAYNA R LAMB	12	236	J	BRIAN D DUBOIS	09	172	B	DAVID W MILLER	08	179	B	DANIEL F MCCORMACK	09	286	M
GINA LOPEZ	03	236	J	<b>DOT REGION 9</b>				MARK W MILSTEIN	08	179	S	JOSE H MEDINA	10	245	M
JOHN SNYDER	04	236	J	PAUL R GENDRON	05	227	B	GEORGE W MOREHOUSE	08	179	M	MICHAEL R NASSOII	01	221	O
WAYNE SPENCE	12	236	J	MICHAEL M ZWICK	05	227	B	JOSHUA A QUILES	08	179	B	TANYA M NELSON	11	245	O
DARRYL STEVENSON	11	236	J	<b>ECONOMIC DEVEL</b>				<b>EX STATE POLICE</b>				MARY C OKENICA	05	281	O
ANTHONY ZACCONE	10	236	J	BRENDA S GROBER	08	262	O	COREY J HOVAK	08	204	U	ANNMARIE C PFOHL	01	221	R
<b>DOCCS COXSACKIE COR FAC</b>				CYNTHIA M SHANNON	08	262	O	<b>H HELEN HAYES</b>				EDWARD S RANDOLPH	08	202	O
JASON T RABIDEAU	08	212	C	KAY A WILKIE	08	262	O	PATRICIA OTOOLE	09	226	H	MICHAEL R SINGLETON	02	359	O
<b>DOCCS ELMIRA CNTR COR FAC</b>				<b>ED HGR ED SRVCS</b>				<b>HEALTH MAIN OFF</b>				JACOB H WEINTRAUB	11	245	G
ERIN E O'BRIEN	02	222	H	JOHN M DEFAZIO	08	355	C	LINDA J BAKER	08	205	E	<b>LAW</b>			
<b>DOCCS FISHKILL COR FAC</b>				<b>ED ROME DEAF</b>				SUSAN BILLI	12	317	A	EDWIN E FEBUS	08	187	K
CHARLES W MULLER	09	310	C	VICTORIA J STOCKTON	06	206	C	STEVEN M BROOKS	08	205	D	TAMARA C MARTIN	10	351	G
<b>DOCCS FRANKLIN COR FAC</b>				<b>EDUC MAIN OFFICE</b>				CHERYL D BROWN	01	220	D	JOHN NICOTINA	08	187	K
SHARON A LAMB	07	361	C	MOHAMMED K CHOWDHURY	10	349	M	CHRISTINA COSTA-DALEY	08	205	A	SHAELNDRA RAMADHIN	10	351	P
CARLY E WALBRIDGE	07	361	C	ROBERT L DAVIES JR	04	230	N	TONIA D DANDRIDGE	10	199	M	JOHN P PRICE	08	187	M
<b>DOCCS GOWANDA COR FAC</b>				STEPHEN T DOMBROSKI JR	08	194	C	AMY C DEMARCO	08	205	Q	ALBERT YASUS	08	187	K
JOYCE J PRITCHARD	01	393	H	IAN S DUCKOR	08	194	C	EDWARD F DOMBROSKI	08	205	D				



# 2020 Convention Delegate List

Name	Reg.	Div.	Title	Name	Reg.	Div.	Title	Name	Reg.	Div.	Title	Name	Reg.	Div.	Title
<b>MH BING PSY CTR</b>				J P NOONAN	08	265	J	COURTNEY A FRANNEY	06	189	C	RADHAKRISHN MOHAN	10	240	K
SEAN M CRONIN	05	208	N	<b>OASAS TRMT CTRS</b>				JACKLYN HOPKINS	06	189	C	TAMI J POPIELARZ	08	240	M
ANGELA M REH	05	208	N	WILLIAM M BROWN	06	183	J	MONICA G MOORE	04	304	E	EILEEN M RICHARDSON	04	240	A
JOANNE S REYNOLDSMCNALLY	05	208	E	JOHN G FORRESTER	11	326	J	MEGAN R OTIS	06	189	H	JOAN M SCHIENER	03	240	P
<b>MH BRONX PSY CT</b>				THOMAS F MURPHY	04	398	J	SAMETTA L SHAW-LIPIEC	06	189	H	NISHITH SHAH	10	240	M
ROBERT LOWINGER	10	213	D	GARY SOARES	11	326	A	<b>OPWDD FINGER LAK DDOO</b>				PRASHANT M SINGAPURA	12	240	K
VENICIO MOJICA JR	10	213	A	VANESSA B WASHINGTON	12	326	J	LEISA ABRAHAM	03	246	D	SHERYL SPERRY	08	240	M
LETICIA RIVERA	10	213	D	BEVERLY WILLIAMS	10	326	E	NESTOR N BERNIER	03	246	C	CHARLES W TERMINI	09	240	M
<b>MH BUFLO PSY CT</b>				<b>OF CHILD FAM SV</b>				RANDI L DIANTONIO	03	259	E	DANIEL WARREN	01	240	K
BERNARD L CAREY	01	180	N	BARBARA G GREGOREK	08	234	P	KRISTINA J LABARBERA	03	246	D	LISA M WELLS	04	240	M
VINCENT A CICATELLO	01	180	A	PENNIE L GRINNELL	08	234	E	JESSICA L NITCHMAN	03	246	A	<b>STONYBRK HOS PR</b>			
ALEXANDRE Z DONASCIMENTO	01	180	H	ROBIN M MATTHEWS	10	191	E	GREGORY SALAMIDA	03	246	D	DOUGLAS BEGENT	12	225	A
<b>MH CAP DST P CT</b>				THOMAS MITCHELL	04	401	E	<b>OPWDD HDSN VAL DDOO</b>				BARBARA L CONIGLIO	12	225	A
FREDERICK R BULMER	08	231	E	JENNIFER R VOELKER	01	337	N	TRUNAY N BRUNSON	09	276	D	CHRISTINE DEMPSEY	12	225	A
MARY HALTERMANN	08	231	D	VERONICA V WARREN	08	234	E	MICHELE S CARAWAY	09	276	C	DENISE DIBIASE	12	225	A
KAREN TICE	08	231	D	<b>OF TEMP DI ASSI</b>				MARISA J MC CLINTON	09	276	C	MICHAEL S DOYLE	12	225	A
<b>MH CNTRL NY P C</b>				CARL E ANDERSON	10	192	D	LUISA A SCOTTCOOPER	09	276	D	NORA M HIGGINS	12	225	A
EDWARD G DUEGAW	04	299	A	STEPHEN L BOYD	05	399	K	<b>OPWDD L ISLAND DDOO</b>				LORAIN E C JELINEK	12	225	A
MARY B MCKINLEY	06	344	A	MARK CENSOR	10	192	M	KEVIN R WILSON	12	209	E	AMY L PACHOLK	12	225	A
GERARD RICONDA	09	323	E	SHARON V DESILVA	08	234	G	<b>OPWDD MAIN OFF</b>				MICHELLE M STRONG	12	225	A
JOSEPHINE A SLIFKA	06	344	A	IVELISSE DISHMEY	11	373	G	MARIE L HENRY	10	292	P	<b>SU COL OPTOMTRY</b>			
AUDREY SYKES	06	344	A	RICHARD A FLETCHER	05	399	M	JODI L NETTLETON	08	257	F	DARWIN W RICHMOND	12	225	D
<b>MH CREEDMR P CT</b>				ELLEN J FULLER	05	399	M	ROSALYN A RENAS	08	257	P	<b>TAX FINANCE</b>			
ALBERT FAMULARO	11	241	E	GERMAINE GRECO	10	192	M	<b>OPWDD SUNMOUNT DDOO</b>				WILFRED M AMANFU	11	406	P
MICHELE SOKOLSKI	11	241	E	STANLEY J KELLEY	05	399	M	JOEL W BARTLETT	07	242	N	SANY S AMBOOKEN	11	290	P
ELSA TARTT	11	241	D	JENNIFER LOPEZ	11	373	G	STEPHANIE M CHAMPAGNE	07	242	E	EDWARD BELLAMY	08	190	P
<b>MH ELMIRA PSY C</b>				MALIYKA A MUHAMMAD	10	192	M	KAREN HOCKEY	07	242	A	CHRISTOPHER G BUMAN	03	360	P
DARREN J MACDOUGALL	02	223	F	MARTIN J ROBINSON	08	234	E	SCOTT M PRENOVEAU	07	242	C	EDGAR CISNEROS	09	182	P
<b>MH KNGBR PY CT</b>				MADDIE SHANNONROBERTS	08	409	M	BARBARA E STRANSKY	07	242	C	JEFFREY D COZZY	08	190	P
CINDY A GUADAGNO	11	252	N	SCOTT STAUB	05	399	M	<b>OPWDD TACONIC DDOO</b>				CONRAD DAVIS	11	406	P
ERROL S LONDON	11	252	A	DEBORAH A WALTON	08	234	G	JANETTE L CLARK	09	248	E	JOSEPH DONAHUE	08	190	P
BERNADETTE OCONNOR	11	252	H	<b>OFC MDICAID INSP GEN</b>				SARAH E SOLIERI	09	248	E	CHOI Y DOWNES	08	190	P
<b>MH MAIN OFFICE</b>				RONNI KENT	08	205	E	<b>OPWDD WESTERN NY DDOO</b>				TAMMY L FIORILLO	08	190	P
CARMELA M TRIOLO	08	392	P	CANTAVE PAUL	09	191	P	SCOTT R DOBE	01	167	H	ELIZABETH A GARCIA	08	190	P
<b>MH MANHATN P CT</b>				COLLEEN C QUACKENBUSH	08	205	P	MALACHY L GATELY	01	243	C	ROBERT J GORDON	11	406	P
HAROLD E BREWSTER	10	267	D	<b>OFF OF INFO TECH SRVCS</b>				DONNA S KARCZ	01	243	C	SANDRA L GRADY	08	190	P
SHARON COLEMAN	10	267	E	DAWN BELLAMY	08	357	K	STEPHANIE MCLEAN-BEATHLEY	01	167	E	SHARON HYDE-SCULLY	08	190	P
<b>MH MHWK VAL P C</b>				JAMES CAMPBELL	08	357	K	GRANT W QUALE	01	167	C	KYLE M JACOBSON	08	190	P
MARY M KRUKONIS	06	183	A	JOSEPH P DAURIO	08	357	K	SHOSHANA J WILLIAMS	01	167	C	JUSTINE A KEEFER	08	190	P
<b>MH PILGRIM P CT</b>				JAMES F DESSO	08	357	K	<b>OPWDDMETRO NY DDOO</b>				JOSEPH KLEIN	01	224	P
JOSE L RODRIGUEZ	12	233	A	CHRISTOPHER J FORD	08	357	K	MURIEL T HARDY	10	407	E	KATRINA LAMPKIN	08	190	P
<b>MH RCK PC CYTH</b>				BRANDON L HILL	08	357	K	CRYSTAL MAMBY	10	407	C	THOMAS J LATKO	01	224	P
TERESA MAYER	09	235	C	GEORGE H HOWARD	11	357	K	JUDITH A MORRISONCONOVER	10	292	D	STUART LEVY	11	406	P
<b>MH ROCH PSY CTR</b>				ADRIENNE KIRKLAND	10	357	K	<b>PK&amp;REC MAIN OFF</b>				MICHAEL B MCFERRAN	08	190	P
LISA L DURKIN	03	283	D	MITHILESH KUMAR	08	357	S	DENISE E MARTIN	08	305	B	MICHAEL A MILLER	08	190	P
NICOLE C TARSON	03	283	N	PRAKASH LAL	08	357	K	<b>PUBLIC SERVICE</b>				KEITHA MOORE	11	406	P
<b>MH ROCKLAND P C</b>				MARY J LUTZ	04	357	K	STEPHEN POWERS	08	203	B	STEVEN C NAWROCKI	01	224	P
CARL ANKRAH	09	235	A	ROBERT P MAHONEY	08	357	K	<b>ROSWELL PARK</b>				STACEY L PAUL	08	190	P
<b>MH S BEACH CNTR</b>				REGINA D MCDONALD	11	357	K	GIRMA AGONAFER	01	196	D	ANGELO P POLITO	08	190	M
KENNETH DISCHEL	11	253	D	ANDREW J MICHELA	08	357	K	YATRAM B JAGROOP	01	196	B	LINDA J SCOTT	08	190	P
SHAQUANA F PERRY	11	253	H	RONALD F OBRYAN	08	357	K	MICHELE L SILSBY	01	196	D	CHRISTINE L SICINA	09	182	M
MICHAEL PREMUS	11	253	D	RICHARD RIDGEWAY	08	357	K	<b>ST LAW CHILD SV</b>				STEPHEN C THOMPSON	04	333	P
CHARLES ROLAND	11	253	E	ENGELS ROJAS	08	357	K	VIRGINIA E DAVEY	07	249	C	YOCEHEVED TRAVIS	11	406	P
<b>MH SAG PC CYTH</b>				JEFFREY SMITH	08	357	K	JAMIE A FRIOT	07	249	C	WILLIAM K VANSLEET	08	190	P
RACHAEL KIRK	12	178	C	KELLEY SMITH	08	357	K	JILL E KENNEDY	07	249	A	ANTHONY VONA	08	190	M
<b>MH ST LAW PSY C</b>				GLORIA THOMAS	03	357	K	<b>STATE</b>				JAKOB WESTMAN	08	190	P
HEATHER A BARKLEY	07	249	E	DEBRA A VERCRUYSE	08	357	K	JAMES A REPPERT	08	295	B	DANIEL ZAGORCSAK	13	341	P
SUSAN M PIRIE	07	249	A	<b>OPWDD BERN FINE DDOO</b>				<b>STATE INS FUND</b>				<b>W NY CH PSY CTR</b>			
<b>MH WASH HTS UN</b>				GWENDOLYN J CULPEPPER	11	207	H	CAROLYN BENTON	10	240	M	LORI R KLUMPP	01	167	A
DARLENE WILLIAMS	10	254	H	<b>OPWDD BROOKLYN DDOO</b>				CHARLES L BROWNING	05	240	G	PATRICIA M MORAN	01	167	F
<b>MHK VLY CYTH</b>				CLAUDETTE M NORMAN	11	244	H	ROBERT S BUREY	01	240	P	<b>WKRS COMP BOARD</b>			
SHEVAUN E ABBOTT	06	183	H	CARRIE L SAUNDERS	11	244	H	CHERMAYNE B CAMPBELL	10	240	M	SCOTT AVIDON	11	285	G
<b>MOTOR VEHICLES</b>				<b>OPWDD BROOME DDOO</b>				CAITLIN A CRUDDEN	12	240	M	SEAMUS S MURPHY	12	285	G
MEGAN S HILL	08	211	F	DENISE BAILEY	05	197	H	KATHERINE A CZACHOROWSKI	03	240	M	WILLIAM G OSTA	08	363	G
LINDA JOHNSON	09	255	R	IRIS M BONILLA	05	197	D	KEVIN J DOBIES	08	240	G	TRACY A PEEL	10	285	G
MAUREEN A KOZAKIEWICZ	08	211	B	JOSHUA B CHIMENE	05	197	D	DAVID M DUBOFSKY	05	240	M	REBECCA S SCHWARTZ	10	285	G
RALPH A MABB III	08	211	B	CAROLYN M COLE	05	197	A	KATHLEEN M FIORE	10	240	G	<b>RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE</b>			
<b>NYS GAMING COMMISSION</b>				TERESA A COLE	05	197	A	JOSEPH W GAMORAN	10	240	P	ROBERT H HARMS	08		
PAULA L DENAULT	08	332	P	CAROLINE L HAMLIN	05	197	C	KENNETH J JOHNSON	10	240	M				
JOSEPH M MCCANN	01	332	P	SHERRY L HANSON	05	197	A	DIANN JONES	03	240	K				
JOSEPH ZICCARDI	01	332	P	SUZANNE F THOMAS	05	403	E	BRANDI L LOVEDAY-CHESLEY	08	240	K				
<b>OASAS MAIN OFF</b>				<b>OPWDD CENTRAL NY DDOO</b>				PATRICIA A MASON	08	240	A				
WILLIAM CRUZ	10	314	J	KENNETH D BRYNIEN	04	304	D	TERESA R MCLEOD	10	240	M				



From left to right are: steward Matt Eronomek, Council Leader Debbie Lombardo and steward Jessica Baker.



A creative way to bring members together outdoors where it is safer to gather. Division 208 lunch at Binghamton PC.



PEF DOCCS members sporting their new masks with Region 12 Coordinator Nora Higgins in Bohemia NY.



PEF New York State Fire Protection Specialists PEF Div 179 working long shifts all over NY from Buffalo to NYC, in addition to their #COVID19 assignments, continuing to keep us safe.



“Heroes Don’t Get Zeros”: Hundreds turn out to rally for COVID pay at Stony Brook.

