

Sisters and Brothers:

Welcome to 2021. I choose to be hopeful that after the very difficult year we all experienced in 2020, we only have upward to go.

I look back at 2020 with mixed feelings. On one hand, I remain deeply saddened by the impact the pandemic has had on all of our lives. I mourn for the CSEA members who lost their lives from the virus, some of whom died from being exposed at work, honoring their commitment to public service by going to work as essential workers. We owe them and their families a debt that can never be repaid, but we also owe them our continued fight to make sure every worker continues to be protected to the strongest extent possible.

I also reflect with distress over the economic condition the pandemic has left us in. So many have lost their livelihoods, and the prospect of many more losing their jobs is very real and very troubling. Our grievance over the contractual wage increases our state employees are owed continues. Our call for hazard pay for the essential workers who continue to sacrifice continues. As we start this new year, we commit to fighting even harder for the federal relief that will sustain needed public services and the jobs of CSEA members. As we struggle to reopen our economy, we cannot afford to cut the jobs of the very people who keep our economy going.

On the other hand, I continue to look back on 2020 with a sense of amazement and pride in how so many of us successfully rose to overcome the challenges we faced. So many union members continued working despite the pandemic and we fought to make sure they had the PPE to keep them safe. Whether they worked at home, their regular worksite, or some new work location, they adapted to keep things going. Workers got creative around the state to make sure services were delivered even during the most difficult times. Our union adapted as well. Our staff transitioned to working remotely to represent and engage our members in new and safe ways. We relied on the staff professionals in our union's Occupational Safety and Health Department like never before to help us advocate for worker safety during the most unsafe times. More than



anything, we all proved that when we unite together, even virtually, there is nothing we can't overcome.

As we begin 2021, we anticipate interesting times ahead. We will certainly see continued fallout from the Coronavirus, as we try and keep each other safe and hope that vaccines will protect us and eventually return us to more normal times.

We also look ahead to a state budget process that will have to deal with a greatly exploded budget deficit thanks to the pandemic. Our Political Action Department staff will continue to do the great work they've always done in making sure we have a seat at the table in budget talks, monitoring the budget that gets proposed, and responding with action plans to make sure that no one tries to balance these deficits on our backs.

We also look forward to an incoming administration in Washington DC that promises to be more worker-friendly and labor-friendly. Instead of an administration trying to take away workers' rights, we will have one that believes in strengthening workers' rights and the power of unions to improve our livelihoods.

We will continue to make efforts to grow our union, providing the union advantage to workers who haven't had it before. There is strength in numbers, and when we bring more members into our union, we build our capacity, grow our power and become more effective advocates.

Yes, the year ahead will remain full of challenges, but I choose to be optimistic that we will overcome them. As much as I miss the opportunities for us to gather together in person as union members, I know we will continue to unite virtually, and work hard collectively to make things better in 2021. I wish you all a safe and happy New Year.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "In Solidarity," text.