

fyi.

Denise: Please post.

From: Michelle Salvador <tele.vermont@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2018 2:40 PM

To: Maida Townsend

Subject: Follow up

> Dear Representatives Townsend and LaClair,

>

> After sitting in on the pay act hearing Tuesday, I wanted to follow up with you regarding the inaccurate figure that was shared that VSEA members make an average annual salary of 63,000 a year. This figure includes the salaries of management and confidentials. Average salary for VSEA members is much lower.

> Additionally the Commissioner raved about how state employees in Vermont make the 9th highest wages for public workers in the US. What this statement did NOT take into account is that :

> 1) That data includes ALL state employees. Managers (and there are MANY!) make much larger wages than front line workers and,

> 2) thus figure does not take into account the cost of living in these top 9 locations. Trust me, vsea members are not living high on any hog.

> If anything the doubling of the specialist copays coupled with the other increases, and the low COLA, will be a pay cut for members.

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> I find it ironic that employees of the state will take this hit (which will "save" the state \$600,000) while the administration is turning around and spending 2.5 million to convince folks from out of state to move here. This doesn't make any sense to me.

> What this is, is a race to the bottom.

> The Commissioner also indicated the people are dying to get state jobs. In my department we have multiple positions that have been open well over a year. In fact the state had to hire a national headhunter to try and recruit candidates to apply for the deputy commissioner of health position. The headhunter just came back and said that they could not find anyone nationwide who wanted to apply for the position because the wages were so low. And these wages are much much higher than the average wage for a Vsea member.

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> These contractual changes will be difficult for my family but it is not my family that I am worried the most about. I'm worried about our lowest wage earners many of which are on public assistance. I'm worried about the impact on our retirees who are living on fixed incomes. I worry about the health of employees who will not seek to go to specialist now that the co-pay has increased by 100%. My husband just had knee replacement surgery and it did not go as expected. He's receiving physical therapy three times a week. Right now that cost \$60. Under the new plan that will cost \$120 a week, and that would have been out of our reach. I understand that you

are not involved in negotiations etc. I am simply telling you so that you understand the impact of these things on the state workforce.

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> I would encourage your committees in the future to take testimony from state employees who are working on the front line. Union staff and representatives of the administration will never be able to give you the complete picture.

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> Thank you for your time, and for your service.

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> Sincerely,

> Michelle Salvador

> Worcester, VT

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> Sent from my iPhone