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March 15, 2007

Dear Members of the State Senate:

**RE: Support S-472 (Sweeney / Doria):  
Concerns Mass Layoffs & Plant Closings**

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO supports S-472, which would provide protections for workers resulting from plant closings and mass layoffs. The legislation would extend the current worker notification period from the federal mandate of 60 days, to 90 days in order to better provide adequate time for employees to find new employment or to be retrained for a different career. This provision also benefits the regional economy by fostering a quicker transition to employment and consequently a reduction in unemployment.

The notification requirement would only apply to layoffs of 100 or more full time employees, which is consistent with federal law. In the case that corporations are not in compliance with the layoff notification provision, a severance pay equal to one week of wages for each year of work by the employee would be provided. The current federal law also provides for a financial penalty for non-compliance. It is important to understand that if a company complies with the additional 30 day notice required by this bill, then they would not have to pay any severance to workers. There are no additional employer penalties contained in the bill.

Under our current system, it is very difficult for many workers to find new employment in 60 days or be retrained. Workers deserve to be made aware of their pending layoff as soon as possible, so they can begin pursuing other employment or training.

The consequences of a mass layoff not only on employees and their family's futures, but also upon their local community cannot be underestimated by our elected officials. For these reasons, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO respectfully ask for your support of this bill, which would take a small step toward remedying an economic hardship for working families in New Jersey and elevate New Jersey to higher standards of respect and responsibility for its workforce.

Sincerely,

Charles Wowkanech  
President

Laurel Brennan  
Secretary/Treasurer

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