



Beware of scam artists!

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**CSEA members mobilize
for blizzard**

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SCAM ALERT:

Do not share personal information with unknown groups

Hundreds of CSEA members have reported recently getting emails and receiving postcards in the mail from unknown, out-of-state entities asking them to click links, scan a QR code or fill out postcards with their personal information and mail them back.

Some of these mailings are fraudulently labeled with a return address as “CSEA President” – **these mailings are NOT coming from CSEA.**

This correspondence is coming from anti-union organizations that are trying to scam CSEA members into quitting our union. These organizations are also seeking members’ personal information.

The postcards and emails are loaded with misleading statements, and these groups are using divisive methods and clever schemes to try to scam members into quitting and providing personal information.

When it comes to clicking unknown links or providing personal

information, CSEA members should always be suspect. Legitimate companies and organizations will never ask members to quit our union.

CSEA Director of Member Engagement Adam Acquario advised members to never give their personal information to unknown entities, to not sign

anything or mail their information to another state or organization and to not respond

to any suspicious emails, phone calls, mailings and home visits from unknown groups. Also, members should not click on links that supposedly give an option to unsubscribe from emails, as unsubscribing would in fact verify the email as valid.

“If someone on the phone is asking you to quit your union, it’s a scam. Stop right there and hang up,” said Acquario. “They have even hired out-of-state actors to visit worksites and homes.”

CSEA members should also not give to unknown groups their financial information such as bank

account or credit card numbers. Members are advised to continually monitor their financial statements.

CSEA officers and activists on the front lines are increasingly seeing this suspicious activity. Once these groups get personal and financial information, there is no telling how or where they will use it.

Acquario noted a few ways that scammers have targeted union

members. These groups may use members’ information or likenesses in future mailings or advertisements, and possibly even steal one’s identity. The scammer may also promise to pay members a check for quitting our union – that will never arrive.

Victims may unknowingly end up being removed from our union without even knowing it.

This isn’t just an attack on our union, but an attack on CSEA members and their livelihoods.

These groups are determined to go after our union-protected contracts to lower wages, cut benefits, eliminate pensions and leave CSEA members without proper representation. Together, we will make sure that doesn’t happen.

For more information, CSEA members should contact their labor relations specialist or region office, and/or call our union’s Member Solutions Center at **800-342-4146** or visit **cseany.org/scam-alert**.



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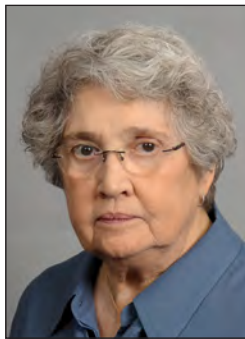
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*President Mary E. Sullivan in touch with*THE **CSEA** WORKFORCE

Scam Alert: Don't be fooled. Guard your personal information!

Greetings, Sisters & Brothers,

I want all of you to be aware and on the lookout. There is an active and ongoing scam developed by out-of-state organizations (who sometimes pose as CSEA) to try to get you and members across the state to leave our union.

Don't let it happen, don't be fooled by their emails, postcards, phone calls and home visits. Don't give out your personal information to unknown entities. Don't click on their links. These scams may put your IDENTITY and banking/credit accounts at risk.

Once they have your information, there's no telling where and how they will use it. Victims may also even end up being removed from the union without even knowing it.

Understand the Scam

1. This is a scam and needs to be addressed as such; none of these groups care about our union members or their dollars. We need to avoid helping them spread their message inadvertently.
2. The current scam is a phishing program designed to trick members into completing a form and sending their personal information to non-CSEA addresses.
3. We have seen a variety of messaging on these cards from information about salaries, random social justice

issue probing with the name of organizations and the addresses changing from piece to piece.

4. The scam is persistent and ongoing. Expect to see it for a long time. It may appear in different forms, but it's out there to stay. All members need to know IT IS A SCAM!
5. These groups have indicated that they will continue to try and break our union by any and all means despite flouting norms and laws such as requesting home addresses from employers and emailing state workers at their job emails.

We must work together to keep our union strong and protect our rights and benefits. This is going to be a long-term fight. But as we all know, our strength is in our numbers. Let's stick together and stick with our union!

If you, your local/unit has been targeted by one or more of these scams please contact your Labor Relations Specialist or Region Office to let them know and/or call our Member Solutions Center at **800-342-4146**.

For more information visit: cseany.org/scam-alert.

In solidarity,

Mary E. Sullivan, President

Fighting back against scammers

*“I would never
intentionally opt
out of my union”*

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**Member Solutions Center
will help you**
Page 5

**Union continues fight
for safer work zones**
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Workers' Memorial Day
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Members fighting back against scammers

Editor's Note: Out-of-state groups continue to target CSEA members across the state with their anti-union, fraudulent messages, including trying to trick members out of leaving the union.

These groups have been sending our union members content that includes false information. These scammers allude to raises and savings and

promote divisive issues to get you to click a link in an email, fill out a postcard or scan a QR Code.

Once they have your information, there is no telling where or how they will use it.

These scams are sophisticated and anyone can potentially be affected by them, but CSEA members are also educating one another about

the reality of these groups and how to spot a potential scam. On this page are members' stories about their experiences with these groups and how they are staying union strong.

See Page 5 for more information about how to connect with our union.

"I would never intentionally opt out of my union"

BROOKLYN — When Pamela Caleb received a bill from her insurance provider, she thought it was a simple mistake.

As a CSEA member, Caleb, a developmental aide at Brooklyn Developmental Center, was accustomed to having her monthly premium automatically deducted from her bank account.



Caleb

After she received a third bill, she suspected something was wrong. That's when she called the insurance provider and got the disturbing news.

"I was told I was no longer a CSEA member," said Caleb. "I didn't understand, but they told me

that since I had opted out of the union, they were no longer able to make automatic deductions from my bank."

She soon discovered that she had inadvertently signed a card sent to her home by out-of-state scammers waging war against unions across the country.

"I would never intentionally opt out of my union," said Caleb. "I always wanted to have my union."

A quick call to CSEA's Member Solutions Center easily remedied her conundrum. Caleb was able to rejoin our union and regain her union standing and benefits.

"It's so deceptive to the union and members,"

said Caleb. "Why would they send someone a card like that?"

Caleb cautioned members to remain vigilant of similar schemes, to never give out personal information and not to sign or mail anything to another state or organization.

"I am so happy to get back into my union," said Caleb. "You always need a union. I was shocked and devastated over it."

After a long civil service career, Caleb is well aware of the benefits and privileges afforded by union membership.

"I'm going to wait 25 years to opt out the union?" she asked. "I would never do that."

— David Galarza

"I'm much more comfortable knowing I have the union to back me"

ONEONTA — When SUNY Oneonta Local President Jenn Regg was at the hospital for nine days with her son after his appendix ruptured, she wasn't worried about her health insurance and what bills might be coming in the mail.

"Our health insurance, negotiated through our union, paid for everything," said Regg.

"We were able to focus on my son and his well-being and didn't have to worry about anything else because we have those benefits in place."

Regg said she's disgusted that there are groups with the sole purpose of breaking up unions across the country.

"They're trying to entice you to think you're going to save some money by not being a part of the union," said Regg. "Without our union, we wouldn't have all of these amazing benefits, protections, and standards for our jobs."

— Nicholas Newcomb



Regg

"Anti-union groups don't stand a chance"

OSWEGO — Out-of-state groups have been harassing CSEA members across the state with constant emails and mailers in an effort to trick workers out of their union membership.

Our union is making sure these anti-worker groups don't succeed.

SUNY Oswego Local President Gary Thompson, equipped with tools and information from CSEA, has been able to fight back by educating his co-workers what these groups are really about and why they want to scam our union members.

"These groups are funded by corporate-backed billionaires," said Thompson. "They're jealous of everything we've fought for and what generations before us fought for like paid time off, vacations, health insurance, and our pensions."

Thompson compared the groups' marketing scheme to the likes of a car insurance commercial. The mailings claim, 'opt-out today and save \$600,' which seems tempting – until you read the fine print.

"Our union is valued much more than our dues, with all of the benefits, resources and



Thompson

member savings," said Thompson. "The value of being in a union is so much more than what they claim you'll save."

SUNY Oswego Local member Gabe Gonzales, a janitor, admitted the groups' tactics were enticing, but said nothing can compare to the comfort of knowing our union has your back.

"It's the security of knowing that I have someone behind me in case my employer does something I don't agree with, and I can have someone there to speak for me," said Gonzales. "I'm a union person. I'm sticking with CSEA no matter how hard these groups try to fight."

Gonzales isn't the only person sticking with their union. More than 70 percent of Americans approve of unions, which is the highest approval rate in over 50 years, according to Gallup poll findings.

Gonzales has a message for anti-union groups trying to scam union members.

"You will not break us up," said Gonzales. "We're too strong. We enjoy our union family, and we are here to stay."

— Nicholas Newcomb



Gonzales

CSEA's Member Solutions Center dedicated to helping you

ALBANY — When CSEA members have a question or concern, they can easily get the help they need through our union's Member Solutions Center.

Based in our union's headquarters, the center and its staff can help CSEA members in numerous ways, including updating contact information, answering questions and directing members to the right place for help on anything from benefits to worksite issues.

Launched in 2018, when CSEA anticipated a high volume of member calls in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* opinion, the Member Solutions Center was an "all hands on deck" working environment. Every CSEA department was represented in the call center to maximize our union's resources as calls came in.

Now, the center has permanent staff who are all trained to not only help solve members' concerns, but also have conversations with them on many union topics.

While members can also get many of their questions answered through our union's Contact Us form on CSEA's website at [cseany.org](https://www.cseany.org), the call center holds value for members who may lack online access or prefer to speak with a live person.

"In the wake of automated technology that grew even more rapidly during the pandemic, we know that there is still an appetite for our members to speak to a live person," said CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan. "When members have a pressing issue that needs attention, the last thing they want to hear on the other line of the phone is a recording. Our union continues to prioritize ways to engage our members and the call center is one of these resources."

"No issue is too small for the call center," said CSEA Director of Membership Charisse Seneres. "We have a seasoned staff who really knows what is going on in our union, and the staff is available to solve anything from accessing email to addressing membership status inquiries."

Engagement is key

As our union continues to face threats and scam attempts from out-of-state groups (*see page 3 for more*), the call center is a key part of our union's team to engage members and give them accurate information in a timely manner.

"One of the obvious threats we are hearing are these groups, attempts to get members to opt out of our union," said Seneres. "The scammers use divisive issues to get attention and get our members to click on a link that may compromise their

device for their contact information and more. CSEA members are not fooled. They know that free-riders only weaken unions. People need to remember that no legitimate company or organization is going to ask you to quit your union."

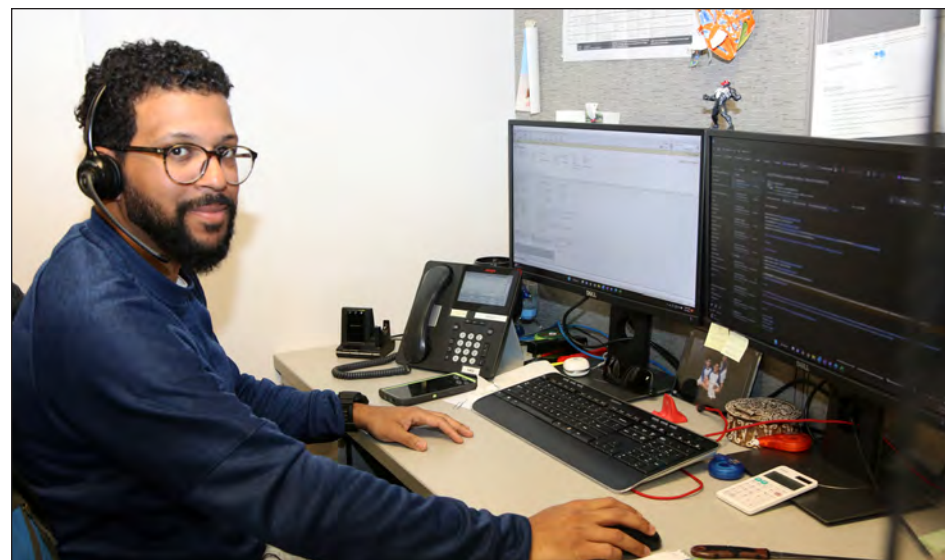
Member Solutions Center staff are also trained on listening for potential topic trends.

"We personally assess a situation by finding out what's going on," said David Sanchez, a member solutions specialist. "The way we keep track is if we get multiple calls from the same local or unit involving the same issue, we will follow it up with the region."

Sanchez noted that the center staff are also trained to engage members who may be frustrated and unsure who to contact to resolve a problem.

"Sometimes, members may be frustrated because they didn't find

"People need to remember that no legitimate company or organization is going to ask you to quit your union."



David Sanchez, a member solutions specialist, logs data after assisting a member.

a solution to their issue and may not know where to go next," said Sanchez. "I try to walk them through a ladder of union contacts, including labor relations specialists or region directors. Many times, they feel better and reassured when we tell them there are resources for help."

Staff also draw on their own experience to engage CSEA members.

"We all have our perspectives and backgrounds with other CSEA departments, so we use that to answer members' questions," said Sanchez, who previously worked in our union's State Operations, Research and Member Benefits departments before joining the Member Solutions Center in 2019.

Sanchez is also bilingual in Spanish and assists members who speak Spanish as a primary language.

"We get a good amount of inbound calls from Spanish-speaking members," said Sanchez. "A significant number of them come

from child care [VOICE Local 100A] and downstate."

Many of the inquiries that Member Solutions Center staff handle include questions from members about dental and vision benefits, as well as insurance questions.

Call center staff also have at hand a list of potential contacts for inquiring members, including contact information regarding union benefits or union representation.

Sanchez noted that CSEA Retiree members also frequently contact our union for questions.

"Retirees have questions about their benefits and have a lot of questions about health insurance," said Sanchez. "They also ask about their pensions."

If you have a question, need help or want to discuss our union with a specialist, we are here to help. Call us today at **(800) 342-4146**.

— Janice Gavin

Helpful phone numbers:

Member Solutions Center:
1-800-342-4146

Employee Benefit Fund (Dental & Vision): 1-800-323-2732

Health Benefits Department:
1-800-286-5242

Pearl Insurance: 518-640-8234

WORK Institute: 1-866-478-5548

New York State and Local Retirement System:
1-866-805-0990

NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training:
1-800-253-4332

AFSCME: 202-429-1000



‘It happened to me:’ Anti-union groups defraud member

ALBANY — Someone stole Mark Nichols’ union membership.

A longtime CSEA member and accountant at the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System (NYSTRS), Nichols was shocked to discover recently that he was no longer a member.

A postcard from an out-of-state, anti-union entity used to encourage union members to give up their membership had been completed in Nichols’ name and sent to our union without his knowledge. The postcard included a false signature and non-existent contact information.

“It’s a big deal to take away someone’s membership. Union membership protects your livelihood,” said Nichols, who is still surprised and angry about the ordeal.

Discovering fraud

Nichols had completed a steward training and planned to take a negotiations training. When he tried in June to register for that training, he was unable to log onto our union’s website.

CSEA New York State Teachers’ Retirement System Local President Cindy Pohlmann suggested to Nichols that he contact CSEA’s Member Solutions Center for help.

A call center representative told Nichols that he was unable to register for the training because he was no longer a CSEA member.

A closer look at the records revealed that CSEA received a postcard in Nichols’ name canceling his union membership.

Shocked, Nichols asked for and received a copy of the document.

“I saw an address [on the postcard] I never had in my life and the signature was legible, which is nothing like my signature,” said

Nichols. “My normal signature has never been legible.”

Nichols resubmitted a membership application, which was quickly processed so he could register for the training.

“If he didn’t try to register for the training, we would have never known [about the fraud],” said Pohlmann.

Relentless efforts

Pohlmann said another NYSTRS Local member was recently tricked out of their union membership when they received a mailing claiming to be from CSEA that stated that members no longer need to pay dues.

Members across the state have reported that they have been the target of aggressive efforts to urge them to quit our union and share their personal information, including through direct mail, emails, postcards, text messages and phone calls.

The materials often appear to be from CSEA, with much of the correspondence falsely attributed to the “CSEA President.” However, they come from anti-union organizations that may be shrouded in numerous aliases.

Relentless outreach and slick marketing messages, often cloaked in patriotic terms such as “freedom” and “liberty,” are aimed at reducing union membership numbers – and worker power.

“These messages are not coming from me or from our union,” said CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan. “Please remain vigilant by not responding to these efforts in order to protect your union benefits and personal information.”

These organizations will even resort to illegal and illicit activity to get members to quit.



Mark Nichols, shown here posing outside of his workplace, recently discovered that his membership had been dropped without his knowledge.

In Nichols’ case, the fraudsters likely gained his name, work address and location from online public records, but in some cases employee information has been handed over by unwitting municipalities or agencies.

Technology including bulk email generators combine last names with standard workplace emails to reach as many people as possible in one click.

Nichols reflected on his membership gap and the potential

consequences.

“I had no coverage,” said Nichols. “People passively think of their union membership as just dues coming out, but they don’t stop to think how the union protects your rights. People should really check their membership status. It happened to me; someone committed fraud. Whoever did that forged my signature. They should be prosecuted.”

— Therese Assalian

Protect yourself

Out-of-state organizations are trying to get your personal information to weaken and take away your union rights! Don’t be fooled into signing anything with your work or personal information. It can jeopardize what CSEA members have fought for and won. Here are some steps to protect yourself:

- Keep an eye out for any communication asking you to quit your union, even if it appears to be from CSEA. This correspondence is NOT coming from our union.
- Clever schemes are used to defraud thousands of union members every year. If it

sounds too good to be true, it usually isn’t true.

- Beware of suspicious activity, including emails, text messages, phone calls, mailings and home visits.
- Don’t give personal information to unknown entities.
- Don’t sign anything, click an email link, scan a QR code or mail your information to another state or organization.

If you have questions or need to report a scam, please contact your labor relations specialist or region office, and/or call our union’s Member Solutions Center at (800) 342-4146.

A person wearing a blue hooded jacket and a white mask is talking on a mobile phone. They are sitting at a desk with a laptop in front of them. In the background, there are several computer monitors displaying various data and graphs. The scene is dimly lit with a blue glow from the screens.

**Beware of
scam artists!**

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- Don't sign anything or mail your information to another state or organization
- These scams put your IDENTITY and banking/credit accounts at risk



For more information, scan the QR code, visit cseany.org/scam-alert or call our Member Solutions Center at 800-342-4146.





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IT'S A



SCAM

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Beware of scam artists!

There are out of state organizations trying to get your personal information.

Don't be fooled into providing anything with your work or personal information.



For more information, scan the QR code, visit cseany.org/scam-alert or call our Member Solutions Center at 800-342-4146.

CSEA  **STAY UNION**
STAY STRONG



Guard your personal information!

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IT'S A **SCAM** !

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Video:

SUNY Cortland local president Tom Hingher's curiosity got the best of him when he scanned a QR code from an anti-union mailer. After he did so, a YouTube video kept popping up on his phone and he had to take it in to get fixed.

SUNY Cortland Local President Tom Hingher discusses getting scammed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rZxZV9kegY>

This is an overview of the attempts of anti-union groups to get CSEA members to quit the union.

Beware of Anti-Union scams:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB74mfMjsnk>