

# Public SECTOR

Special Erie Co.  
Election Edition

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**Ballots go out January 19 to eligible voters**

## Future at stake in Erie election

BUFFALO — Erie County employees will be voting this month for the union of their choice in a representation election for all county employees ordered by the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).

CSEA, the incumbent union representing Erie County employees, faces a challenge from a so-called "association" which presently represents no one, has no staff, no constitution or by-laws, and no structure of any kind.

Despite CSEA's objections to a representation election involving a non-entity, PERB will be mailing ballots to all county employees on January 19. Marked ballots must be returned to PERB by no later than February 6 to be valid. Ballots will be counted on that day in Albany.

For county employees, the election represents a continuing delay in CSEA's negotiations with the county for a new contract. While the union was ready to go to the bargaining table with employee demands months ago, the challenge — led by people defeated in democratic union elections in the past — forced postponement of bargaining under orders from PERB.

CSEA Local 815, representing Erie County employees, had already

assembled a list of contract demands — headed by salary increases and new dental insurance — and a negotiating team to go to the bargaining table with the county. Ironically, despite the fact that it is responsible for the present expiration of the county contract without a successor agreement, the challenging "association" has accused CSEA of not pushing for retroactivity in past contracts, a charge flatly refuted by the facts.

Local 815 President John Eiss and CSEA Region 6 President Robert L. Lattimer have strongly criticized the challenging union for making erroneous and misleading statements about CSEA's representation of Erie County employees. In an effort to present the facts about the issues, this special edition of The Public Sector has been prepared.

"A representation election can literally impact on the future of all employees in the bargaining unit," comments Local President Eiss. "We're confident that the membership will know that supporting CSEA is the right choice to make, but we don't want anyone to be misled by the distortions spread by the opposition. This is too important a decision to allow unanswered accusations to interfere."

## CSEA: Performance, not distortions

BUFFALO — Anybody can call itself, "Erie County Rank and File Association", but what is R and F really all about?

First, it sure isn't about Erie County employees. R and F doesn't represent any Erie County employees. It's never negotiated a contract, it's never had any membership elections, it doesn't have any constitution or by-laws, it doesn't have any offices, it doesn't have any professional staff, it doesn't have any political action program, in short, it doesn't have anything that is needed to make a real union work.

It's time to ask some really hard questions about R and F and the kind of group it is. Remember the pathetic "you lose, you win" ad they ran in the newspaper desperately trying to get anybody to sign designation cards to get an election? Take a hard look at some of the things they said and you'll know the kind of group we're dealing with.

They claim CSEA doesn't fight for retroactivity in contracts, and that's nonsense. Go back and look at your old contracts and you will see the truth for yourself. They say you have no say in union decisions and that's a lie. CSEA members are represented by democratically elected officers and delegates who represent membership interests. In fact, CSEA is probably the most democratic union in New York. Their leaders know about CSEA's democracy because some of them have run for office and been rejected by Erie County employees.

All CSEA contracts in Erie County have been ratified by CSEA members. That's a fact. It's even a part of Local 815's Constitution. If you don't ratify a contract, your Local president can't sign it. It's that simple. What is R and F going to do? Who knows? They haven't got a constitution and they haven't got any members to ratify a contract.

R and F even accused CSEA Local 815 of being a part of a bigger union outside Erie County. That's a real revelation. That bigger union-in addition to rebating 25 percent of dues to our local — also provides full-time professional labor relations experts to represent us, it provides offices to service us, it keeps us informed on what's going on in our union, lobbies to protect our jobs in the state legislature, fights to get federal aid for Erie County in Washington, D.C. and comes to our aid in battles like Meyer Hospital and Proposition One.

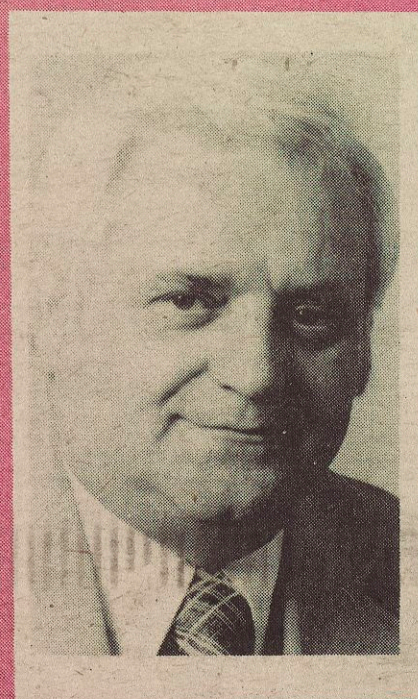
Maybe R and F should answer it's own questions. Where's their professional staff? Who will represent you in grievances and arbitrations? Where's their office? Who are their elected leaders? Where's their constitution? Are they going to have a unit and section structure to serve employees like CSEA? How do we know that?

"Erie County Rank and File Association" is a bunch of rejected dissidents teaming up with a lawyer to try and create their own union. They have no experience. They have no staff. They have never negotiated a contract. They probably even know less about dealing with job protection, political action and other issues vital to your future.

When you get your representation election ballot during the week of January 18, compare what you know about CSEA and what you have seen it do for you against the unsubstantiated promises and distortions of R and F.

### CSEA President Bill McGowan urges member votes for proven performer

CSEA President William L. McGowan knows the meaning of union representation for Erie County employees. A two-term president of the largest public employee union in New York State, Bill McGowan is also an International Vice President of AFSCME, the largest public employee union in the AFL-CIO, and a former president of CSEA's Western Region.



"There's a lot more to effective representation of public employees these days than negotiations. That's certainly the big part of the representation picture, but as Erie County employees have learned, political action, effective communication and resources that only a strong union can provide will defeat threats like Proposition One and the Meyer Hospital give-away plan.

"CSEA and AFSCME join forces to fight at the bargaining table and off for Erie County employees. I think we have proven that we have delivered in the past and we will deliver even more in the future. CSEA is a proven performer for Erie County employees and we value your support."

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# 'A good union is like an insurance policy'

BUFFALO — John Eiss knows what public employee unions are all about, so he knows where his support will be in the upcoming representation election for Erie County employees. John is voting for CSEA.

John Eiss is an Environmental Health Technician with the Erie County Health Department and has been active in unionism in Erie County for the past decade. He is the President of CSEA's Erie County Local 815, an honor bestowed upon him by CSEA members in the Local three years ago.

"In my experience with unions, I've found CSEA to be the most responsive and democratic union I've ever dealt with. No union is perfect, but CSEA stands above the rest," he says.

John is a firm believer in unionism and feels that many of the benefits of representation delivered to Erie County employees by CSEA, simply aren't recognized.

"Take political action and lobbying, for example," Eiss said. "We work for elected officials who are themselves politicians. We must have political input into what they do, not only as it affects us directly, but also in the services that we provide to the public."

"CSEA has the best political action program of any union in the state, public or private. Being a part of the largest public employee union in the state helps us in Erie County because we have the support and strength from CSEA to successfully deal with local problems that can't be dealt with at the bargaining table, such as the infamous 'Erie County Proposition One' which could have eliminated many jobs and services under the guise of cutting welfare costs. I firmly believe we defeated Proposition One only with the organization and strength of our Local backed up by CSEA and AFSCME."

But Proposition One's defeat was not an isolated example of CSEA delivering for Erie County employees, John says, "Another example of CSEA effectiveness beyond contract negotiations was the defeat of Erie County's attempt to give away the brand new Meyer Memorial Hospital to a private company, a move that would have wiped out hundreds of public employee jobs and reduced needed health care services for the public."

"A good union is like an insurance policy," Eiss continued, "to protect all of its members against the unforeseen disciplinary charge or other problem that might pop up. If we had to pay our own legal costs for such matters, it could create a big problem. Paying union dues is a hedge against the worst possibility."

"And most importantly, contract negotiations conducted in an aggressive, professional manner with the employee's needs in mind are vital to the well-being of Erie County employees. Before we had a strong union like CSEA, the County decided on whatever it was they wanted to give us and that was it. We've definitely done better by our members with raises and other benefits since we have been with CSEA," Mr. Eiss said.

## Region President Robert Lattimer tells why you should support CSEA

"CSEA is a democratic labor union run by the members, for the members. In Erie County, we have proven our value to county employees time and again and we will continue to do that in the future because that is what CSEA is all about. Anybody can make promises and Erie County employees have heard plenty of them from the challenger in this election, but that's all the challenger has offered."

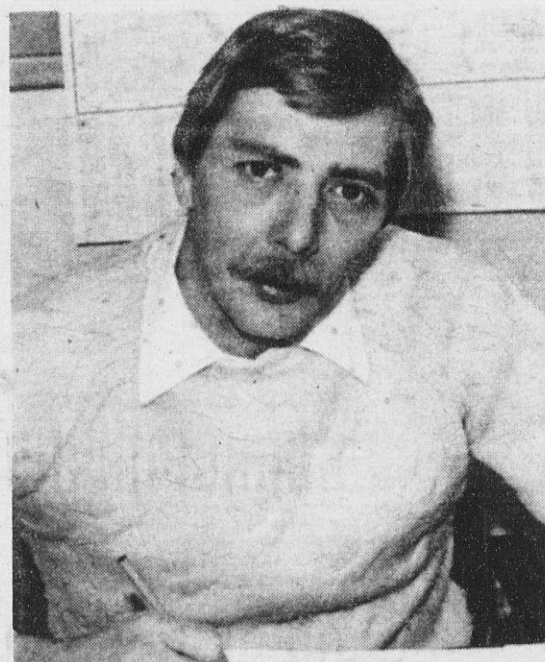


"CSEA provides professional labor relations staff to service Local 815 and its membership. We provide legal assistance to the tune of \$25,000 per year to Erie County employees. We use our considerable resources at the state level to fight in the Legislature on your behalf. CSEA spearheaded the drive for occupational safety and health legislation (OSHA) for public employees, it won the first real reform of the Taylor Law, it fights constantly to protect our share of the State Budget."

"Through AFSCME, CSEA is fighting to protect Erie County's share of federal revenue sharing and other federal aid programs that provide nearly a quarter of our member's paychecks in Erie County, and no local 'association' can do that."

"Anybody can promise, but only an effective labor union can provide regional offices, professional staff, legal assistance, legislative clout, communications expertise, and input into federal programs that Erie County depends upon. CSEA is the union for Erie County employees."

—Robert Lattimer  
CSEA Region VI President



**'In my experience with unions, I've found CSEA to be the most responsive and democratic union I've ever dealt with. No union is perfect, but CSEA stands above the rest.'**  
— John Eiss

## These members urge you to vote CSEA

"CSEA has been doing a great job in protecting job rights. Many people have been working out of title and our union has been winning grievances and protecting worker's rights."

—TOM SWEENEY, Social Worker

"This city deserves a public hospital and our union was instrumental in seeing that the Medical Center remained a public hospital. Without CSEA support on this issue, I'm sure many jobs would have been lost. Another indication of the value of CSEA to its members is the recent enactment of OSHA for public employees and Right To Know laws. CSEA's initiative has made worker's protection an across-the-board fact. A strong union is important for public employees and CSEA has a proven track record. I'm sticking with a winner."

—DOUG MYERS, Senior Lab Technician

"Several of my co-workers have won grievances for out-of-title work, with CSEA support, so it's good to know that they'll be there if I ever need assistance. I also know that in the last contract CSEA helped improve the shift differential pay for all the switchboard operators. CSEA gets my vote."

—SUSAN MATUSZEWSKI, Switchboard Operator



MYERS



MATUSZEWSKI



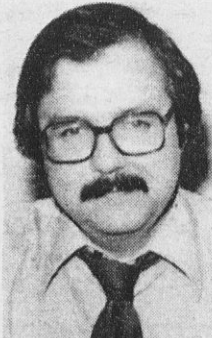
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"I've seen first-hand the benefits that a strong union like CSEA brings to its members. I've seen my co-workers win grievances with CSEA's backing and it's a comforting feeling to know that this backing is there whenever we need it. CSEA gets my vote."

—BONNIE GOLDEN, Medical Records Technician



CHAVOUS

"CSEA has the greatest organization of any union in the country, so naturally they can do more for county employees. Our size helps; CSEA is more of a union than any of the organizations around."

—JOHN DALEO, Environmental Technician

"In the 12 years that CSEA has been our bargaining agent, our pay has tripled, and I don't think we would have the same benefits without CSEA's representation."

—MAGGIE McNEELA, Clerk/Typist

"With CSEA support I received back pay for an entire five month period that I worked out-of-title. I think CSEA is a good union and I've seen the results of belonging to a good union. I'm sticking with CSEA."

—KATHY CHAVOUS, Receptionist