

Local 117 files grievance and ULP over furlough, seeks injunctive relief

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Your Local Union has been taking all available legal action to challenge DOC on furloughs.

Teamsters Local 117 filed a grievance, alleging that DOC violated numerous sections of your collective bargaining agreement by implementing furloughs. DOC has agreed to process the grievance on an expedited basis.

Your Union also filed an Unfair Labor Practice Charge (ULP) with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) on the issue. The ULP asserts that DOC implemented unilateral changes, engaged in direct dealing with represented employees and failed to engage in good faith bargaining on matters affecting wages, hours, and working conditions. As a remedy, your Union is requesting that, among other things, PERC issue a make-whole award that includes back pay and benefits for any bargaining unit members subject to furlough under the new law. PERC has issued a Preliminary Ruling, requiring the State to answer the charges within 21 days.

Additionally, your Local Union sought a court injunction to stop the State from moving ahead on its plans to furlough some DOC workers.

After hearing argument in Thurston County Superior Court on Friday, July 9, Judge McPhee denied the injunction in a narrow ruling. Judge McPhee did not deny the fact that the issue needs to be negotiated, nor did he say that the State has the right to implement the furloughs. He simply denied the Union's motion for an injunction on the ground that he did not find a clear legal or equitable right. This is the second time in a month that the courts have denied motions for injunctive relief for State workers. Just last week, the Washington Federation of State Employees lost a similar argument before Judge Hicks.

Even though we did not succeed in getting the injunction, Teamsters 117 will continue to fight against the furloughs. The ULPs will be heard by PERC, and we will push for expedited arbitration on our grievance. We firmly believe that that State does not have the right to unilaterally cut Teamster-represented employees' hours in this manner.