

NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

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March 14, 2011

Dear Members of the NJ State Assembly:

Re: Please Support AR-145 (Giblin / Stender) Supports Collective Bargaining & Urges the Administration to Negotiate in "Good Faith"

The basic concept of collective bargaining is under assault in states throughout the nation, including Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana, Michigan, Idaho and several others. Those states are advancing legislation that would strip employees of their collective bargaining rights. Here in New Jersey, some elected officials are taking a different course. Although they are not seeking to end collective bargaining, they are proposing policies that ignore, side step or subvert the collective bargaining process. For example, if either of the health care proposals currently being debated is enacted, the ability to bargain health insurance would effectively end under most circumstances. This would constrict the scope of negotiations and weaken collective bargaining.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is sensitive to the harsh economic environment we are currently operating in. That is why we are passionate in our desire to negotiate contracts for state employees and other bargaining units. As the resolution states, unions have a long history of bargaining in good faith during difficult economic times, to the joint benefit of employees and employers. Representatives of state worker unions have solid proposals that they are ready to be put forth to help address our state budgetary realities, and we have health care proposals that would translate into significant savings for taxpayers.

Typically, the collective bargaining process for these employees starts toward the end of the calendar year prior to the year in which the contract expires. But here we are now, in March, with contracts expiring in June, and negotiations only began on Friday, March 11, 2011.

This resolution has a very simple message - let's start negotiating in good faith and let's respect the collective bargaining process and recognize it as the best vehicle for achieving fair terms of employment. We respectfully ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Charles Wowkanech
President

Laurel Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer

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