



Hopeful for the year ahead

Sisters and Brothers:

As we approach a new year, I'd like to reflect on the past year and look forward to 2022.

At this time last year, we were waiting for a vaccine to be approved to start combatting the devastating effects of the pandemic. We were all tired of isolation, mask wearing, social distancing and experiencing so much loss of life. Workers, especially in health care settings, were completely overwhelmed and frustrated, as were so many essential workers who were working so hard, and sacrificing so much to keep our communities running.

We were also fighting for our own economic survival. Our members kept government at both the state and local level working on overdrive providing essential services throughout the shutdown. As 2020 ended, New York and other states across our nation faced massive deficits and record unemployment as so many businesses were forced to shut down.

But CSEA members never gave up. We turned up the pressure on our federal elected leaders and ran a strong campaign to make sure CSEA members' jobs and services remained fully funded. Thanks to our efforts, the American Rescue Plan was passed, providing the resources needed to ensure the continuation of essential services CSEA members provide.

As we move forward, our leadership and our staff continue to negotiate contracts on the local level, as well as making sure we protect the health and safety of our workers. Neither our activists, leaders nor our CSEA staff missed a beat throughout the most trying of times. And now, with the financial

pressures on our state eased, and a new governor in office, we are resuming contract talks for our state Executive Branch and Judiciary workers.

While we've faced some difficult fights this year, including implementation of vaccine mandates and the negative impact of critical and structural staffing shortages, as well as facility closures, we now move on to a new year with new challenges. We've begun our "all hands on deck" fight to stop the passage of the New York Health Act, which will take away our negotiated health benefits we have fought so hard for. We will fight back this proposal to maintain our health care benefits just like we did the constitutional convention a few years ago when our pensions were threatened.

I am hopeful for the year ahead. As we continue to beat back COVID and work together for the good of all CSEA members across the state, we will see a brighter year ahead and hopefully see each other, too!

I wish you all a safe, warm and happy holiday season and year's end. I hope you have time to spend with loved ones and friends. While you do, think of our union brothers and sisters who are working, sacrificing their holidays and giving up their time with family and friends to continue providing the essential services we all rely on. They are our holiday heroes, and we should appreciate them.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary E. Sullivan, President