

- ▶▶ AFT Connecticut
- ▶▶ American Association of University Professors – Connecticut State University
- ▶▶ American Association of University Professors – UCONN
- ▶▶ American Federation of State, County, & Municipal Employees - Council 4
- ▶▶ Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges/ SEIU Local 1973
- ▶▶ Connecticut Association of Prosecutors
- ▶▶ Connecticut Employees Union Independent/ SEIU Local 511
- ▶▶ Connecticut Federations of School Administrators Local 61
- ▶▶ Connecticut Police and Fire Union/IAFF-IUPA
- ▶▶ Connecticut State Police Union
- ▶▶ CSEA SEIU Local 2001
- ▶▶ International Brotherhood of Police Officers/SEIU Local 731
- ▶▶ New England Healthcare Employees Union, District 1199/SEIU

## ***The State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition***

### **Exposing Gubernatorial Candidates' Dangerous Vision for Connecticut's Working Families & the Economy**

Leaders of the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) are reacting to comments made by Connecticut Republican Party candidates for governor in the 2010 General Election. Former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Tom Foley accepted the party's nomination during the State GOP's convention on April 22 and promised during his acceptance speech, as he has repeatedly during the primary campaign, to outsource public services <sup>1</sup> and eliminate jobs in order to bring down the deficit. Current Lt. Governor Michael Fedele has been a strong advocate for deep spending cuts <sup>2</sup> on the campaign trail and Metro Hartford Alliance President and CEO Nelson "Oz" Griebel has argued that State employee unions must be brought back to the bargaining table <sup>3</sup> even after the significant savings produced from the coalition's 2009 cost-savings agreement.

Now that the campaigns are in full swing, the candidates are being asked again and again how they plan to solve Connecticut's significant economic problems. Considering the state's down economy, the serious struggles facing the state's working families, some of their answers ring hollow. Worse, some of them fit the oldest political maxim -- if you don't support honest solutions to people's problems, try scapegoating someone else. That way it looks like you have answers, even when you don't.

SEBAC is calling the Republicans' statements on the economy and their solutions for solving budget deficits misguided and dangerous. More importantly, their shortsighted plans threaten to impact job growth in the state. Foley, for example, has proposed reducing the number of public service workers to levels following massive layoffs in 2003 <sup>4</sup>. Lt. Gov. Fedele was quoted as saying that Connecticut cannot afford its State employee workforce <sup>5</sup>.

In a *Hartford Courant* article published just before the May conventions, Griebel was quoted as saying "I will take an immediate accounting of all state agencies and consolidate, eliminate and privatize government services as appropriate." <sup>6</sup>

When asked how he would fix the state's economy, Lt. Governor Fedele said he would institute a four-year State employee hiring freeze, restructure employee salaries and benefits, and privatize certain state services because private providers deliver services at half the cost of state-run services, state group homes and other state facilities <sup>6</sup>.

Finally, in the same article, GOP gubernatorial nominee Tom Foley stated that he would "shift state services to outside contractors where it can be shown that equivalent service levels can be provided at less cost." <sup>6</sup>

This slash and burn approach to deficit mitigation has been proven ineffective.

Connecticut has experienced the failure of private contractors and has paid the price for outsourcing. One need only remember the I-84 debacle to be reminded that going private does not save the state precious dollars.

Similarly, studies have shown that cutting public services, particularly during a recession, means losing jobs in the private sector. With the reductions made under Governor M. Jodi Rell's tenure, Connecticut has lost over 50,000 jobs. In addition, these cuts mean the loss of direct services like access to job training services, educational programs, healthcare, senior services, and public safety functions.

The cycle of lost earnings and the desperate need for vital services constricted by political leaders is perpetuated and the state's economy spirals ever downward in the Republicans' vision for Connecticut.

All of this, because Republican Party candidates won't ask the wealthy few and large corporations to pay their fair share. They insist on a slash and burn approach and scapegoating state employees as the way out of this mess. Connecticut needs real solutions, not phony methods, to achieve economic recovery.

Middle-class families -- including public service workers -- in Connecticut currently contribute around 10% of their income to state and local taxes, and the poor pay close to 12%. Taking into account federal deductions they claim for local taxes and the increase included in last year's budget of 1.5% on income over \$1 million, the very rich only pay around 5% of their income in state and local taxes.

SEBAC leaders continue to reach out to Governor Rell and all of the candidates who seek ideas to help reduce the budget deficit, achieve greater government efficiency and help grow jobs. By focusing on Connecticut's economy as a whole, and jobs in particular, we believe we can help bring the state and its working families back from recession and into a brighter future.

To learn more about the coalition's campaign for a fair budget and a livable state with great public services visit [www.InThisTogetherCT.org](http://www.InThisTogetherCT.org).

#### **Footnotes:**

1 *"The state needs to cut spending by outsourcing some government services and other measures."*

Tom Foley, Business Council of Fairfield County Gubernatorial Debate, Feb. 26, 2010.

2 *"We need deep spending cuts that would include a four-year hiring freeze, merging state agencies, capping pensions and eliminating bonus payments for state employees."*

Lt. Gov. Michael Fedele, Press Conference, Mar. 17, 2010.

3 *"It's critical that the next governor bring the state employee unions to the negotiating table and discuss ways to cut costs."*

Oz Griebel, Republican NBC Gubernatorial debate, Mar. 18, 2010.

4 *"I would bid out human service functions to private agencies, such as for clients at the Southbury Training School; reduce state workers to 2003 levels through attrition; and eliminate duplication of services."*

Tom Foley, Hamden Chamber of Commerce's Business and Community Expo, Apr. 13, 2010.

5 *"Connecticut cannot afford its approximate 50,000 state employee work force and the benefits they receive."*

Lt. Gov. Michael Fedele, NBC Gubernatorial debate, Mar. 18, 2010.

6 Governor's Challenge: How I Would Fix It, *Hartford Courant* Commentary, May 16, 2010.