

Colleagues,

We entered the 21st century today with our “Save the LPN Program” page. The purpose of the page is to reach the thousands of former students, their employers, and anyone else who is connected to the program. Encourage the students to become a fan. On the page is a link to GetActive, so they can generate a letter to the Governor; a link to our website, so they can learn more about this crisis; and a link so students and former students can write about how this program has impacted their life. We have run out of time to go contact everybody, so now they have a chance to contact us. We discussed the idea with Eric Bailey, the AFT Communications Coordinator, last night at 7:00; by 1:00 this afternoon it was up and running. Every SVFT member with a Facebook account, all 276 of them, have been automatically contacted. When the officers get home, we are all anxious to talk to our kids about how to sign up.

The Crisis Committee met today to fine-tune our strategy. Terri Merositis of the AFT helped us focus our approach. We need every member to contact the Governor and ask the Governor to restore the program. We need the LPN instructors and reps to make a more specific proposal. We need you to go to GetActive and email Representative Christopher Donovan, Representative Denise Merrill, Representative John Geragosian, Senator Donald Williams, Senator Martin Looney, and Senator Toni Harp: all can be contacted by simply clicking on their names. We need you to ask them to tell the Governor that the State can save the program by increasing the tuition cost for the students. Current students and applicants have indicated that they are very willing to pay triple the cost – one group testified in before Senator Harp that they thought \$15,000 would be fair, which represented an increase of over \$10,000 – and the department heads from the program have been requesting significant increases in tuition for years. Such an increase would still put the State program at less than ½ the cost of the private programs for a far superior product. It is not enough simply to agree that it is a necessary and wonderful program; they need to challenge the Governor by either through legislation or a public statement that they will raise fees in the 2010-2011 fiscal year if she will restore the program. We need appropriations and education to be together on this appeal. By removing the Governor’s “rationale,” we are not just another hand stretched out for funds; we are offering solutions. We have reason to believe this approach is starting to work. Connie Gibeault, LPN DH from Windham, had many questions after her public testimony – a rare occurrence – about the funding of the program; she and Ted Moscovitz (LPN DH from Goodwin) did a terrific job answering them. We will be following up on some of their questions tomorrow. Senator Joseph Crisco called our office with similar questions tonight during our meeting. Everyone needs to use the GetActive site (a link will be on www.svft.org very soon, but it has been emailed to every member as well) and make the following points: the program could raise fees dramatically and still attract applicants; the program has a 100% job placement rate; and whatever cost the State accrues is soon more than recovered by the addition of the students to the tax rolls. This letter is not just about the fact that the program is worthwhile; we need to make them show the Governor that the program can make fiscal sense even in desperate times.

We have included the link to the Courant article that was referenced yesterday. Please write these letters. Julie Marzano of Kaynor is the chairperson of the crisis committee; Ruth Cion, a special education teacher from Goodwin with a great deal of experience in union activism, will provide invaluable support as co-chair. Tomorrow we will contact the membership in general to

discuss this campaign, and we will be sending out an Vocational Instructor Extra before the holidays so every member knows the importance of this fight. Keep us informed about the contacts you have made, and keep up the battle. This program is too important to our union, our system, and our state to let up even for a moment

In solidarity,

Rick, Jan, and Ed