

CWA Local 1037 Stewards' E-Update



MARCH 10, 2010

It's the 132nd issue of CWA Local 1037's weekly update bulletin, designed to highlight campaigns, give updates, and let stewards know about upcoming events. If you have an event or anything that you would like to have us feature, please e-mail Molly at mhurford@cwa1037.org or call 973-623-1828 ext. 220.

In This Issue

- **Local 1037 Up to the Minute**
- **State Workers: take action!**
- From AFL-CIO: Workplaces Must Adapt to Greater Role of Women In Workforce
- Labor Movie of the Week: 9 to 5

Quote of the Week

“The only effective answer to organized greed is organized labor.”

-Thomas Donahue

UP TO THE MINUTE



State Workers: Christie Admits the No Layoff Agreement is Enforceable

Yesterday Governor Christie announced he was wrong and despite his pledges to violate our No Layoff Agreement he cannot layoff State Workers this year. This is an important vindication of what CWA has said all along – that the Memorandum of Agreement providing for a deferment of wages in exchange for no layoffs is as binding on this Governor as it was on Corzine.

But beware, the Governor also stated he may find other ways to use “executive authority” and that he’ll “have to come up with some other ingenious ways to try to accomplish” his goals. Think this means sitting down with State Workers to discuss the State’s fiscal problems and ways to protect jobs and needed services? Unlikely, so stay tuned.

Click here to read the latest news coverage:

- http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/03/nj_gov_chris_christie_says_hes.html
- <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9EBPV9G0.htm>
- <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-03-09/n-j-s-christie-says-he-can-t-fire-or-furlough-state-workers.html>

Check out CWA's new ad featuring Local 1037 Shop Stewards!

<http://cwa1037.org/video.htm>

Attention State Workers:

Please keep checking the website www.cwa1037.org as well as www.cwanj.org to get details on the coming budget fights. Make sure that you spread the word!

To view all of the I’ll Be There forms, visit the State Worker page on our website.

DON’T FORGET TO GET EVERYONE TO WEAR RED ON THURSDAYS!

(Take pictures and email them to tech@cwa1037.org)



East Orange 1-Stop- Dept. of Labor



DCF Regional School-Morris Campus Staff and the Northern Region Child Studies Team

Get the facts on our pension costs and the budget

Review the information CWA is providing Legislators and the media: <http://cwa1037.org/> and click on the link for the Powerpoint presentation.

Request for Donated Sick Leave

Theresa Saunders, a Local 1037 Shop Steward from the Dept of Health in Newark is on the State's Donated Leave List. She has been battling recurrent cancer for several years and is again on donated leave. Please consider donating leave time to her.



"For those of you headed to work, today's forecast calls for scattered frustration, followed by a brief storm of criticism and a flurry of random distractions."

State Workers: Take Action

To find your legislator, check out the Political Action page at
<http://cwa1037.org/politics.htm>

**YOUR Pension and Health Benefits Are Under Attack
But YOU can do a very simple thing to stop them**

CALL YOUR ASSEMBLY PERSON TODAY

Tell him or her that the current reform package will make matters worse and not solve any problems.

HERE'S HOW:

- Go to www.njleg.state.nj.us
- On the left hand side, click on “Find Your Legislator”
- On the right hand side of that page, click on Search for Legislative Members by “Municipality”
- Find the name of the town you live in, and click on it
- On that page, click on the link that says “Legislators for District xx”
- Scroll down and find both of your Assembly representatives

Each one will have a phone number. **Call that number, and say the following:**

“My name is [YOUR NAME] and I live in [TOWN WHERE YOU LIVE]. I am a public worker and a constituent of Assemblyman/Assemblywoman [NAME OF THE ASSEMBLYPERSON YOU ARE CALLING]. I am urging you to oppose the public worker pension and health benefits reform package. Eliminating disability retirement and undermining collective bargaining is wrong. I expect my elected officials to work with my union, not destroy the collective bargaining system in New Jersey.”

Call at any time, call more than once, and leave messages if you get an answering machine!

Make sure your voice is heard when it comes to your pension and benefits!

LETTER TO ASSEMBLYPERSON GUIDE

Use this guide to compose your own letter to your assemblyperson. For information about how to find your assembly person, contact your local or visit www.cwanj.org

[Your Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Today's Date]

The Honorable [Write Your Assemblyperson's Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear Assemblyman/Assemblywoman [Write Your Assemblyperson's Name]:

I am writing to ask you to oppose the Pension and Health Benefit Reform Bills for Public Employees. I am a public employee in [Name of Town Where You Work], and I [Describe Your Job].

As written in the Senate, where they are S2, S3, and S4, these bills are unfair, and they use public employees to score political points without solving the real problems of the state.

[Here are some points you can make, or write your own]

- One of the biggest priorities for legislators should be finding solutions to New Jersey's budget crisis. But these bills won't affect one dime of government spending in the current budget and won't get us anywhere towards a balanced budget for this year. Making reactionary changes to the pension system right now won't get us any closer to solving this year's budget crisis.
- There is a provision in one bill that eliminates the non-forfeitable right for anyone who does not have five years or more of service. That means that anyone who does not have five years or more of service may not be able to count on retirement security.
- Despite what Governor Christie says, I am not going to get a \$3.3 million pension. In fact, I'm not going to get anything near that. The average pension for a state worker with 25 years of service is about \$35,000, and the average pension for a local government worker with 25 years is less than \$32,000. Laws should be made to stop people abusing the pension system and driving up the costs to taxpayers, but the only way I am getting a \$3.3 million pension is if I live to be 160 years old.
- One of the bills would create allow new hires and any employee with less than 10 years of service to enter a 401(k). This would mean the state would have to pay more matching funds to immediately fund the 401(k) and it would decrease the amount of money coming

into the pension. Taking more money out of the pension and putting less money into the pension will hardly solve the problems with my pension plan.

- One of the bills would create a tiered system of benefits for pensioners. It is not fair for two people to be doing the same job and be paid differently. Additionally, this will pit workers against other workers and diminish morale in my work place.
- Eliminating Disability Retirement and the Sick Leave Injury Program is simply unfair. A worker who gets hurt on the job shouldn't have to live in fear that he or she won't be able to provide for his or her family because of a work-related injury.
- As an intermittent employee, I fought for 15 years to have the right to bargain for health benefits. One of the bills takes away my ability to even bargain for health benefits with a stroke of the pen.
- The bills don't realistically address the biggest problem with the pension plan: Even though I've made my contributions every pay check the state has contributed \$1.5 billion to the Pension Fund in the past 15 years and allowed local governments numerous pension holidays. If the legislature is serious about reforming the pension plan, the issue of funding the pension should be considered first, not after all the changes have been made to the benefits.
- The amount I pay for my health care is an issue best left to those who are familiar with the employment conditions in my workplace, not the political whims in Trenton. Unilaterally imposing health care costs for all employees sets a dangerous precedent that politicians in Trenton can change things like this without the bargaining process sets a very dangerous precedent. You may agree with it this time, but you may think it is a very bad idea the next time the legislature gets involve on this level.

As a public worker, I go to work every day and do my best to keep New Jersey working. I take my responsibilities very seriously and I do it even though people in the public call me lazy and politicians use me to score cheap political points whenever they feel like it. All I am asking for is a fair deal when it comes to my health insurance and my retirement security.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to oppose the Pension and Health Benefit Reform package for public workers.

Sincerely,

[Sign Your Name]

From AFL-CIO's Blog

Workplaces Must Adapt to Greater Role of Women In Workforce

By James Parks

A new Center for American Progress (CAP) report released in time for International Women's Day today offers practical solutions to help America's workers and families meet the dual demands of work and family.

The report, "Our Working Nation: How Working Women Are Reshaping America's Families and Economy and What It Means for Policymakers," calls for:

- Updating basic labor standards to recognize that most workers also have family responsibilities and need predictable and flexible workplace schedules, access to paid family and medical leave the right to paid sick days.* Improving basic fairness in our workplace by ending discrimination against all workers, including pregnant women and caregivers.
- Providing direct support to working families with child care and elder care needs.
- Improving knowledge about family-responsive workplace policies by collecting national data on work-life policies offered by employers and analyzing the effectiveness of existing state and local policies.

The report builds on the 2009 Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation, which took a comprehensive look at working women and how their work has transformed today's workplace.

In a telephone press conference this afternoon, the report's co-author Heather Boushey, senior economist at CAP, cited a poll that shows a large majority of Americans support new, more family-friendly workplace policies. A full 85 percent of respondents say businesses that fail to adapt to the needs of modern families risk losing good workers.

Boushey said: "These issues are becoming more important in the recession. Most of the jobs that have been lost have been lost by men leaving millions of women and mothers to support their families. On top of this for those worker who have their jobs we need to make sure they stay employed, that... family-work conflicts don't put them on the unemployment rolls."

In the United States and around the world, working women fall short of getting equal pay, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO).

In addition to higher poverty rates and the ongoing prevalence of sexual and domestic violence, the United Nations reports that women earn between 30 percent and 40 percent less pay than men for equivalent work. And with the nation's financial debacle, U.S. women are shouldering the added burdens of sky-high unemployment, rampant foreclosures and inadequate access to health care.

The AFL-CIO has a "long-standing commitment to gender equality in the workplace," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler said. "And today we're reaffirming that commitment, standing firm with workers around the world to call for a more equitable and inclusive future for women."

In a statement, the AFL-CIO said: "It's clear that the jobs crisis is a crisis for working women. But like the women who marched in New York City over 100 years ago for shorter working hours, better pay, an end to child labor, and the vote, women today are fighting back. As labor readies for a massive campaign to create the jobs our country desperately needs, the AFL-CIO is proud to stand with them in that fight."

Labor Movie of the Week:

9 to 5

“Getting even is a full-time job.”



9 to 5 is the perfect movie for Women’s History Month. It’s a fun light-hearted comedy about three working women who realize every secretary’s dream as they turn the tables on their autocratic, sexist, egotistical boss and change the male-controlled workplace into a model office. The women hatch a plan to kidnap the boss, and after the successful takeover they institute a host of popular procedures, changing the workplace to suit their vision of a more equitable, friendly environment. The movie stars Lily Tomlin, Jane Fonda, Dolly Parton- in her movie debut!- and Dabney Coleman.

The film is centered on the friendship between three women who work in the business offices of a large corporation known as Consolidated. Judy (Jane Fonda) is a naïve new employee, a recent divorcee whose husband left her for his secretary. On her first day, Judy meets Violet (Lily Tomlin), a longtime employee of Consolidated. Violet trains Judy and introduces her to the department executive, Franklin Hart, who immediately reveals himself to be arrogant and sexist. Judy soon learns that Violet has been passed over consistently by those who could promote her. The third woman in the trio is Doralee (Dolly Parton), Hart’s personal secretary. Despite the fact that Doralee is a happily married woman, and Hart is also married, Hart continually makes inappropriate advances toward her, pushing her patience and tolerance to the limit. With Hart’s wife away on a lengthy cruise, the women decide to kidnap Hart and imprison him in his own home after Violet discovers that Hart has been embezzling money from Consolidated, and the girls plan on using the information to blackmail him. The three women work together to make Hart’s absence in the office as inconspicuous as possible, and along the way they take a number of liberties in improving the workplace in ways that they see fit.

The movie naturally has a happy ending for the three women, and the boss somehow ends up lost in the Amazon. We don’t ask questions, we just accept the hilariously eighties charm that this movie has, and enjoy it while remembering just how far women have come in the workplace, and how far we still have to go. So check out 9 to 5, but don’t borrow any ideas from it!



“Forget the energy crisis, inflation, recession, job shortages, the disappointing sales of the Chrysler “K,” urban blight and the price of gold. There’s no problem with capitalism that three liberated Nancy Drews can’t solve if they don’t have to keep running out to get coffee for their superiors.” – NY Times Review, 1980

To buy:

https://unionshop.aflcio.org/product1.cfm?Product_ID=1432

If you have an idea for a labor movie/music of the week, please email mhurford@cwa1037.org