



State Legislature listens to PEF members:

"Fund Our Future!"

The Communicator

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Metro NY Labor Communications Council

The President's Message By WAYNE SPENCE



'Fund Our Future' campaign yields legislative wins

It has been a very busy spring for PEF! State lawmakers concluded their work at the start of this month, and I'm pleased to report that PEF pushed through more than half a dozen bills that, if signed by the governor, will improve the working lives of our members. [You can read all about them here.](#)

My sincere thanks to every member, active or retired, who took the time to write or call their legislators on behalf of PEF's priorities, as well as the work of the Statewide Political Action Committee and PEF's Legislative Department.

Last week, we held the quarterly meeting of our Executive Board in Albany, where nine new PEF leaders were sworn in to conduct the business of the union. [This issue includes a summary of that meeting.](#) Before that, I was joined by my fellow statewide officers on a tour of agencies and worksites in "downstate" New York – PEF regions 10, 11 and 12. You can see a few photos in the gallery at the end of this issue. We updated members on those legislative wins and talked about issues and concerns they face at work. For the first time in a long time, I think I heard more praise than complaints. That doesn't mean that everything is perfect for every state worker, far from it, but it does mean the hard work we all do together as a union is paying off. We are committed to following up with leadership in each region to address the issues and concerns that were brought to our attention.

Many members, of course, asked about contract negotiations, which we anticipate beginning this fall. Our current collective bargaining agreement runs through April 1, 2023. Anyone with suggestions for the PEF Contract Team is invited to email ContractSuggestions2022@pef.org.

Lastly, a pair of features I recommend in this issue of The Communicator. The first is a look at the critical [work being done by the Joint Affirmative Action Advisory Committee](#), which helps members who feel they have been discriminated against on the job. And the second highlights two PEF members who benefitted from the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness program](#) – one of them to the tune of almost \$100,000! I urge members who meet the criteria to apply and be as persistent as the members profiled. It could literally change your financial future.

Thanks for reading and I hope you all have a relaxing start to the summer. We'll be continuing our Statewide Officer Tour in the months ahead and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Until then stay safe, and stay healthy.

In Unity,

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

Wayne Spence
PEF President



PEF endorses Hochul for governor, several legislative candidates

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

The PEF Executive Board voted June 9 to endorse Kathy Hochul for governor. No other candidates were discussed, and the 12 PEF regional political action committees and the union's statewide PAC had all recommended Hochul's endorsement.

The board was informed June 10 that Hochul called the PEF president to thank the union for its endorsement.

Other early political endorsements recommended by the union's political action committees and approved by the board June 9 include:

- Pamela Helming, R, Senate District 54;
- David Weprin, D, Assembly District 24;
- Andrew Hevesi, D, Assembly District 28;
- Jeffrion Aubry, D, Assembly District 35;
- Juan Ardila, D, Assembly District 37;
- Mathylde Frontus, D, Assembly District 46;
- Latrice Walker, D, Assembly District 55;
- Monique Chandler-Waterman, D, Assembly District 58;
- Nikki Lucas, D, Assembly District 60;
- Deborah Glick, D, Assembly District 66;
- Inez Dickens, D, Assembly District 70;
- Al Taylor, D, Assembly District 71;
- Manny De Los Santos, D, Assembly District 72;
- Yudelka Tapia, D, Assembly District 86;
- Angelo Santabarbara, D, Assembly District 111;
- Jen Lunsford, D, Assembly District 133; and
- Harry Bronson, D, Assembly District 138.

The board also made several other early candidate endorsements at its [April meeting](#).

Democrat and Republican political primaries will be held June 28 and August 23 this year to select the parties' candidates for the November 8 general election. Only Democrats can vote in the Democratic primary and only Republicans may vote in the Republican primary.

Candidates for governor, lieutenant governor and state Assembly will be selected June 28 and the candidates for Congress and the state Senate will vie for party nominations August 23.

PEF Legislative Director Pat Lyons said it's important for members who support the endorsed candidates to support their campaigns by volunteering or assisting in other ways.

"These candidates helped us puncture the state spending cap, dedicate money to fill vacancies, enact the nurse loan repayment and healthcare worker bonus programs, pass legislation to require cost/benefit analysis and protect nurses from abuses of mandated overtime," Lyons said.



PEF leaders and staff from the Buffalo area were recognized and shared their thoughts about the massacre at Tops supermarket on May 14.

Buffalo tragedy

PEF President Wayne Spence began the board's two-day quarterly meeting in Albany by asking the board members and staff from the Buffalo area to come to the front of the room, where they were invited to speak about their experiences related to the tragic mass shooting at the Tops supermarket in Buffalo on May 14.



"It was a gut punch," Spence said. He noted that the alleged shooter is the son of two PEF members, one of whom is a longtime member of the Executive Board. News media also ran a photo of the shooter's map of the store that was drawn on a PEF notepad. The president added that a PEF council leader lost a grandparent in the shooting, and other PEF members lost friends.

Stephanie McLean-Beathley, the administrator of the PEF Membership Benefits Program, is a Red Cross volunteer who was called to respond the day of the tragedy, helping children who were separated from their adults – a process that took up to seven hours. Another board member who works for the state Health Department, John Ingram, helped coordinate the assembly and delivery of food kits for the community and reported that FeedMoreWNY had more volunteers than needed thanks to the generosity of PEF members and others.



Nine new members of the PEF Executive Board are sworn-in prior to the start of the meeting on June 9.

Union solidarity

Spence then introduced PEF organizing coordinator Andrew Puleo, PEF Communications Director Rob Merrill and PEF Division 357 Council Leader Ron O'Bryan, who spent a week in Los Angeles in late March to assist the Service Employees International Union (a parent union of PEF) Local 721 organize 95,000 county workers there fighting for a new contract and against privatization of their jobs. The effort resulted in a march through downtown L.A. by 3,000 county workers that helped the union reach a tentative agreement that is now up for ratification. Some of the SEIU affiliate volunteers who were in L.A. came to Albany in May to help PEF with its organizing blitz in Region 8.

Contract update

Spence reported that the Civil Service Employees Association recently reached a temporary agreement with New York state on a five-year pact that offers 2 percent raises for two years and 3 percent raises for the final three years of the agreement.

Spence said PEF expects to begin negotiations with the state on a new contract in November, but it is already pressing the state Office of Employee Relations to put the employee dental program out to bid – something it has never done and is resisting.

"I've asked the comptroller to audit it, but he hasn't agreed to do it," Spence said. "We will have to lobby him."

Vice President Darlene Williams, who chairs PEF's contract team, said the team expects to send out contract surveys to members in August and will meet with members throughout the state to hear

their thoughts regarding contract priorities. Members also are invited to send their suggestions and comments to the team any time at contract2022Suggestions@pef.org.

Region 3 Coordinator Leisa Abraham asked how much it would cost members to make the benefits of the Family Medical Leave Act available to them, and was told the current estimate is an average of about \$385 per member, per year.

Nursing issues

Although several very important bills regarding mandatory overtime for state nurses passed both the state Assembly and Senate this year, PEF is asking members to sign letters/petition to state lawmakers asking them to support further improvements for nurses, including higher pay grades and improved pensions for newer hires.

Spence announced that PEF has hired former member Debbie Eagle – who is a nurse and an attorney – to consult with the union temporarily to work on PEF nursing issues while PEF interviews candidates for its nurse organizer position.

Many PEF nurses are so overworked because of short staffing that they have little chance to get the time off to lobby for relief and better pay, Spence said.

Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon brought words of support from Gov. Hochul to PEF nurses at SUNY Downstate in May and her message to PEF nurses was featured in a video produced by the DOL. The video was played for the PEF board members at their meeting. ([Click to view it on PEF Facebook.](#)) PEF got the state to increase geographic pay for nurses at SUNY hospitals to help make them more competitive when recruiting new hires.

Hourly provisionals

Chris Leo, PEF chief of staff, reported that the union is working with the Department of Civil Service to address the problem of provisional employees at the state Labor Department not moving up to permanent positions. PEF offered four training sessions for the provisionals this month to help them prepare for any upcoming T&E (training and experience) exams.

Organizing

Spence said he and PEF's other statewide officers continue to meet with members at their worksites in spite of the cold shoulder he increasingly receives from the state when arranging \ visits. If the union is denied the opportunity to hold onsite meetings, it will hold them outside, he said.

"If the state (finds it) can shut me down, what will they do to our local leaders?" Spence said. He noted that when PEF was denied a permit to hold its nurses' press conference on the Capitol steps in Albany recently, "We did it anyway (in Capitol Park)."

PEF Director of Organizing Dan Carpenter reported that of 1,055 new state hires since the executive board last met, 856 have signed PEF membership cards and the recent PEF blitz in the Capital District produced 95 new members and 41 new contributors to the Committee on Political Education (COPE).

"What we did in Albany was not just for Albany," Spence said. "We plan to do it in more areas of the state."

Carpenter said PEF hopes to focus organizing efforts in coming months on members at all three SUNY medical centers, and at the state departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation.

"It's worth it. Members appreciate you coming to their homes," Spence said.

Using accrued leave

Spence and several board members urged union members to use their vacation time. Region 4 Coordinator Gina Corona advised members to ask to use their vacation time and to "let PEF know if it's denied."

Board member Ade Oluwo recommended that members who cannot get permission to use their vacation time should donate it to other members who are too sick or injured to work and have run out of leave.



2022 PEF Convention plans

The board approved plans for the 2022 PEF Convention that will be held October 23-26 in Niagara Falls. It was noted that downstate delegates will not need to arrive on the Saturday before convention as they did last year, so no Saturday flights or lodging will be arranged for them. The board voted to increase both the delegates' meal stipend from statewide PEF and the PEF limit on the stipends that are awarded by some PEF divisions to their delegates.

It was explained that delegates should not make their own hotel reservations because PEF will already have booked rooms as part of its agreement with Niagara Falls to hold a citywide convention and must pay for them regardless.

PEF finances

PEF Secretary-Treasurer Joe Donahue said membership and dues revenue have increased since the state lifted the hiring freeze. Committee expenses are still down since they have been meeting virtually. President Spence said the committees may now resume holding in-person meetings at PEF headquarters and should contact his office at (518) 785-1900, ext. 225, when they are ready to do that.

Donahue reported that PEF division expenses are also down because the divisions, too, have been meeting virtually.

PEF is self-insured and Donahue said the cost of employee health insurance claims is up.

PEF Executive Director Todd Kerner said, "We are at the mercy of claims. We had a bunch that hit the Stop Loss insurance (threshold)." The board went into executive session to further discuss the issue. It also discussed changes to the SEIU pension plan for PEF officers and staff in a separate executive session.

Constitutional amendments

The executive board debated a proposed amendment to change Article XII (Recall) of the PEF Constitution to provide that recall may only be done for cause. This Article on Recall presently provides that a PEF elected official may be removed by popular demand by a petition signed by 60% of the membership of the constituency of that office (without cause). During the debate it was noted that Article XIII (Impeachment) already allows for impeachment for cause. Under either Article (Recall or Impeachment), the person recalled or impeached may seek office again during the next election. The debate focused on concerns that people facing possible recall from office need to know the grounds for the recall so they could defend themselves. Concerns were also debated that this would create two articles with different standards to remove a PEF elected official for cause. The executive board approved sending the amendment to add "for cause" to the recall provision to the PEF 2022 Convention.

Two housekeeping amendments to the PEF Constitution were proposed by the PEF Constitution and Bylaws Committee regarding obsolete language. Those proposed amendments were also approved by the Executive Board to be sent to the PEF 2022 Convention.

The proposed amendments will next be voted on by the delegates at the PEF Convention Oct. 23-26, 2022.

The next executive board meeting will take place Sept. 8-9, 2022, in Albany.





Union scores important legislative wins including penalties for mandating nurse OT

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Bills that passed both the state Senate and Assembly in the 2022 session showed the lawmakers were paying attention to many of the concerns PEF shared with them.

First, the governor included language borrowed from the union's "Fund Our Future" campaign in parts of her proposed Executive Budget in January and now the Legislature has passed bills that PEF supports. All-in-all, it's been an encouraging start to the year.

State legislators passed a bill that puts teeth in the existing law that aims to block state agencies from ordering nurses to work overtime. The Employer Sanction for Violation of Mandatory Overtime authorizes a penalty of \$1,000 to \$3,000 per violation for employers who mandate non-emergency OT for nurses. It also requires the employer to pay the nurse who is mandated an additional 15% of the OT payment.

A second bill that passed limits employers' use of emergencies to excuse the mandatory OT. An emergency for a natural disaster may last a maximum of three days, and up to 30 days for a declared emergency.

Another important bill that passed both houses requires state agencies to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if it would be equal or less expensive to let state employees do work instead of awarding it to private contractors or consultants. The requirement would apply to services with a price tag of \$1 million or more.

PEF also was successful in gaining passage of legislation requiring the state Office for People with Developmental Disabilities to publicly report before December 31, 2022, the number and nature of state-operated residential facilities serving individuals with developmental disabilities, a staffing census at such facilities and the status of hiring new staff for them.

Passing both houses of the state Legislature is clearing the first big hurdle to making these provisions state law. The next hurdle is getting the governor to sign these bills into law.

These are just a few of more than 20 bills covering a wide range of issues important to PEF members that passed both houses and will go to the governor for her consideration in the coming months.

PEF President Wayne Spence credited the union's Fund Our Future campaign for focusing the efforts of PEF leaders, staff and members on getting important information to legislators and getting the bills passed by both houses.

"Our members sent more than 7,000 letters and made thousands of phone calls to legislators in support of our legislative priorities," said Spence, who gave special thanks to members of PEF's political action committees "for their support and tireless work advocating on behalf of these important bills."

He also expressed deep appreciation to state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and the legislative majorities in both houses for their support of these and other PEF issues.

With the question of the governor's support for each bill pending, Spence cautioned PEF members not to assume the battle is over and won. "We will be advocating for the governor to sign these important bills into law, and we will ask for your help with that effort as the bills are sent to her desk," he said.



PEF members Aaron Lang, Rachel Johnson, Mary Jenkins, Stacey Dorsey, Karen Hoth and Shawn Reynolds were honored at the DOCCS Medal Ceremony on June 9.

DOCCS honors parole officers at memorial wall; presents medals to PEF members at ceremony

By KATE STICKLES

Parole officers Shawn Reynolds of Corning and Karen Hoth of Dunkirk received the Medal of Honor at the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) medal ceremony June 9 at the training academy in Albany.

Parole officers Rachel Johnson of Fort Ann; Mary Jenkins of Ballston Lake; and Aaron Lang of Corinth; and Stacey Dorsey, a parole service program specialist, of New York City, received medals of merit.

“Our members work every day to keep our streets safe and assist parolees as they reintegrate into the community,” said PEF President Wayne Spence, a long-time parole officer himself. “Some go above and beyond their duties and are deserving of recognition for their heroism. We extend our sincerest thanks to the officers honored with this year’s Medals of Honor and Medals of Merit.”

DOCCS leadership praised parole and corrections officers for their professionalism, hard work and dedication to the people of New York state and observed moments of silence at the memorial wall in Albany and at the academy medal ceremony for the 43 men and women who have died in the line of duty since records were kept starting in 1861.

Medal of Honor

DOCCS Ceremony Group PhotoThe Medal of Honor is presented to employees whose actions in the line of duty evidence an extraordinary degree of courage, bravery or heroism.

PEF member and parole officer Shawn Reynolds received the honor for his role in apprehending an absconder wanted in connection with a homicide in North Carolina.

“Parole Officer Reynolds observed the subject and gave verbal commands for the subject to stop and get on the ground,” DOCCS leadership stated. “The subject defied verbal commands and



PEF Executive Board member Steven Drake and Senior Parole Officer John Snyder of Syracuse place the PEF wreath at the parole officers’ memorial June 9.

began exchanging gunfire with the officers and pointed his firearm at Reynolds, who fired his state-issued weapon as the subject continued to attempt to exchange gunfire with the officers.

“The subject was shot and ultimately succumbed to his injuries,” he continued. “Without hesitation, Reynolds responded to a deadly situation in an effort to protect other members of law enforcement and the citizens of Elmira, N.Y.”

Parole officer and PEF member Karen Hoth received the Medal of Honor for her role in talking down a releasee who had attempted to murder his aunt, led police on a high-speed chase with a female passenger; and was holding a gun to the women’s head, armed with a knife.





PEF members gather for a group photo at the parole officers' memorial.

[SEE COMMUNICATOR COVERAGE FROM JULY 2021: PEF parole officer talks down parolee during tense hostage standoff in western New York.](#)

Hoth offered to talk to the suspect and after several hours of negotiations, she was able to encourage him to release the hostage.

"Still armed with a knife and a gun, Hoth maintained communications and was able to successfully encourage him to toss the firearm and surrender himself," DOCCS leadership said.

Medal of Merit

The Medal of Merit is presented to employees for extraordinary performance in the line of duty or for an exceptional contribution to the department.

PEF parole officers Rachel Johnson, Mary Jenkins and Aaron Lang, from the Northeast Bureau, responded to a call that a parolee had unlawfully taken his biological son from a foster care setting and was refusing to return the child.

The officers "responded quickly to the situation and within a few hours, located the parolee who refused to disclose the location of his son. The parole officers conducted a lawful search of the parolee's smart phone and discovered text messages between the parolee and his new girlfriend.

"This led PO Johnson to perform a more thorough media search of the parolee's girlfriend and, as a result, found the infant safe and

sound at her residence," DOCCS said. The child was returned safely to the Clinton County Department of Social Services.

When Reentry Manager Stacey Dorsey, in the Manhattan/Staten Island Region, observed an unknown male screaming toward the windows of the office for his parole officer to come and help him, she asked him what was wrong.

The man said he needed his parole officer to take him to the hospital and he did not want to hurt himself.

"Dorsey began speaking with the individual, trying to calm him down as he was in obvious distress," DOCCS stated. "[She] persuaded him to stop hurting himself. Dorsey's quick thinking and compassionate intervention stopped a distressed releasee from severely harming himself and got him the help that he so desperately needed."

DOCCS Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci praised the work of these members.

"In unison with Governor Kathy Hochul and Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Marcos Soler, I extend my sincerest gratitude, not only to the people we recognize here today, but also to the almost 26,000 DOCCS employees statewide, who day-in and day-out, do their jobs with the utmost pride, professionalism and dedication," he said.



PEF members and DOCCS leadership gather for a group photo after the Medal Ceremony June 9.



If you experience discrimination, PEF will help you fight it

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Workplace discrimination is banned in the PEF contract. Nevertheless, some members feel they do experience it, especially when they apply for a promotion or a transfer.

Article 36 of the contract between PEF and the state is relatively short. It says PEF will admit all state employees in the Professional, Scientific and Technical (PS&T) bargaining unit to membership and it will represent them without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap.

Article 36 further says the state will continue its established policy against all forms of illegal discrimination.

Then, it says that PEF and the state shall form a Joint Affirmative Action Advisory Committee (JAAAC) to develop appropriate recommendations on matters of mutual interest in the areas of equal employment and affirmative action.

PEF has appointed seven members to represent it on this joint committee. The three PEF co-chairs are Vice President Darlene Williams, Tamara Martin and Mohammed Chowdhury. The union also is represented by Bellew McManus, Ade Oluwo, Cheryl Wallace and retiree Charles Roland. The committee meets quarterly.

"We want people to realize we are active, engaged and achieving positive results for members. The committee is doing a great job," Williams said.

The JAAAC focuses on situations where a member or group of members feel they are being illegally discriminated against or harassed. Williams said the committee is aided by consultant Eric Josey in helping members file timely complaints with the correct governmental bodies.

"We often use the state Freedom of Information Law to gather evidence, because we need to prove their treatment is discriminatory," Williams said. "We may need statistics or data and it might need to come from the agency. The agencies aren't pushing back, but they are really slow to move. They say they will look into it."

Williams cited the example of a case where management wouldn't let a member sit for a promotion exam. "I don't think they ever gave her an excuse for why she couldn't take it," Williams said. "We 'FOILED' the statistics on promotions at that agency and found that promotions of minorities was so low. We inundated them with evidence. All of a sudden, they allowed her to take the exam. This is outright racism."

Members who feel they are experiencing discrimination should go first to their PEF field representative who can give them a complaint form to complete. Then the committee will help them navigate the paperwork.

"Our committee members are committed to ending injustice," Williams said. "As people are beginning to realize that we are there to help them, the number of complaints we are receiving from them is going up. We want to be part of making real change for the future. We want to shine a light on people who are suffering silently."





Now is the time to recognize essential workers at Albany County Probation

By KATE STICKLES

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, public servants across the country stepped up and went above and beyond to protect their communities. Some municipalities, hospitals, and businesses honored that work with hazard pay or bonuses.

In Albany County, there are workers deserving of that recognition who have not received any.

PEF members at Albany County Probation worked on the frontlines throughout the pandemic, providing vital community supervision and volunteering to provide security and logistics at Department of Health COVID testing sites and during quarantine house visits.

During the height of the pandemic, many went above and beyond for their community, dipping into their own wallets to assist quarantined residents who couldn't get out for pet food or other supplies. Others kept serving their probation clients.

More than two years later, Albany County Probation is in contract negotiations and with inflation at near historic highs, offering 2 percent across the board wage increases – largely the same as the previous five-year contract — is a slap in the face to these essential workers.

"Albany County Probation PEF Local 502 are asking for a fair contract," said Council Leader Tricia LaDuke. "Two percent is not fair given the soaring gas prices, inflation and cost of living. Two percent

barely pays for the increase in health insurance premiums and members who have reached the maximum step within our contract are seeing their paychecks get smaller. Additionally, we are not in line with other comparable counties, yet we deal with some of the most dangerous communities. PEF Local 502 unequivocally stands in solidarity for a fair contract."

PEF President Wayne Spence echoed the sentiments.

"Two percent does not come close to keeping pace with inflation, and it certainly won't increase salaries enough so that probation officers can afford to pay today's astronomical gas prices," said PEF President Wayne Spence, a long-time New York state parole officer. "If the county doesn't agree to pay a fair wage, these skilled and experienced officers will seek employment elsewhere, leaving all of us less safe in our community."

"Keeping the community safe from crime is an essential service," he said. "The employees of Albany County Probation are essential workers. They deserve to be treated with the same respect as their fellow frontline workers. Albany County should do right by them in their next contract."

New Region 2 coordinator elected, 8 executive board seats filled

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

[Shelby Wisneski is the new PEF Region 2 coordinator.](#) She was the only certified candidate for the seat following the nomination period in PEF's first quarter 2022 special elections to fill midterm vacancies. She will serve the remainder of the term that expires July 31, 2024. Wisneski is a social work assistant 3 at the Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Services Office.

Eight vacancies on the PEF Executive Board also were filled in the first quarter special elections. All nine successful candidates were automatically seated as the only certified candidates for the seats. They are:

- Joan Rosegreen, Seat 81 representing certain members at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn;
- Mathew Wisnowski, Seat 97 representing certain members at SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse;
- Mariea Young, Seat 161 representing certain members at the state Executive Department;
- Katherine Richardson, Seat 165 representing certain members at the state Executive Department;
- Lisa Wells, Seat 207 representing certain members at the state Insurance Fund;
- Patricia Mason, Seat 210 representing certain members at the state Insurance Fund;
- Robin Matthews, Seat 440 representing certain members at the state Office of Children and Family Services; and
- Jordan Blatz, Seat 550 representing certain members at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

No candidates were certified for 11 additional board vacancies in the first quarter special election. Those seats plus six new midterm vacancies will be open for nominations in the second quarter special election that begins July 11, when nominating petitions will become available for download online at www.pef.org/elections or by calling 800-342-4306, ext. 337 to request that a supply be mailed to you.

Nominations will close August 2. If more than one candidate is certified to fill a vacant position, balloting will be conducted for that constituency. Ballots would be mailed August 23 for return to the American Arbitration Association by September 14. AAA would count the ballots September 15.

Vacant seats to be filled in the second quarter special election are:

- Seat 1, Agriculture and Markets;
- Seat 15, Civil Service;
- Seat 40, Corrections;
- Seat 90, Higher Education;
- Seat 101, SUNY Stony Brook;
- Seat 104, SUNY Stony Brook;
- Seat 105, Environmental Conservation;
- Seat 172, Information Technology Systems
- Seat 173, Information Technology Systems;
- Seat 202, Medicaid Inspector General;
- Seat 245, Labor
- Seat 375, Kingsboro;
- Seat 395, Sagamore;
- Seat 425, Public Service
- Seat 485, Tax and Finance;
- Seat 520, Transportation; and
- Seat 545, Political subdivisions.





State suspends weekly COVID testing requirement for unvaccinated employees

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

The state suspended, effective June 7, its requirement that employees not vaccinated against COVID-19 be tested weekly for the virus.

Nevertheless, the state Office of Employee Relations (OER) told state human resource managers to “encourage all employees to continue testing through home tests or at testing locations.”

This is only a suspension of the requirement and OER could lift it at any time and resume weekly testing.

Existing disciplinary cases involving state employees who refused to be vaccinated are not affected by this suspension. Employees who violated a mandate at the time are still facing discipline.

Employees who test positive, are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or feel that they have been exposed to COVID-19, should continue to follow the latest [isolation and quarantine guidance from New York State Department of Health](#).

PEF’s advocacy resulted in employees at many worksites being able to test, download and upload results on work time. Also, many sites provided an ability to mail samples through agency mailrooms.



Think you may be eligible for loan forgiveness? Apply now!

By KATE STICKLES

Social media is bursting with discussions about student loan forgiveness – from proponents who want to relieve some of the crushing debt as they grapple with astronomical gas prices and record inflation, to opponents who say previous generations paid off their loans, so this one should, too.

Whatever the outcome of that debate, some PEF members are already eligible for student loan forgiveness through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. And some members who were not previously eligible, may now be after temporary changes to the program in the fall of 2021.

“On Oct. 6, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced a change to Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program rules for a limited time as a result of the COVID-19 emergency. Throughout the emergency, ED has provided a variety of benefits to borrowers. Now, for a limited time, borrowers may receive credit for past periods of repayment that would otherwise not qualify for PSLF,” according to [Studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov). “Under the new temporary rules, any prior period of repayment will count as a qualifying payment, regardless of loan program, repayment plan, or whether the payment was made in full or on time. But you do continue to need qualifying employment.”

This change will apply to borrowers with Direct Loans, those who have already consolidated into the Direct Loan Program, and those who consolidate into the Direct Loan Program by Oct. 31, 2022.

PEF member keeps her eye on the prize

For more than 15 years, Christine Wade has worked as a licensed psychologist at the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, making service to others her life’s work. When the PSLP program was created in 2007, Wade knew she wanted to work toward loan forgiveness.

The start was rocky.

“I wasn’t able to make the payments and you had to be on a specific repayment plan,” she said. “Due to life, I wasn’t able to afford those. I was on a forbearance for a number of years.”

Once she found a stronger financial footing, Wade began to build her case for forgiveness.

“I immediately started submitting employment certification forms to the program to make sure my employment qualified,” she said. “Every year, I would take the form to HR. I had so much debt I wanted my loans forgiven, so I followed it very closely.”

Over the ensuing years, her payments eventually reached the 120 required for forgiveness, helped in part by the 2021 waiver.



"In January 2022, forgiveness came," she said. "It was amazing. I was forgiven \$85,000 and refunded more than \$11,000 in qualifying payments!"

For Wade, who kept up with the program and certifications, the process went relatively smoothly.

For others, not so much.

Persistence paid off

PEF member Rebecca Zobel's husband Mark, also a PEF member, has worked for New York state for more than 18 years. With tens of thousands of dollars in debt, the couple decided to pursue the PSLP relief after learning details during a seminar organized by PEF.

"He applied and he was denied," Zobel said. "I can't remember exactly the reason. Then I ran into (PEF Region 3 Coordinator) Leisa Abraham last year, who said we needed to reapply, they had made eligibility changes. We did the whole application again and it was denied again. I really thought that was it."

Zobel and her husband knew he had the required time in and he had always made payments on time. The couple couldn't imagine why they had been denied.

"We were so upset about it," she recalled. "You couldn't call or email." After repeated denials, the Zobels suddenly received a check in the mail labeled "loan forgiveness" for around \$3,000. "No explanation, no letter. We went online to the portal and the loan balance was zero."

They still don't know what happened or what prompted the denials, but Zobel advised other PEF members who believe they qualify to apply again, even if they are denied.

"Keep applying," she said. "Check the information on the portal. Find out why you were denied; maybe you shouldn't have been. If it wasn't for Leisa, I don't know if we would have known to reapply. I owe PEF a big thank you."

She said the loan forgiveness program can be a major boost to state employment, if it continues.

"I would advocate for folks just graduating with loans to try to come to the state or work for a nonprofit," she said. "It might really be worth it."

PEF MBP webinars, details on loan forgiveness

PEF Membership Benefits is hosting a series of webinar sessions on loan forgiveness. The no-cost, live webinar with Cambridge Credit Counseling is detailed and includes a live Q&A session at the end to address any questions you may have. Register now and learn about the temporary revisions made to the PSLF program, as the revisions in place expire October 31, 2022. [Click here for details](#), dates and to register. For general information and eligibility requirements, [visit PEF MBP's information page here](#).



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The power of positive thinking amid a mental health crisis

By KATE STICKLES

Times have been tough for PEF members the last few years – thousands faced COVID on the job as essential workers or endured the isolation brought on by the pandemic; and now, everyone is adjusting to record-high inflation and returning to work amid still prevalent COVID cases statewide.

“We recognize how important it is to bring us together to talk about wellness, mental health and stress management,” said PEF Vice President Randi DiAntonio during a webinar with Dr. Stephen Birchak, also known as “Dr. Bird,” a leading national speaker in the positive psychology movement.

DiAntonio said Dr. Bird has spoken to PEF members before and “you walk out of a room after a meeting with Dr. Bird feeling like you have a better sense of how to handle things that you have no control over.”

A professor emeritus at the College of St. Rose, Dr. Bird has trained critical mental health providers and has dedicated his life to positive psychology.

“The world is a very challenging place,” he said. “There are so many variables we can’t control. It’s not about changing the environment around us, sometimes we can’t. We have to look at ourselves and what can I do with what I have right now?”

“There is no magic wand, but there are things we can do together to be able to help each other through this,” he said. “There is no agency, or administration, or government that can guarantee that life will be normal. Change is the new normal.”

Dr. Bird focused on how we can continue to nurture our positivity, mental health, and coping skills by remembering the power of compassion, connections, and courage.

Compassion

The last two years have been a rollercoaster.

“If you found yourself crying in the last two years, that’s a sign that you are still invested in life,” Dr. Bird said. “If you didn’t feel anything, I would be concerned about you. The three easiest words in English are ‘I don’t care.’ Once we hear those words come out of our mouth, we lose all our power.”

So how do we rebuild ourselves?

“Compassion, connections and courage,” he said.

Self-compassion is the most important place to start. “You can’t give away something you don’t have,” Dr. Bird said. Self-compassion is about loving your best self, he continued. “A lot of people live a life of ‘should’ and then we’re miserable because we can’t like our best self.”

Not only does low self-esteem hurt you, but it also hurts those around you. Low opinion of yourself spreads to your inner circle – and then outward, bringing everyone down with you. Road rage, Facebook rage, Twitter rage: “On the way to work we are thinking of everything that can go bad. When you get there, you have nine stories in your head about how the day is going to go bad.”





Dr. Stephen Birchak. Photo via www.docbird.com

Dr. Bird said impatience is immoral.

"There are real crises in the world," he said. "The pandemic is a real crisis. Guns and murder, these are real crises. 9/11 was a real crisis. Having a loved one die. These are real crises. But long lines at Dunkin', that's not a crisis. Who left the dishes in the sink, not a crisis. Not everything is a crisis. Is it a crisis or is it an inconvenience?"

As public employees, PEF members have to be ambassadors of kindness, said Dr. Bird. "If we are not the ones who are trying to make the world a calmer place, then who is?"

Connections

Dr. BirdThe right connections, like family, colleagues and loved ones, as opposed to "emotional vampires," are vital for a positive outlook.

"We have seen some horrific things in the news, but I guarantee for every horrific incident, there are thousands of other things that people have done that have been kind and patient and loving," Dr. Bird said. "People talk about passengers on planes all out of control. I have flown thousands of times and I've never seen a fight. I've seen somebody help someone with a piece of luggage; help a mother with a stroller; I've seen thousands of acts of kindness for every horrific one.

"Have you ever allowed a negative co-worker, rude stranger, negative social media, or negative talk show to alter your positive attitude?" he said. "How will you choose to retain your positivity?"

Dr. Bird said everyone should try to spend time focusing on things they are grateful for or that make them smile each day. Take a break from the cyber world of negativity. After a while, you will start to notice things that are going well instead of dwelling on things that aren't.

"Rumination can change brain chemistry," he said. "It can cause anxiety and depression. Is doing what I'm doing getting me what I want?"

Courage

Be courageous even if you aren't comfortable, he advised. It's OK to "do it afraid."

"Fearlessness is overrated," Dr. Bird said. "If you're completely fearless, you are dangerous. Having some fear is natural. When we have to do important things in life, we've got to do it afraid. You have to let go of being perfect. Do you want to be happily flawed, or perfectly miserable?"

For short inspirational positive change videos (5-7 minutes each), visit [Dr. Bird's YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...). To connect with Dr. Bird, visit www.docbird.com or email jerkwhisperer@gmail.com.



Down the road from PEF Headquarters, a union is born

By KATE STICKLES

Since December 8, 2021, there have been union wins at 150 Starbucks stores across the country, according to [Starbucks Workers United](#).

Once of them is just down the road from PEF Headquarters on Troy-Schenectady Road in Latham.

Wage increases outpaced by inflation and a lack of opportunities for advancement inspired Starbucks employee James Schenk to contact Starbucks Workers United and start the ball rolling for a union at the Latham Plaza store.

"The biggest motivation for me, and everyone who voted has different reasons, but for me it was stagnation of my livelihood and opportunities," Schenk said. "Plus, the cost of living has gone up so dramatically over the last year and our raises and compensation haven't done anything to reflect that."

With his raise coming in below inflation, Schenk is effectively making less this year than he was last year.

"For me, it was really financial security," he added, pointing out that it is the staff in locations across the country that make the company successful. "Without the baristas, there is no Starbucks. The baristas are the ones doing the lion's share of work and receiving very little of the benefits."

Schenk said Starbucks management often sends down directives that staff cannot accommodate due to short staffing.

"There are not enough baristas to achieve drive-thru goals; they are cutting people's hours," he said. "That's a big issue now, that insecurity and concern they aren't going to be able to provide for their families."

Now that the store voted to unionize, the next step is negotiating their first contract. And that isn't going to be as easy as it may sound.

"Howard Schultz (Starbucks' CEO) has made it clear that he is not going to recognize the stores that have voted to unionize," Schenk said.



James Schenk, left, and Siena, right, from the Starbucks location near PEF Headquarters, are joined by Starbucks Workers United rep Emily Vicks, center. Their hard work helped secure a union win at the store.

In an interview with the [The New York Times](#), when asked if he would ever embrace the union, Schultz stated simply: "No."

That won't stop Starbucks Workers United, which [filed charges against Starbucks](#) with the National Labor Relations Board.





Juneteenth Freedom Day

Remembering the struggle for equality on Juneteenth

By **KATE STICKLES**

You may have June 20 off work in recognition of Juneteenth, but what do you know about the new federal holiday?

On June 19, 1865, a major general in the Union Army arrived in Galveston, Texas, to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation and free the last enslaved Americans in Texas from bondage. That day became known as Juneteenth.

“Juneteenth marks both the long, hard night of slavery and subjugation, and a promise of a brighter morning to come,” said President Joe Biden in a speech on June 17, 2021. “By making Juneteenth a holiday, all Americans can feel the power of this day, and learn from our history, and celebrate progress, and grapple with the distance we’ve come but the distance we have to travel.”

We have come a long way since the 1800s – but more needs to be done to close the racial wage gap and combat racial inequality and discrimination in areas like employment, housing, entrepreneurship, education, and health care.

The role of unions

According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), unions help close wage gaps for Black and Hispanic workers.

“Collective bargaining lifts wages of black workers closer to those of their white counterparts,” the EPI stated. “Unionized black workers earn even more in some sectors. Unionized black construction workers in New York City earn 36.1 percent more than nonunion black construction workers in New York City.”

EPI quotes the late AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka as saying, “the labor movement is the most integrated institution in America.” The article goes on to state that “labor leaders are calling for broad and sustained attention to addressing racism and sexism where they continue to violate labor’s democratic ideals.”

PEF has your back

As a union, PEF has taken the issue of discrimination seriously and, per the contract, has formed a Joint Affirmative Action Advisory Committee (JAAAC) to focus on situations where a member or group of members feel they are being illegally discriminated against or harassed.

[RELATED: If you experience discrimination, PEF will help you fight it](#)

If you feel you are being discriminated against, let us know. Visit this link to access a form to report the issue to the JAAAC.



Members ask tough questions at DOCCS annual Open Forum

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, President Wayne Spence, Statewide Labor Management Chair Steve Drake, and the Statewide Labor Management Team were eager to host the annual Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) Labor Management Conference, held May 11-13 in Saratoga.

The conference began with several training sessions in various areas, including Health & Safety Issues, Student Loan Forgiveness, Divisions Finance, Workers Compensation, Parole Contract Insurance Overview and Member Engagement.

The highlight of the conference was the three-hour open forum discussion. During the forum, attendees had the opportunity to direct questions to management, including Acting DOCCS Commissioner Anthony Annucci, Executive Deputy Commissioner (EDC) Daniel Martuscello III, as well as Deputy Commissioners, Assistant and Associate Commissioners representing various areas.

Acting Commissioner Annucci opened the forum, speaking about the continuing priority of safety and security, stating “we must all feel comfortable and safe when we come to work.” He acknowledged that is an increasingly difficult task, taking into consideration the dangerous population of incarcerated individuals, the COVID pandemic, and numerous legislative changes that have substantially affected the department. Annucci stressed the importance of management and staff working together to create an environment that is conducive to safety while maintaining productivity.

Conference attendees asked important questions regarding issues and concerns voiced by members from facilities and community supervision offices across the state.

Darrell Robertson (Wallkill Correctional Facility) stated that incarcerated individuals often come to programs after receiving medication, including Medical Assisted Treatment (MAT). These individuals come to vocational programs and use tools, equipment and other machines, even though occasionally, Robertson said, they are “out of it.” EDC Maruscello stated that if any staff member notices an incarcerated individual exhibiting unusual or concerning behavior, staff should immediately notify an officer in the area so the individual can be removed from the program. Staff should also notify their supervisor, as well as Medical in case an adjustment in their medication is needed.

John Taverne (Walsh Regional Medical Unit) and Donald Yates (Attica Correctional Facility) spoke about the strain put



Commissioner Annucci addressing the DOCCS L-M Conference

on nursing staff during a facility incident such as a lockdown, Correction Emergency Response Team (CERT) deployment, or an extraordinary number of Unusual Incidents (UIs). They suggested implementation of a protocol to allow for deployment of additional nursing staff in the event of a serious incident or emergency, if the impacted facility does not have adequate staff. Taverne said the issue had been discussed earlier in the day during the Nurses Subcommittee meeting. EDC Martuscello agreed that administration had a productive discussion with the Nurses Subcommittee regarding the issue. He noted there have been two recent CERT deployments, at Cape Vincent and Attica, and acknowledged nursing staff is extremely busy providing medical care not only to incarcerated individuals, but also to facility staff and CERT members. He reported the department is working to resolve the issue so that staffing can be increased for a large number of UIs and injuries if indicated.

Steven Feinstein (Bedford Hills Correctional Facility) requested clarification on scheduling in regard to DOCCS nurses and agency nurses, and asked if it is acceptable to use nursing staff shortages to give agency nurses preferred schedules. EDC Martuscello said facilities should be following rule 6.02, which states DOCCS nurses should be used first.

Sandy Derr (Altona Correctional Facility) expressed concern over the decreasing population of incarcerated individuals in facilities. EDC Martuscello reported the population was approximately 30,789 incarcerated individuals, leaving about 8,000 empty beds in the system. Martuscello said the department has been looking at bed consolidations, meaning taking beds or dorms “offline.” Consolidating in such a manner leaves areas in the facility available to isolate incarcerated individuals with infectious diseases like COVID, influenza or chicken pox.



Christopher Lanz (Franklin Correctional Facility) reported that one of the positive changes brought about by the Prison Violence Task Force was a modification in the package program and asked administration to provide more information regarding the program. Acting Commissioner Annucci stated there was a need to change the package program and he believes the new program will be safer for all involved. "People are dying because of the packages," he said. Annucci indicated there were 594 uses of Narcan last year in facilities. The package program was implemented in the Wende hub on May 9, and a follow-up will be conducted with all superintendents in that hub to determine if any changes need to be made. The program is expected to continue to roll out hub-by-hub once the pilot in Wende has been reviewed.

Najieh Isaac (Bronx I) voiced concern regarding Parole Officers being utilized as Court Officers. He said they are even given keys to the area while they are there. Deputy Commissioner Marco Ricci said there are plans to post Institutional Safety Officers in these areas and personnel has been contacted for additional staffing. The courts are working with the department to provide a safe work environment for staff. Workplace Violence Assessments are being conducted in the newly assigned court areas and recommendations will be shared with the courts. Ricci emphasized staff safety is of utmost importance.

Gabriela Franklyn (Community Supervision) said that the "Less is More" parole law has literally created chaos in the courts and cities and is hindering the safety of Parole Revocation Specialists (PRS) and Hearing Officers because they do not have weapons. Administration stated they would have an internal discussion about the issue. Under the current guidelines, PRS do not have the right to carry a weapon and the department cannot issue a state weapon on a permit.

Selina Reed (Peekskill Area Office) inquired if Area Offices would be closed or merged or consolidated and, if so, is there any information as to which offices would be affected and when would it take place?

Marco said that the initial projection for reduction in parolees was between 6,000-8,000, and that in actuality, it will be more like between 10,000-11,000. He emphasized that no one should panic about consolidation. He said he will look at balance when replacing staff to "right-size" regions as they manage the change in the parolee population.



Pictured: Region 7's DOCCS Division Leaders; Sandy Derr, Carly Gagnon, Dave Mosier and Region 7 Coordinator, Barb Stransky

Additional questions related to training in various areas. Deputy Commissioner Jeff McKoy stated there will be more training for staff on the Residential Rehabilitation Unit process. DC Ricci discussed possible training in prisoner transport, stating we "do not want to be in that business in the first place," but the reality is sometimes DOCC has no other choice. Ricci also discussed additional training along the lines of annual Officer Street Survival Training.

Statewide Labor Management Chair Steve Drake said he "appreciates the open dialogue PEF continues to have with administration and stressed it would not be possible without cooperation from both management and labor." He stated it is important to make use of labor management on a local level, but emphasized that he and the statewide labor management team are "only an e-mail or phone call away" if issues cannot be addressed at the local level or there are exigent circumstances. Drake said he speaks with EDC Martuscello "at a minimum weekly, usually more often than that," a statement confirmed by Martuscello.



PEF member Yamil Speight-Miller stands to the left of President Wayne Spence in this group photo of NOBLE members at the Black and Puerto Rican legislative conference April 9 in Albany.

Member gathers skills and effectiveness with every challenge met

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

It's not unusual to find that someone who is investing a lot of time and energy in their union, is also carrying other responsibilities beyond their immediate family and job duties.

Yamil Speight-Miller is such a person, but he takes it to such lengths that it goes beyond "unusual" all the way to "rare."

An investigative specialist 1 at the Department of Health in New York City, he is treasurer and a steward of PEF Division 199. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. He is always taking on new tasks and challenging himself.

"I see Yamil working with PEF to build our membership as a volunteer in our recent Membership Engagement action in Region 8, as well as working with state legislators and with the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "I also see him taking a leadership role in addressing public needs during the worst of the COVID pandemic. He brings a lot of skills, experience and helpful contacts to everything he tackles. I'm grateful he is focusing some of that on PEF."

Earlier this year when Spence was asked to be a panelist at a workshop titled the "Impact of Restorative Justice in Public Safety" at the New York State Association of Black, Puerto Rican and Asian Legislators' annual conference in Albany, Speight-Miller was there helping state Sen. Leroy Comrie, who sponsored the workshop. It was standing-room-only at the workshop, which drew many state



Yamil Speight-Miller



leaders and sparked lively debate on how to protect public safety without abusing the rights of people in minority groups.

Speight-Miller said New York Congressman Hakeem Jeffries has since asked him to help facilitate a discussion of that same topic at NOBLE's annual conference this July in Orlando, Florida.

While he chairs NOBLE's Political Awareness Committee in New York state, Speight-Miller is also involved as president of his local block association in Brooklyn.

"We have to build back better" when unexpected calamities such as 9/11 and the pandemic suddenly confront us, Speight-Miller said. "Everything I do is aimed at giving back to humanity. It has nothing to do with dollars. My state pay is the only money I get."

What he has discovered is that every experience and every new challenge he faces helps to prepare him for the ones that follow. "Every role I've had, has had a lot of impact," he said.

"I worked at the state Department of Taxation and Finance before I transferred to the Health Department, and I received incident command training from the Federal Emergency Management Administration," he said. "So when COVID hit, I was one of just two people at the Health Department who had received that training."

Speight-Miller used that training to help set up a COVID testing center at Aqueduct race track and led the training for other DOH employees to set up additional testing sites. In addition, he was DOH's incident commander during the pandemic.

Yamil engaging group Speight-Miller's history of public service started long before he came to work for the state. He began in 2000 as an intern working for the late Queens District Attorney Richard Brown and followed that with jobs at the Queens Borough Public Library, New York City Police Department, NYC Administration for Children Services, NYC Human Resources Administration,



PEF Division 199 Council Leader Yamil Speight-Miller speaks at an April meeting of member engagement volunteers in Albany.

and the NYC Corrections Department before landing at NYS Tax and Finance.

Speight-Miller credits the unflagging support and guidance he has received from his mother and siblings, his partner and the help of a mentor in continuing to move forward and invest so much of himself in the challenges and opportunities that he encounters.

He found then Erie County Clerk Kathy Hochul – now governor of New York — was very helpful to him when, as a young man in New York City, he was trying to help a family member in Erie County who was a military veteran coping poorly with a substance abuse addiction.

"She had the patience to tell me exactly how to file the right papers and do the best I could for my family member. I talked with her many times, and I will never forget the help and advice she gave me," Speight-Miller said. "It helped to build my confidence that I could make a difference in someone's life."

"I have no down time in my life now," he said, but he finds the effort he puts into all of his roles to be rewarding and uplifting. "I don't take it for granted. I celebrate and rejoice in our victories when they come."

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NEW + EXISTING PEF MEMBERS

SIGN NOW!



PEF officers engage members at locations across the state

By KATE STICKLES

PEF's statewide officers are hard at work attending open houses and visiting state office buildings and worksites to engage PEF members. At each of the meetings, the president, secretary-treasurer, vice presidents and appropriate regional coordinator and PEF staff provide updates about union priorities, while members get the chance to directly ask questions about issues important to them.

"These visits give you the opportunity to share any issues you might be facing at work," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "Are you being bullied? We want to know. Do you have questions about Civil Service tests at your agency or the status of contract negotiations? These are the things we talked about during the tours."

The first round of the tour took President Spence and Vice Presidents Randi DiAntonio, Sharon DeSilva, and Darlene Williams to Regions 10, 11 and 12 from May 16-20. The officers visited 13 different locations, reached around 700 members, and signed up 12 new PEF members.

The second leg of the Statewide Leadership Tour took leaders to Region 9 in the Hudson Valley this week, where officers visited 10 different locations, ranging from the Department of Health to correctional facilities and psychiatric centers. They met with more than 500 members and provided updates on PEF contract, legislative and budget wins, plus signed up new members.

Visits to agencies and worksites in Region 5 are planned June 28 and 29, followed by Regions 1, 2 and 3 the week of Aug. 1-5.





ARC



Big Sing Correctional Facility



Robin Peters



Empower PC



Region 10 Visit



Region 12 Visit



SPARC



Robin Clayton Powell



HR



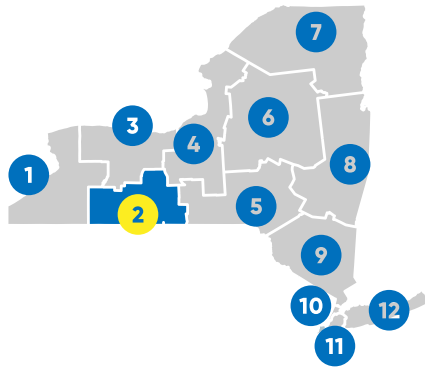
Greenman



St Albans



Department of Health



New PEF Region 2 Coordinator — Shelby Wisneski



Shelby Wisneski, a social work assistant 3 for OPWDD Finger Lakes DDSO Regional Office, was elected Region 2 Coordinator in April 2022.

Wisneski has been a PEF member since 2007, with a four-year break while she worked in a CSEA position.

She has served as a PEF Steward, Treasurer, Division leader and as Region 2 PAC Co-Chair.

Wisneski said she ran for election as Region 2 coordinator because she loved being the local Division leader and wanted to become more involved in the union.

"I plan to support the members of our Region by holding more membership meetings and working to get members involved in the union," she said. "I'm excited to meet the members of Region 2!"





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DMV members: Our goal is ‘No Empty Chair’ at graduation

By KATE STICKLES

Graduation season is underway, and students are donning caps and gowns to join their fellow graduates on bleachers, stages, and in seating areas inside and out, ready for their names to be called and to take their first steps into the larger world.

Too often, there are seats that remain unfilled: tributes to students lost in preventable crashes on New York’s roadways.

PEF members at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) work tirelessly every day to make sure all those seats are filled going forward.

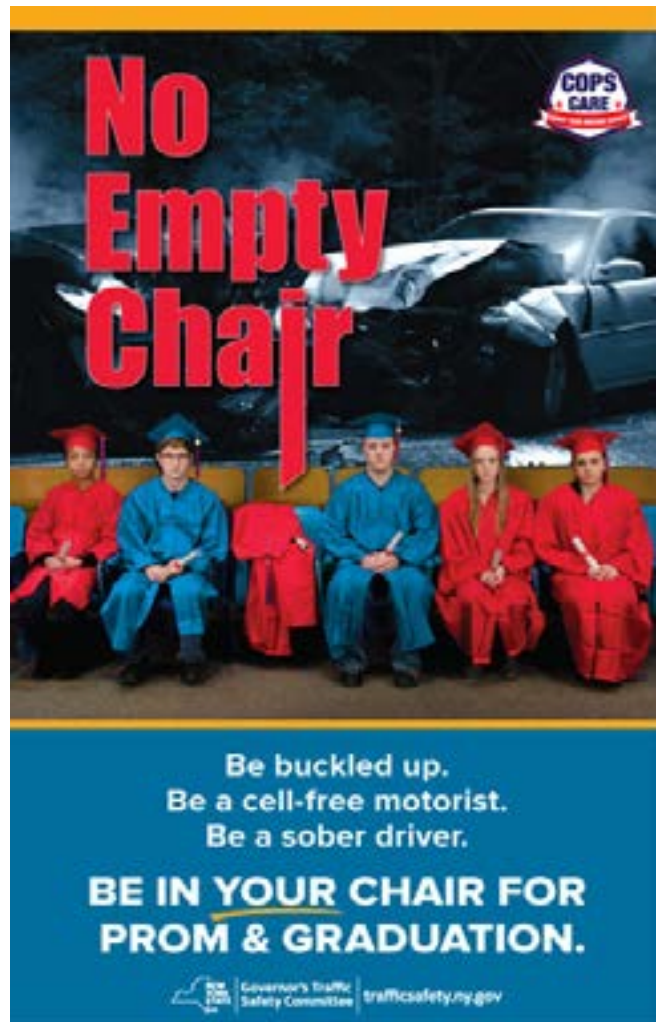
“We work in partnership with law enforcement, not-for-profits, health departments, school administrators and community organizations to raise teen driver awareness because they are at risk for traffic crash injuries and fatalities,” said PEF Executive Board and Contract Team member Maureen Kozakiewicz, a highway safety program representative with the DMV. “We want to make sure every student is at their graduation and that there are ‘no empty chairs.’ We work collaboratively to save lives.”

The [No Empty Chair campaign](#), launched by the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) in 2014, brings together partners to educate teen drivers about the dangers of speeding, distracted driving, underage drinking, driving while drowsy, and to promote safe driving habits.

“Motor vehicle crashes are higher among teens 16 to 19,” Kozakiewicz said. “In New York state, speed is one of our most concerning issues. Impairment, distraction, and drowsy driving, all of these are top causes of crashes, especially for younger drivers.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of death for U.S. teens. Per mile driven, teen drivers in this age group are nearly three times as likely to be in a fatal crash as drivers aged 20 or older.

“We in traffic safety, we don’t call anything an accident,” Kozakiewicz said. “Every crash has resulting contributing factors. There is a reason why a crash occurs. In New York State we call them crashes because injury and death on the highway are predictable and preventable.”



Artwork for the No Empty Chair campaign, designed by a PEF member at the DMV.

“That’s what we do, we look at crashes and we work with law enforcement to figure out what were the contributing factors,” she said. “Most of us who are outside traffic safety don’t even realize. There is not an awareness of everything that goes on when someone is hurt or killed on our roadways.”

Recently, Kozakiewicz said, the No Empty Chair campaign visited Niagara County, bringing together 900 students to show them the dangers of unsafe driving. Showing them



the impact of these behaviors, the professionals drive their message home.

"There's usually an 'aha' moment that students get during these events that driving is no joke," Kozakiewicz said.

PEF members lead the way

As part of the GTSC Traffic Safety Office, Kozakiewicz said her department's focus is on the behavioral side of traffic safety and involves a lot of outreach and coordination with groups throughout the state.

"We give agencies and organizations at a local level help and assistance with their own traffic safety programs, and we funnel federal funding through a competitive grant process down to the local agencies," she said. "We integrate state level initiatives into local programming. It's a very dynamic role that we take statewide.

"So many PEF members are involved in traffic safety," Kozakiewicz said. "Graphic artists, the communications office, who write PR and do research. We have four highway safety program representatives, and each rep has a wide swath of counties that they oversee. We work with program analysts who assist with contracts, budget, and program areas, such as impairment. There are program managers who oversee large programs areas (impairment and occupant protection) and also oversee a few counties. We have our internal auditor who also assists with all our grant claims. What we do is a collaborative, team effort!"

During the last week of April, the DMV and its partners focused on a different aspect of teen driving and safety, including speeding in school zones, seatbelt use, cell use and texting, Operation Safe Stop and underage drinking and impaired driving.

The work is important, Kozakiewicz said, and takes dedication and skill.

"It's a fascinating job," she said. "You have to love this and be committed to saving lives, because that's what it comes down to."

Teen driver resources

The GTSC offers additional resources for educators, coaches, and school resource officers. Younger drivers can see Younger Driver resources at [DMV.enforcement](#) to figure out what were the contributing factors," she said. "Most of us who are outside traffic safety don't even realize. There is not an awareness of everything that goes on when someone is hurt or killed on our roadways."

Recently, Kozakiewicz said, the No Empty Chair campaign visited Niagara County, bringing together 900 students to show them the dangers of unsafe driving. Showing them the impact of these behaviors, the professionals drive their message home.

"There's usually an 'aha' moment that students get during these events that driving is no joke," Kozakiewicz said.

PEF members lead the way

As part of the GTSC Traffic Safety Office, Kozakiewicz said her department's focus is on the behavioral side of traffic safety and involves a lot of outreach and coordination with groups throughout the state.

"We give agencies and organizations at a local level help and assistance with their own traffic safety programs, and we funnel federal funding through a competitive grant process down to the local agencies," she said. "We integrate state level initiatives into local programming. It's a very dynamic role that we take statewide.

"So many PEF members are involved in traffic safety," Kozakiewicz said. "Graphic artists, the communications office, who write PR and do research. We have four highway safety program representatives, and each rep has a wide swath of counties that they oversee. We work with program analysts who assist with contracts, budget, and program areas, such as impairment. There are program managers who oversee large programs areas (impairment and occupant protection) and also oversee a few counties. We have our internal auditor who also assists with all our grant claims. What we do is a collaborative, team effort!"

During the last week of April, the DMV and its partners focused on a different aspect of teen driving and safety, including speeding in school zones, seatbelt use, cell use and texting, Operation Safe Stop and underage drinking and impaired driving.

The work is important, Kozakiewicz said, and takes dedication and skill.

"It's a fascinating job," she said. "You have to love this and be committed to saving lives, because that's what it comes down to."

Teen driver resources

[The GTSC offers additional resources](#) for educators, coaches, and school resource officers. Younger drivers can see [Younger Driver resources at DMV](#).



The 44th annual PEF convention will be held Oct. 23-26, 2022, in Niagara Falls. The following members submitted valid petitions and will be seated.



44TH ANNUAL CONVENTION DELEGATE INFORMATION

Niagara Falls, New York | October 23–26, 2022

2022 Convention Delegate List

NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE	NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE	NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE	NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE
RETIREE REP				WAYNE SPENCE	12	236	J	COURTNEY L GOULD	03	284	B	EX CRMNL JST SV			
ROBERT H HARMIS	08			VIKKY M URENA	11	236	J	MATTHEW C ORAVEC	03	284	B	MARIEA V YOUNG	08	204	C
AUDIT CONTROL				CHERYL A WALLACE	09	236	J	LAURA K RICHERT	03	284	P	EX DIV HUMAN RT			
DANIELLE K BRIDGER	08	263	P	ANTHONY ZACCONE	10	236	J	DOT REGION 5				BELLEW MCMANUS	10	329	G
ANDRE P BROWN	08	263	K	DOCCS EASTERN NY COR FAC				THOMAS W LOZINSKY JR	01	219	B	JEANNE L ORTIZ	10	329	S
CATHERINE DELL'ANGELO	08	263	U	PATRICIA A GALLIGAN	09	195	H	KERI L OSSONT	01	219	P	WILLIAM P PLOSKI	10	329	S
ETHAN FLEMING	08	263	S	DOCCS ELMIRA CNTR COR FAC				JUSTIN J PRZEPASNAIAK	01	219	B	EX HSG&CMTY RNL			
ROBERT N HORN	08	263	P	MICHAEL L CRIPPEN	02	222	C	PAUL M UEBELHOER	01	219	B	GLADYS FRANCO	10	168	S
MARK LAMARCHE	08	263	K	TANYA OLIVER	02	222	C	DOT REGION 7				EX OFF GEN SERV			
WENDY S MECCARIELLO	08	263	U	DOCCS FISHKILL COR FAC				CANDACE M KIBE	04	247	B	GEORGE T BALINDA	08	179	B
RAYMOND M MOROZ	08	263	K	LAURA M CLOIDT	09	310	C	JULIAN D KUCHARSKI	04	247	B	OWEN G BYRNE II	01	179	B
KELLY A NADEAU	08	263	P	GEORGE R GILLO	09	310	C	DOT REGION 8				GLORIA FUNG	08	179	B
ALBERT PASSINEAU	08	263	K	CARLY E GAGNON	07	361	C	BRIAN D DUBOIS	09	172	B	BE HA	08	179	B
JAMES E RAPPAPORT	08	263	P	SHARON A LAMB	07	361	C	CARLY FITZ-HENLEY	09	172	P	MOHAMMAD E HAQUE	08	179	B
BRIAN SHIELDS	08	263	P	CHRISTOPHER T LANZ	07	361	C	DOT REGION 9				MIRIAM G MCGIVER	08	179	B
JOSEPH F UGINO	08	263	K	DOCCS GREEN HAVEN COR FAC				BRIAN A DECKER	05	227	B	DAVID W MILLER	08	179	B
DANIEL J WINKLER	03	263	P	SABU CHERIAN	09	184	C	PAUL R GENDRON	05	227	B	RICHARD E VEHLow	08	179	B
CORRL SRVCS M/O				DOCCS GROVELAND COR FAC				ALEXANDER J PRINCE	05	227	B	JEFFREY L WESTERMAN	01	179	B
TRACY L JOHNSON-MCBRIDE	08	229	H	ANNE K JORDAN	03	324	H	ECONOMIC DEVEL				H HELEN HAYES			
DOUGLAS A WILBURN	08	229	H	DOCCS HALE CREEK ASAC				WILLIAM D FERGUSON	07	262	O	PATRICIA OTOOLE	09	226	H
DEPT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES				MIRANDA C PRIME	06	390	C	CYNTHIA M SHANNON	08	262	O	HEALTH MAIN OFF			
NERISSA P ALVAREZ	10	174	U	DOCCS MID-STATE COR FAC				SHERI SMITH	08	262	P	SHEILA AMBROSE	08	205	D
EDDIE CLEMETSON	10	260	P	KAREN BARNES	06	338	C	ED BATAVIA BLND				MICHELLE J ARROYO-SANTOS	08	205	P
GILBERT W DENTON	10	260	P	DANIEL P JOAQUIN	06	338	C	JACQUELYN M CLEMENTS	03	298	H	CHRISTOPHER J AUER	08	205	B
SERGEY K GARANIN	10	174	C	DOCCS MOHAWK COR FAC				ED SPECIAL				LINDA J BAKER	08	205	E
SUZETTE GRANT	10	174	P	STEVEN DRAKE	06	379	C	SEAN M DOBBIN	08	194	C	ERIKA L BAKER	08	205	D
OCTAVIA S JOSEPH	10	260	P	CHRISTOPHER G DUNHAM	06	379	A	AARON J GORE	08	194	C	SUSAN BILLI	12	317	A
MAUREEN A KELLMAN	10	260	P	MARIANNE LAZOR	06	379	A	EDUC MAIN OFFICE				CHERYL D BROWN	01	220	D
JEFFREY J LUDWIN	08	268	P	MATTHEW J PRIME	06	379	C	JANICE R ANDERSON-SMALL	11	376	N	JASON CORVINO	08	205	P
HAROLD MARCELIN	10	260	P	JOHN TAVERNE	06	379	A	CAROL ANSTAY	09	230	N	MICHAEL A DREIBELBIS	08	205	D
WENDY P MARSHALL	10	260	F	DOCCS SING SING COR FAC				JAMES G BRANDOW	08	194	C	KENNETH FERRO	08	205	P
JIMMIE NEWSOME	10	260	P	TAMBOURA LITTLE	09	323	H	MOHAMMED K CHOWDHURY	10	349	M	SHERI M FRIEDBERG	10	199	D
ADEMOLA OLUWO	10	260	P	DOCCS TACONIC COR FAC				ROBERT L DAVIES JR	04	230	N	CHERYL D GEILER	04	312	A
ROBERT H OTTAVIANO JR	10	174	F	KIM R WATSON	09	271	J	JAMIE DIGAUDIO	08	194	C	MYRON R GETMAN	08	205	Q
DOCCS ALBION COR FAC				DOCCS UPSTATE COR FAC				BARBARA GAFFNEY	10	376	N	MARLENE F GRIMSHAW	08	205	D
DAVID G SCHULTZ	03	289	C	TRACY L NELSON	07	400	H	CARLOS J GARCIA	08	194	C	JOHN A INGRAM	01	220	D
DOCCS ALTONA COR FAC				DOT MAIN OFFICE				ELIZABETH M KARALAK	09	194	C	KIMBERLY A JENSEN	08	205	E
SANDRA M DERR	07	342	C	RUFUS S BANKS	08	177	B	MICHAEL LENIG	01	349	M	RICHARD P KAPPES	08	205	P
DOCCS AUBURN COR FAC				JOHN J BISHOP	08	177	B	LAWRENCE J MAGARAM	10	349	M	TRACY KNOTT	08	205	E
ALI MUHSEN	04	299	F	MANOEL V CARTAGENES	08	177	B	YANDE S MCMILLAN FALODU	11	376	N	CRYSTAL LIDDLE	08	205	E
DOCCS BARE HILL COR FAC				PAUL R LYONS	08	177	B	AUDREY MYERS	12	376	K	TRACY L MANN	10	199	E
DAVID J MOSIER	07	377	C	ERIC L OPHARDT	08	177	B	JOHN M QUAIN	05	230	F	JOSEPH W MOSSEAU	08	205	P
DOCCS BEDFRD HILL COR FAC				JOSHUA E ROWINSKI	08	177	B	ANGELINA RODRIGUEZ	11	376	K	ADRIENNE V NICHOLSON	08	205	P
DIANE JAULUS	09	353	E	MARY F SABO	08	177	G	MARY K SAPP	08	194	C	SHANEEVA L NORBI	08	205	P
HAROLD TESENY	09	353	C	ABDUS SALAM	10	214	B	VED SHRAVAH	08	194	C	BRIAN D PARENTE	12	317	B
DOCCS CAPE VINCENT COR FAC				GUSTAVO SANTOS	08	177	O	BETH A UGINO	08	194	C	MADALYN ROYAL	08	205	E
LORI A GREENIZEN	04	367	H	MAUREEN P SHIELDS	08	177	B	ENVIR CONS M/O				YAMIL R SPEIGHT-MILLER	10	199	M
DOCCS CAYUGA COR FAC				DOT REGION 10				KEITH A BROWNE	09	169	B	TANIA T WHITE	08	205	D
DANIEL LOVEN	04	371	C	JOSEPH ADDEO	12	170	R	TODD M CAFFOE	03	169	B	ROBERT E YANKOWSKI	08	205	P
DOCCS CLINTON COR FAC				TAPON K BISWAS	12	170	B	KAREN J DRAVES	01	169	G	HOMELAND SECURITY			
JERRY KOWALOWSKI	07	239	H	WILLIAM A HOLTHAUSEN	12	170	B	PAUL J FRACZEK	08	169	B	JOHN T THOMSEN	08	179	C
DOCCS COLLINS COR FAC				WILLIAM G PIKE	12	170	B	BRUCE C GIDDINGS	08	169	B	HSC BRKLN P/R			
SHAUN M WENTLAND	01	340	C	JOHN RAZULIS	12	170	B	PRADEEP K JANGBARI	03	169	B	ANA CASTANEROS	11	198	A
THOMAS W YEATES	01	340	C	JEFFREY SARDEGNA	12	170	B	ASEEM KUMAR	08	169	B	ABDALLAHI DIOP	11	198	A
DOCCS COMMUNITY SUPERVISION				DOT REGION 11				ERIK J LATREMORE	04	169	Q	CORINA FLORECE-RUIZ	11	198	A
CATHERINE ADAMS	11	236	J	MAMADOU S DIALLO	11	214	B	ANTOINETTE NORFLEET	08	169	B	GEORGETTE PERSONNA	11	198	A
JERRY M BARANSKA	04	236	J	GEORGE E KAUFER	11	214	B	SALVATORE F PRIORE	08	169	B	DIANA T POTAKEY	11	198	A
CHAVELA R BRATTON	11	236	J	DOT REGION 3				RYAN J TOMKO	01	169	B	JOAN P ROSEGREEN	11	198	A
JAMES C HARFORD	10	236	J	LAUREL L CARPENTER	04	256	B	TERESA TYOE	04	169	B	JOAN P ROSEGREEN	11	198	A
ROBERT D HODSON	04	236	J	RICHARD D STEVENS	04	256	B	BRIAN D WEEKS	09	169	B	HSC SYR HOSP PR			
GINA LOPEZ	03	236	J	SCOTT A WENDT	04	256	B	SCOTT M WELLS	05	169	Q	RACHEL M AMODIO-KOPP	04	320	A
VICTORIA E SMITH	12	236	J	DOT REGION 4				KALEB N WINTERS	08	169	B	MARIANNE FRANCIS	04	320	A
JOHN SNYDER	04	236	J	ROBERT D GORKA II	03	284	B					JOHN F HORAN	04	320	A

2022 Convention Delegate List

NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE	NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE	NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE	NAME	REG.	DIV.	TITLE
STONYBRK HOS PR				ANGEL A MANGUERA	12	225	A	ROSS IZZO	08	190	P	STEPHEN C THOMPSON	04	333	P
NISAA B ABDULLAH	12	225	A	CAROLL MARAY	12	225	A	KYLE M JACOBSON	08	190	P	JAKOB WESTMAN	08	190	P
ROWENA A ABESAMIS	12	225	A	J C OBRIEN	12	225	A	JOSEPH KLEIN	01	224	P	AYOUB S YAZBECK	01	224	P
NATASHA BALASHOVA	12	225	A	GLADYS M OLEA	12	225	A	KENNETH D LASKY	08	190	P	DANIEL ZAGORSCAK	13	341	P
DOUGLAS BEGENT	12	225	A	AMY L PACHOLK	12	225	A	THOMAS J LATKO	01	224	P	W NY CH PSY CTR			
BARBARA L CONIGLIO	12	225	A	PENNY M WHITTAKER	12	225	A	STUART LEVY	11	406	P	LORI R KLUMPP	01	167	A
EUGENE DEAL	12	225	A	TAX FINANCE				HARRY MARC CHARLES	11	290	P	PATRICIA M MORAN	01	167	F
DEBRA DELGIORNO	12	225	A	EDWARD BELLAMY	08	190	P	GEORGE MARRETT	09	182	P	WKRS COMP BOARD			
DANIELLE G DELIO	12	225	A	CHRISTOPHER G BUMAN	03	360	P	MICHAEL A MILLER	08	190	P	SCOTT T HARMS	08	363	G
CHRISTINE DEMPSEY	12	225	A	JEFFREY D COZZY	08	190	P	STEVEN E MURPHY	08	190	P	TAMMI L LUCKHURST	08	363	M
MICHAEL S DOYLE	12	225	A	CONRAD DAVIS	11	406	P	JONATHAN J OLIVERI	12	186	P	SEAMUS S MURPHY	12	285	G
DIOSDADO C ESPINOSA	12	225	A	JOSEPH DONAHUE	08	190	P	STACEY L PAUL	08	190	P	ANNETTE M PANZIRONI	08	363	G
LAURA A FLERX	12	225	A	CHOI Y DOWNES	08	190	P	ANGELO P POLITO	08	190	M	TRACY A PEEL	10	285	G
ALISON N HARRIS	12	225	A	BERNICE B EDWARDS	08	190	P	BRITTNEY A RENAUD	08	190	P	REBECCA S SCHWARTZ	11	285	G
NORA M HIGGINS	12	225	A	JAMES R FAHRENKOPF	08	190	P	LINDA J SCOTT	08	190	P	VICKI A SWEET	08	363	K
HEATHER J KAMMERER	12	225	A	TAMMY L FIORILLO	08	190	P	CHRISTINE L SICINA	09	182	M				
JARED W MAJEED	12	225	A	SHARON HYDE-SCULLY	08	190	P	KEVIN W TAMOL	01	224	P				



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.

- **Matthew Cassidy** is a senior librarian at Woodbourne Correctional Facility in Woodbourne.
- **Margaret Mendez** is a motor vehicle referee at the state Department of Motor Vehicles in Brooklyn.
- **Leanne Graf** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse.
- **Lydia Seales-Fuller** is a nurse 2 psychiatric at Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse.
- **Cherie Griffin** is a taxpayer services specialist 2 at the state Department of Taxation and Finance in Albany.
- **Kyle Tomlin** is a supervising offender rehabilitation coordinator at Ulster Correctional Facility in Napanoch.
- **Monica Kehagias-Gordon** is an intensive case manager at Buffalo Psychiatric Center.
- **Karen Tully** is a senior attorney at the NYS Department of State in Albany.
- **Maria Lisanti** is an intensive case manager at Bronx Psychiatric Center.
- **Sharon Lynch** is a parole officer in Jamaica Queens.

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 189 and 190 of the 2019-23 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, or call 518 396-8201. Be sure to provide your contact information.





Letters to the Editor

Report on more labor-related legal issues

To The Editor: I have been a snowbird for several years now and have noticed how easily former civil service employees forget where their retirement benefits came from.

I respectfully request that The Communicator report on U.S. Supreme Court cases that have had an impact on unions and labor conditions in general. Also important is that our membership be made aware of NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) actions and directives.

PEF members need to be aware of who is buttering their bread, now and into retirement.

TONY DiCARLO
Venice, FL

Editor's Note: *The NLRB deals with private-sector labor issues. The NYS Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) hears public-sector labor cases in New York.*

Represent all PEF members

To the Editor: A lot of great things happening if you are a nurse.

I think the other agencies within PEF are forgotten about, such as DOT and DOL.

We are a union. Fight for all of us and try talking about other PEF members and what you are doing for us.

Maybe some of us should consider leaving the union and finding one that cares. Kind of like what parole officers are doing. They want out and want in a union that is going to protect them.

I listen to your town hall calls and I all I hear is "NURSES BENEFITS."

Treat us like a UNION!!!

NICOLE SHANTIE
Malone

Editor's Note: *PEF does represent all of its members, not just nurses who are the union's single largest job title group. As noted in the Executive Board report in this issue of The Communicator, PEF is currently working to address the needs of its members at the state Labor Department who are in provisional, hourly positions and have found it difficult to become permanent state employees.*

Members who have issues they want PEF to address should talk to their steward or field representative. If you don't know who your field rep is, call the union at (800) 342-4306 and they can look it up based on your agency and location. Members with story ideas for The Communicator may send them to thecomunicator@pef.org.



Enjoy summer, but keep protected from COVID

As we ease into summer, hopefully we are getting closer to being able to relax and start enjoying life without fear of COVID-19. It has been a long and arduous process through these past two years of the pandemic.

At PEF Retirees, we have cautiously started gathering again as an Executive Board and in our individual chapters. However, we still need to be cautious and protect ourselves from any serious complications of COVID-19. It's important to get vaccinated and boosted. Here is some valuable information from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

"Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, unvaccinated people have accounted for a majority of COVID-19 deaths in the United States. But, in recent months, an alarming number of vaccinated older and disabled Americans have succumbed to the disease.

"Forty-two percent of the people who died in January and February during the highly contagious omicron variant's surge were vaccinated, compared with 23% in September, the peak of the delta wave. Most of the vaccinated people who died had not received a booster shot. This analysis was conducted by The Washington Post using data from CDC.

"While a majority of seniors are immunized, the vaccine's potency wanes over time, leaving older people vulnerable to severe infection. The highest concentration of vaccinated deaths occurred among older Americans and the immunocompromised, with those over the age of 75 making up two-thirds of the deaths from the 'omicron' wave.

"Still, unvaccinated people remain far more likely to die from COVID-19 than the vaccinated, especially when compared to Americans who have received booster shots.

"Health experts continue to stress that the overwhelming majority of the vaccinated will survive COVID-19 infection. However, they argue that the deaths serve as a reminder that high-risk groups such as older Americans should receive booster doses and exercise extra precautions during infection surges.

"Seniors remain especially vulnerable during this pandemic. The CDC has approved second booster doses for those 65 and older and those 50 and older with underlying medical conditions that increase their risk for severe disease from COVID-19, and we encourage all seniors to follow their guidance when it comes to receiving that added level of protection."

I received my second booster (4th shot) April 26. One day before holding an in person Chapter 2 Retiree meeting. It was good to meet in person rather than virtual.

PEF Retirees need your continued support. If we are to grow in numbers and in influence to be an effective voice for retirees, we need your action, participation and membership. Membership is not automatic when you retire. You can get the membership application at www.pef.org or contact PEF Retirees at 800-785-1900 ext. 288.

If you have moved, changed your email or phone number please contact us at rmango@pef.org so that we can update our contact information for you.





May 16, 2022

Region 9 and PEF 236 Stewards represented health, safety, and contractual issues and concerns of the members at the Statewide labor mgt conference with DOCCS upper management.



May 23, 2022

PEF Women's Committee member Vivian Falto, left, shares a laugh with EMILY'S LIST President Laphonza Butler at a "Women for Tish" event supporting New York Attorney General Letitia James on May 23 in Manhattan.



May 23, 2022

Members of the PEF Women's Committee pose for a photo with New York General Letitia James and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson at a "Women for Tish" event May 23 in Manhattan.

May 25, 2022

PEF leaders attended the annual Appreciation Gala held by the Capital District Area Labor Federation on May 25 in Albany. Back row, left to right: VP Sharon DeSilva, MBP Administrator Stephanie McLean-Beathley, PEF Executive Board members Ray Moroz and Maureen Kozakiewicz, and U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y). Front row, left to right: Secretary-Treasurer Joe Donahue, Vice President Darlene Williams, Region 8 Coordinator Danielle Bridger.





September 25, 2021

PEF Retiree David Krobe received a “Red, White and Gratitude” quilt at the Needle Show at the Gainesville United Methodist Church.

Krobe served in the U.S. Navy from 1959 to 1989. He presented his fellow honorees with a veteran pin from PEF.

Photo courtesy of the Warsaw Country Courier

June 8, 2022

S-T Donahue participating in a rally at the Starbucks located at Stuyvesant Plaza on June 8. They voted unanimously to unionize. He’s standing next to Bernie Mulligan, a former PEF staffer who now works with State Sen. Bob Jackson.



