

Colleagues,

Much to report today, not all of it good but in general fairly promising. First, the bad news: the House Legal Counsel has decided that Governor is within her rights to make unilateral cuts, including the “suspension” of the LPN program. There had been some talk that House Democrats believed Governor Rell had acted outside her authority and were looking to file an injunction to stop her from imposing the cuts. We never had put much hope in that ploy, though it would have been nice if it had worked. Now that possibility is gone. There is some positive news, though. The Senate Democrats caucused yesterday. Senate President Pro Tem Don Williams spoke on the senate floor and invited republican legislative leaders to sit down with him and senate Majority Leader Martin Looney to find a way to fund the LPN program. Both through our office and the AFT, we have continued to contact legislator with that message. We have new reason to hope that key legislators are ready to step forward for us to question the supposed savings in the Governor’s proposal. When we get confirmation about the exact nature of that support, we will share it.

The AFT, through Lobbyist Jennifer Berrigan and Communications Director Eric Bailey, has recommended we write an open letter to the Governor; we have included the text. The letter goes over the same points we made last week: Cutting this program to save money doesn’t make any sense if it actually costs more money to close it than to keep it open. We are trying to make our points so clearly, so concisely, that even a cursory reading will leave the recipient acknowledging the problems with the Governor’s proposal. We continue to get phone calls and emails from legislators and their assistants telling us they agree with us and they will fight for us, but now we need results. The AFT believes an open letter to the Governor is the best vehicle to get results. What we need from you is to bombard the Governor with letters that highlight the bulleted points we have been making. Feel free to use the numbers, but adapt it. Point out that you do not want to make 20% in another job; you want to teach practical nursing to CT students. Students can write saying that they would have paid more for the program, another cost-saving measure. But every letter, every email now has to go to the Governor.

We have also been receiving emails looking for more information about how the SEBAC layoff protection will work. Everyone received an email from Karen Shaw, head of the Department of Education’s Human Resources. The email seemed to us to be a nice way of saying, “Don’t ask us any questions, because we don’t know what we’re going to do yet.” The truth is, no one knows how this will work other than the way we outlined the process last week. There is no list of “comparable” or “similar” jobs yet compiled. There has not been any discussion that we know of about how training will be handled. The rumors we hear are just that – rumors, most of which make little sense. The rumor that people will become substitute teachers makes no sense as a long-term solution; the system doesn’t want \$400 a day substitutes. We have been specifically told that there will be no new retirement incentive, but that needs to be tempered by saying that we were told that at this time last year as well, and that there is absolutely nothing anyone can say or do to stop people from believing one will soon be announces. Since the first RIP, there has been one every 6-8 years; to speed up that process 600% seems highly unlikely. The exact details of how the process will work was emailed last week, and is on our website www.svft.org in the member’s log in section. The logistics of placing 39 teachers in comparable jobs is so daunting that it has yet to begin, a fact that is good for us.

One last thing: Betty Jenkins Donahue provided the following link to an article on this issue: <http://nursing.advanceweb.com/Regional-Articles/Features/Class-Dismissed-2.aspx> . [Please email the governor again tonight](#), ask the LPN students to [send her another email](#), and let's make one big push before the holiday. If we didn't get everything we wanted yesterday, we at least were given new reasons to hope – a new plan for publicity, some encouragement from legislators. Let's make sure we don't let up now.

Rick, Jan, and Ed