



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

May 7, 2009

Dear CWA Member,

This is a very important letter. Please read it carefully.

I want to bring you up to date as to what is going on with Governor Corzine's demand for wage cuts, furloughs, layoffs and the rapidly deteriorating budget and economic situation.

As you know, Governor Corzine has demanded that State Workers give up their July Wage Increase, their fiscal year 2010 increments, and take 14 furlough days between May 2009 and June 30, 2010. He has said that if the unions do not agree to this there will be 7000 – 9000 layoffs.

The CWA Bargaining Committee has been in discussions with the Administration. We are trying to fairly address the legitimate budget issues with specific and substantive ideas to achieve real savings and prevent layoffs. We are trying to act responsibly and, within the following guidelines:

1. We want to protect our members' jobs.
2. We want to maintain the integrity of collective bargaining. We cannot permit the Governor (or anyone else) to create a pattern where whenever there are budget problems they can unravel a contract. At the same time, we want to be realistic about the economic circumstances we are confronting.
3. The Administration can't hold political appointees, consultants and temporary workers harmless. They have to address our issues about the use of these positions.

We have made some proposals that we think meet these requirements. What follows is the framework of what we have discussed. **All of the details are not here because we do not have an agreement from the Corzine Administration (and we may not get one)** and because we need to be able to negotiate strategically without tying ourselves to a position that was put out in writing.

If we reach an Agreement, our members will get a chance to vote on it.

The CWA Framework for an agreement:

1. We proposed to the Administration a deferral of wages (not increments) that provides that all wage increases must be in place before the end of the contract and any wages that are deferred “out of pocket” will be recaptured at a later date. In other words – the Contract maintains its integrity, but there will be a period of time that the State will be able to achieve some savings while the economy is in bad shape.
2. We have proposed specific cuts to Temporary Employment Services, political appointees, consultants and outside contracts.
3. In return for an agreement, there can be no layoffs.
4. Everyone must be treated equitably.

We do not know if we can reach an agreement with the Administration. The Governor’s demands are great and he has not offered a no-layoff guarantee. We think our members agree that we should negotiate with the Administration and are willing to make sacrifices provided those sacrifices actually save our jobs.

We know that our members have questions about whether or not they are facing furloughs or layoffs. We also know that there are members who say that we should not do anything that modifies our agreement, and others who say do anything and everything to avoid layoffs even if there are no guarantees. These are very difficult issues. We have to make thoughtful and difficult choices.

Here is what we are doing:

1. We will continue discussions with the Administration to see if we can work something out within the framework discussed above;
2. We are pursuing our legal cases regarding the negotiability of furloughs and the bad faith of the Administration acting unilaterally;
3. We are having pointed and careful discussions with Legislators about the Budget so that we are working on a political, as well as, a negotiations front.
4. We are asking our members to come out for important and critical mobilization events.

Your Local will keep you informed as to what is going on. This letter and future updates will be on the Home Page of our website www.cwanj.org. All of the Locals have websites as well, and you can find information on those websites:

www.cwa1031.org

www.cwalocal1032.org

www.cwalocal1033.org

www.cwa1034.org

www.cwa1037.org

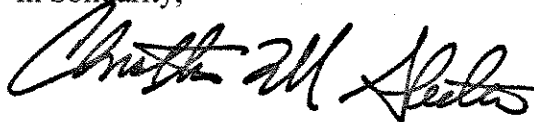
www.cwa1039.org

www.cwalocal1040.org

We are trying to provide our members with as much information as possible, without compromising strategic and delicate discussions. We want your feedback. We would like to know what you think about the CWA framework. Please email us at CWANJfeedback@cwa-union.org. We won't be able to respond to individual email – if you need specific information you have to go through your Local – but we want to know if you think we are on the right track or not.

Thank you for your patience and support. I know this is a very difficult time for all of our members, for our Union and for all working families. Let's try to look out for each other and stay united.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris M. Shelton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Shelton" clearly legible.

Chris Shelton
District 1 Vice President