

# MCCC NEWS



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## HEUU Lobby Day

### National Lobby Day to Repeal the Social Security Offsets Reaps Success

Reported by Carole Dupont, STCC

Close to 300 MTA higher education members descended on the statehouse Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> to lobby for funding ratified contracts that were vetoed by Governor Swift before she left office. This was part of an on-going effort by Higher Education Unions United (HEUU) to secure funding.

These unfunded contracts cover 13,000 employees, mostly from MTA locals but also from MFT, AFSCME and other unions. The majority are employed at the various UMass campuses, but the AFSCME classified staff employees at community colleges are also among them.

A number of MCCC members participated in solidarity with the affected unions. Bunker Hill Chapter President, Ted Ridout, led a delegation from his college along with MCCC leaders like President Rick Doud and Vice President Joe LeBlanc.

The day began at 10:00 a.m. with a group meeting highlighted by speeches from Representatives Ellen Story (D-Amherst) and Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington), and from Senators Steven Tolman (D-Watertown) and Stanley Rosenberg (D-Amherst). MTA President Cathy Boudreau and MFT President Kathy Kelly also spoke.

The speakers pointed out the unprecedented nature of not funding duly negotiated and ratified contracts. In an impassioned speech Senator Tolman, a former MBTA Carmen's Union member, railed against this affront to collective bargaining and said that if the state won't honor contracts, then unions should have the right to strike.

After the speeches, members were broken up into small groups with lists of three representatives and one senator to visit in their offices. Armed with packets that included talking points stressing that these are bills that are due, and that the state has sufficient funds in reserve to pay these bills.

A number of representatives noted that the lobbying campaign was very professional and was beginning to have an effect. On Oct. 30 the Public Service Committee voted unanimously to recommend the funding bill. Next, it has to go to the House Ways and Means Committee for a similar vote before going to the floor of the House. ■



Senator Stanley Rosenberg speaks to MTA Higher Ed. activists (credit Spindel)



MTA Higher Ed. activists listen to Senator Stanley Rosenberg (credit Spindel)



Bristol Community College members wearing caps and gowns participate in State House Watch (photo by Jerry Spindel)

On Oct. 1, over 160 NEA lobbyists determinedly marched the halls of congress spreading a simple message: Social Security offsets are unfair, discriminate against public service workers and need to be repealed.

Affecting public employees in 15 states, including Massachusetts, these provisions reduce Social Security benefits for state pensioners. The Government Pension Offset (GPO) provision reduces a married individual's survivor's benefits by 2/3 of their public pension. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) applies to all employees, and it changes the formula used to calculate Social Security benefits, leading to reductions up to 60%.

Sponsors of a bill to eliminate these provisions, Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA) and Rep. Berman (D-CA), inspired the assembled group with their dynamic leadership and total support for repealing the GPO/WEP. NEA President, Reggie Weaver, also led a rousing display of encouragement for the troops who would march the halls of the United States Congress.

Margaret Kane (NEA GPO/WEP

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# Strategic Action Committee Report

## Why Not Politics?

*New MCCC program will encourage our students to consider a career in politics and government*

By Joe LeBlanc, MCCC Vice President



Joe LeBlanc,  
MCCC Vice President

In a letter to Robert Livingston in 1800, Thomas Jefferson urges him to consider a career in public service: "Come forward, then, and give us the aid of your talents and the weight of your

character towards the new establishment of republicanism."

In our own time, too many of our students feel ambivalent or negative about government and politics. A survey conducted by the Harvard Political Review indicates that college students are "disillu-

sioned about and disconnected from our political system." Here is a sampling of the results:

- 64 percent do not trust the federal government to do the right thing all or most of the time.
- 74 percent of college students believe that politicians are motivated by selfish reasons.
- 87 percent say they need more practical information about politics before they get involved.
- 86 percent of students agree that volunteering in the community is easier than volunteering in politics.
- 97 percent believe "enjoyment of activity" is an effective factor in motivating them [to volunteer]. But only 7 percent strongly agree that "political activity is enjoyable . . ."

The survey also points out that "college students are seeking new ways to solve

local and national problems." It suggests that if students are shown that politics can play a positive role in changing our society and if students are given more direct contact with government, they are more likely to get involved with the political process. They are also more likely to see government as part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

College students are interested in volunteering, and the survey indicates that "60 percent of them are or have been involved in community service during the past year." Yet few of these students have volunteered for positions in government service and fewer still in political campaigns.

For our part, the MCCC requests that you encourage your students to work as legislative interns in the State House next semester. In a new union initiative, The MCCC Student Legislative Intern Program will provide six student interns

with \$250 grants to underwrite their transportation and other expenses. After selection by the Strategic Action Committee's Steering Committee in early December, the students will be interviewed by the Legislative Education Office. The LEA staff will then place our students in internships in a meaningful program for both students and staff.

We hope this initiative will provide an incentive for some of our best students to learn first-hand about state government and to consider a career in government and public service. We also hope it nurtures their idealism and shows them the vital role government and politics play in the future of this Commonwealth and nation.

Editor's note: Internship materials were sent out via email earlier this month. They are also available on the union's website: <http://mccc-union.org> ■

## Fitzgerald Reports to MCCC BOD

MCCC Day Grievance Coordinator, Dennis Fitzgerald, made his fall report to the MCCC Board on October 17. In the report Fitzgerald detailed some significant resolutions for the union as well as some problems.

One resolution was in the workload of a Department chairperson. In the cited case, the chairperson's departmental re-

sponsibilities required working more than an average of six hours per week. The member was able to document the work, and was eventually awarded increased compensation.

Fitzgerald made the following note: Department chairpersons who can document that they work more than an average of six (6) hours per week on departmental responsibilities should receive more than a one (1) course reduction. This additional benefit may be either an additional workload reduction or compensation at \$750 per credit hour or a combination of both.

Another resolution was for faculty at Springfield who were required to work beyond the academic year because of their program requirements. The additional work was being paid as DCE courses when it was really part of their regular Day work. These members will be eligible to apply that income to their retirement by paying in the appropriate retirement contribution.

One problem area was related to appointment preferences. Fitzgerald reminded the Board that unit members serving on search committees should consult the contract to ensure that candidates who are members receive their contractual rights. ■



Dennis Fitzgerald,  
MCCC Grievance Coordinator

## National Lobby Day... *Continued from Page 1*

cadre), Len Paolillo (MSCA NEA director), Jackie Gorrie (NEA director) and Carole Dupont (MCCC GPO/WEP activist) represented Massachusetts. By 7 a.m. 3200 phone calls had been received, and 449 of them were from Massachusetts! 7000 calls burned up the phone lines that morning, overwhelming the system, and leading to a complete shutdown.

However, certain congressmen in key legislative positions, hold our future in their hands. Republican Congressman Clay Shaw of Florida is chairman of the sub committee on Social Security and has the power to move the repeal legislation toward a vote. He is not a cosponsor as of yet.

Fortunately all the Massachusetts senators and reps are cosponsors of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2003, but their help is needed in influencing their non-supportive colleagues to sign on as cosponsors of this repeal. Congressmen Neal and Markey personally met with the team and promised their complete commitment to the cause.

Ten new cosponsors were picked up that day and several others have recently signed on bringing our totals to 274 reps and 26 senators. Our spirits were invigo-

rated and gratified by the wonderful reception we received.

One realization revealed to us during our encounters is that we need coalition partners. This cannot be viewed simply as a "teacher" issue. It must become a "people" issue. Currently teacher unions like the NEA, MTA and the MCCC are leading the fight. We must form partnerships with the firemen, police, retirees and other public service workers to enhance our bargaining powers in a massive grassroots uprising. We need to identify our retirees in Florida, so they can contact and enlighten Congressman Shaw to the unfair and discriminatory impact of GPO/WEP on our public service workers.

Colossal public education of these issues is absolutely necessary. There is an enormous misunderstanding among the electorate that this is "double dipping." We need to get our message out to the public that these are "earned social security benefits." Letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines and other creative measures need to be utilized so the general public will truly understand the devastating and unjustified impact GPO/WEP has on public service workers. ■

## 03 Retirement Buyback

The MCCC has sent out a questionnaire to all full-time faculty and staff to see how many people worked as non-fringe-benefited (03) employees before becoming regular employees. This does not include part-time teaching under the DCE contract.

This is an effort to determine how significant this issue is regarding credit towards state retirement benefits. It is very important for members who worked part-time in the community college system to complete the survey as accurately as possible.

After the data is compiled, the Strategic Action Committee will determine how to proceed with lobbying activities to support proposed legislation. ■

## Know Your Day Contract

### November 2003

Nov. 11 Veterans Day holiday

Nov. 21 Unit Personnel Practices Committee established p. 30

Nov. 30 Tentative Spring assignments to faculty (p. 32)

### December 2003

Dec. 1 Applications for sabbaticals for Fall 2004 due (p. 17)

N.B. Dates may vary depending on the first day of classes. Most of these dates are "last date" standards. In many instances the action can be accomplished before the date indicated. ■



MCCC Activist Carole Dupont (l) meets with Congressman Richard Neal along with MTA's Margaret Kane.



# DCE NEWS



DCE Negotiating Team seated (l-r) John Palmer, Michael Dubson, Michelle Gallagher, standing Don Williams, Divya Taylor, Patrick Seyon and Joe Rizzo.

## DCE Raises

Despite the lack of raises for all other unionized employees in higher education, MCCC DCE members are receiving salary increases this semester. The 2000-2003 Agreement provided for raises beyond the normal July to June three-year contract period.

MCCC members working under the DCE contract will see their pay increase by 2% for the Fall 2003 semester. The new salary schedule is as follows:

- Step 1 - \$751.00 per credit
- Step 2 - \$805.00 per credit
- Step 3 - \$866.00 per credit
- Step 4 - \$909.00 per credit

Unit members who are compensated on an hourly basis will get a 2% increase of their hourly rate. These will be the last raises under the current contract, which expires this semester.

### SALARY PROGRESSION

	Per Credit Salary				
	Sept. 99	Sept. 00	Sept. 01	Sept. 02	Sept. 03
Step 1	\$680	\$694	\$715	\$736	\$751
Step 2	\$729	\$744	\$766	\$789	\$805
Step 3	\$784	\$800	\$824	\$849	\$866
Step 4		\$840	\$865	\$891	\$909

  

	Per 3-Credit Course				
	Sept. 99	Sept. 00	Sept. 01	Sept. 02	Sept. 03
Step 1	\$2,040	\$2,082	\$2,145	\$2,208	\$2,253
Step 2	\$2,187	\$2,232	\$2,298	\$2,367	\$2,415
Step 3	\$2,352	\$2,400	\$2,472	\$2,547	\$2,598
Step 4		\$2,520	\$2,595	\$2,673	\$2,727

## MCCC News

<http://www.mccc-union.org>

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## DCE Negotiations

The DCE negotiating team has started to meet to prepare the Union's demand package for a successor agreement to the expired contract. They have already held meetings on October 16 and 30 and on November 7.

The team membership has been finalized with five members who teach only in DCE: Jane Arnold, Michael Dubson, John Palmer, Patrick Seyon and Divya Taylor. Donald Williams who teaches both as a Day and DCE member at North Shore Community College rounds out the representation.

Joe Rizzo, MCCC DCE Grievance Coordinator, and Michelle Gallagher, MTA Consultant, serve as advisors to the team providing guidance and technical support.

To date, the meetings have consisted of presentations on bargaining procedures and going over the history of grievances filed under the old contract and their resolutions.

A questionnaire will be sent to all DCE members in the next few weeks. This survey will help to determine the issues and priorities that the team will negotiate. It is important that members fill these out and return them quickly.

As yet no dates have been set for the MCCC team to meet with the management team representing the colleges. ■

## Health Care, Pensions, Debt Fueling Yet Another Big Projected Budget Deficit

By Michael P. Norton, State House News Service

**STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, .....**A projected \$2 billion increase in spending far exceeds the likely \$300 million lift in state tax collections in the fiscal year ahead, setting the stage for yet another round of belt-tightening and revenue searches on Beacon Hill, according to the Senate's top budget writer.

The projected spending, mainly a 12 percent surge in Medicaid's bottom line and a doubling of public employee pension funding, will far outpace an estimated 2 percent increase in state tax revenues in the fiscal year ahead, Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairwoman Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) told reporters Monday afternoon.

The spending and revenue trends, combined with the evaporation of one-time revenues used to preserve programs this year, underscores a \$2 billion budget problem for fiscal 2005, which begins nine months from now. Gov. Mitt Romney, the House and Senate will spend much of the fall, winter and spring tackling the latest budget problem.

Murray's \$2 billion budget gap estimate is similar to those forecasted in recent months by other state budget analysts.

In late September, at the direction of Senate President Robert Travaglini (D-East Boston), Murray delivered her evaluation to her Democratic colleagues in a closed meeting. Asked about their reaction, Murray said the senators were "somber and concerned" but pleased to be updated on the fiscal outlook. Murray said the broad update was also needed to add perspective for colleagues who hope to entertain a mid-year spending bill soon.

### Fewer Options

The main options for closing the gap are spending cuts and revenues. Murray did not discuss either in detail today. Asked about revenue options, she said: "You tell me. I haven't got any new ones at the moment." Murray said she has not heard calls for higher taxes from the public or legislators. "I'm not prepared to go there yet."

The Legislature in 2002 raised taxes by more than \$1 billion, over the veto of then Acting Gov. Jane Swift. Gov. Mitt Romney took office in January and like his Republican predecessors pledged to veto any further tax hikes. Lawmakers both unable and unwilling to mount another round of tax hikes instead joined Romney last year in jacking up fees by roughly \$500 million. Looking forward, sources of potential new revenues appear to be fewer.

Asked if she would like Romney to modify his firm opposition to new or higher taxes, Murray said Democrats in the Legislature and the Republican administration worked well earlier this year to close a \$3 billion gap and should continue to do so. "We all have to be open-minded going forward, and not draw a line in anything," said Murray.

Murray distanced herself from a casino gaming proposal that Sen. Michael Morrissey (D-Quincy) and Sen. Brian Lees (R-East Longmeadow) are drafting. She said she is "not crazy about" expanded gaming and remains concerned that it may cut into a state Lottery that has long been a reliable source of local aid for cities and towns. "There are many people that are absolutely opposed to gaming," said Murray.

Democrats and Republicans alike are not eager to advance a new round of spending cuts. Romney has acknowledged that the cuts required to balance this year's budget went deeper than he imagined when elected Medicaid, Pensions Driving Spending Increases

Spending on Medicaid, the health program that serves nearly one million poor, elderly and disabled residents, would rise by \$785 million based on the 12 percent national average increase in spending on the program, Murray said. Medicaid spending increases are forcing level funding or deep cuts in most other state spending categories.

Addressing reporters in her office, Murray said that if the federal government would agree to cover those eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, the state's Medicaid funding problems would ease significantly. "We would have enough money to cover all the other health needs in the Commonwealth," she said.

The Senate analysis includes a projected

\$621 million increase in spending on pensions. That would represent a near doubling of the current level, a major spending hike in a time of fiscal austerity.

Since the state budget crisis hit in 2001, lawmakers and Republican governors have been cutting pension funding. But they now appear intent on increasing it. The state's unfunded pension liability is soaring once again and Murray suggested the pension funding increase is inevitable. "We have too," she said. "We took it off budget this year and moved it so that we have to make that payment upfront, outside of the budget."

Murray's analysis is based on a 2 percent, or \$297 million increase in fiscal 2005 tax revenues. Romney aides are preliminarily projecting a 4 percent increase in tax revenues. The administration and House and Senate leaders in January must agree on a joint revenue estimate for the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2004.

Through the first three months of fiscal 2004, tax collections are up 4.4 percent from the first quarter of fiscal 2003. But Murray said September sales and income tax collections were "very poor" and continuing job losses worry her.

Despite favorable interest rates, spending to retire state debt is on track to increase by \$190 million in fiscal 2005, Murray said. Her analysis is built on an inflation-adjusted 2 percent increase in most spending accounts. That increase alone would require \$193 million, or about two thirds of the new tax revenues projected by the Senate.

Murray's analysis also calls for a \$75 million increase in Chapter 70 school aid to keep districts at the mandated foundation levels of spending, as well as a statutorily mandated stabilization fund deposit of \$74 million. "I don't think we can back off the foundation budget," Murray said, though some funding inequities should be addressed.

Stephen Collins, executive director of the Massachusetts Human Services Coalition, said human service programs have absorbed \$1.4 billion in cuts since 2001. Collins says core services to the needy have been axed and predicted entire programs may need to be cut if state officials don't dip into reserves, reform programs, or raise taxes.

Collins said the current budget could force the closure of group homes for the mentally retarded, layoffs of social workers who safeguard abused and neglected children, longer waiting lists for child care assistance, the loss of health insurance coverage for people with disabilities and the loss of nutrition services for women and children.

"We call on Governor Romney to break his no-new-taxes pledge as readily and repeatedly as he has broken his pledge not to cut essential state services," Collins wrote in a memo he circulated on the Hill Monday.

Murray said she hopes her estimates are too conservative, but cautioned those looking to increase spending and restore programs cut since 2001. "Even if the numbers do get better, it's not going to be good enough to expand services or restore many of the cuts we have made over the last 48 months," she said.

Senators are working on several proposals to help ease the fiscal crunch. In addition to an economic stimulus bill, Murray said, senators are looking at "absolutely critical" school building assistance program reforms, planning to release school aid formula recommendations in early November, examining a \$128 million-and-growing deficit in the pool that pays providers of health care to the uninsured, investigating more efficient ways to purchase human services, and exploring state highway and turnpike consolidations that "absolutely" hold the potential for savings.

"These are all things we're looking at presently and working on presently," said Murray.

Murray said she has no timeline for consideration of a supplemental budget to prevent layoffs of social workers and the release of youthful offenders. "The House has to originate money bills," she said. "I haven't talked to them lately about it." Murray said the Senate will keep its pledge to shore up some fiscal 2004 budget line items. ■