

Dear Colleague,

Everyone is certainly now aware of the impending threat to the LPN program in our system. We want to provide a time-line of the events as we became aware of them and our position on this proposal.

Last Tuesday evening, I received an email detailing the Governor's Deficit Mitigation Plan. In the plan, the Governor announced the suspension of the LPN program through gubernatorial mandate. I called Superintendent Pat Ciccone, shared the news, and discussed its impact on our members and our system. The next day began the Thanksgiving vacation, and though we answered questions from members who had heard rumors about the closing of the program, there was little we could do until Monday, November 30. On Monday, we met with the Superintendent and Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan about the program. We questioned both the extent of the proposed savings, and the impact on our members and their students. We have contacted AFT- CT Lobbyist Jennifer Berrigan about the proper steps to take with the legislators. We have also spoken to Dan Livingston, chief negotiator for SEBAC, about this proposal. We have, of course, spoken to any and all members who have called our office.

If this proposal goes through, any teacher hired before July 1, 2009 will be protected from layoff through the SEBAC agreement. Everyone would maintain current salary and benefits throughout the life of the agreement, which extends until July, 2011. How this arrangement will be handled, the exact method of job placement, has not been determined; obviously, the SVFT would work to ensure that your rights are protected. However, we are not conceding that the LPN program will be suspended. We know the impact your efforts for the LPN program have had on the quality of health care in the state. We know how you have helped people dramatically change their lives, enabling people to begin careers that give them financial security and a sense of personal dignity. We also know that these extraordinary times put common sense and long-term growth behind quick fixes. The Governor is maintaining she can eliminate the program without legislative approval; she is certainly not asking for ours. We cannot promise success in our efforts. We can promise that we will communicate with you honestly and fully, that we will work to protect your best interests, and that we will not ever forget the important role you play in the economic and educational life of our state.

In Solidarity,

Rick Tanasi

SVFT President