



TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION 117

Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

General Public and Private Sector Employees and Special Services Employees in King and Pierce Counties and Employees of the State of Washington



BARGAINING COMMITTEE JOINT STATEMENT

Since the start of negotiations for the 2015-2017 contract, there has been a rollercoaster of emotional responses toward the intent of the bargaining team and the Teamsters 117 leadership regarding its rank-and-file members. We, the bargaining team, were made aware of many issues needing to be addressed in the new contract. However, two issues that seemed unanimous were that we were tired of the Washington State Government and the Department of Corrections balancing the budget on the backs of state workers and that we were grossly underpaid.

With this said, the bargaining committee took a strong approach at standing toe to toe with the state's bargaining team. Our "pipe dream" was not to be forced to push anything toward interest arbitration but that the state would finally recognize the hard work that prison employees perform daily and reward us comparably to our counterparts. However, we knew this would not happen under normal circumstances as we have gone down this road before. Therefore, unanimously, we decided to push the state's best and final offer of three percent back across the table and use the MOU (memo of understanding) interest arbitration for two reasons. One was the stern refusal of the state's bargaining team to renew the interest arbitration MOU regardless of whether or not the best and final proposal was accepted. Second was the hope that bringing our case to a third party individual in a thorough manner would exemplify what is to be a prison worker and would show that what the state was offering was ridiculous.

In addition, the bargaining committee wanted to rectify a wrong that was brought to our attention by many rank-and-file members regarding the disparity in pay between facilities. If we were to ask each individual at each facility why they felt they should receive or continue to receive what the state originally called recruitment and retention pay but changed to location pay, each individual would have similarly valid reasons. However, we, the bargaining committee felt that this has been a thorn in the side of solidarity and sought toward a resolution that would benefit the membership as a whole and not just be aimed at one or two classifications. We sought a prison premium which would replace the location pay but yet be extended to the entire rank-and-file membership. Either way the end goal was to bring everyone to the same equal playing field.

By involving the arbitrator we knew we were taking a risk but felt it was necessary. We examined all of our options and believed that we had to consider the whole rather than the few. We asked for much more through

interest arbitration, but the arbitrator had a requirement of adhering to an award that he believed was feasibly attainable. This award was determined through his interpretation of the facts and testimonies provided during the entire arbitration process and the union could not contest his decision regardless of our opinion.

On a separate but equally important note, it is evident that through the use of social media, rather than standing united against the State of Washington and the Department of Corrections, we are engaging in arguments between each other and tearing each other down. Solidarity is important for any group to succeed in creating change and change does not happen at the wave of a wand. Solidarity should not be compromised because of a disagreement over the legitimate feelings of others. Rather solidarity should become stronger because we bring our own individuality to the table.

We need to regroup and re-aim our focus, anger, frustration, and disappointment toward those that can facilitate change. We need to let our voices be heard louder than ever.

We hope that this clarifies some questions and reiterates the importance of strengthening our solidarity across the state. We're not just individuals who work in different job classifications, custody or non-custody. But rather we are a family who work in the same mentally and physically demanding dangerous environment. May we act like it and be united.

Sandra Conner (AHCC, ARNP)

Amber Bates (CBCC, CC2)

Joschue Reyes (CBCC, CO2)

Levi Dean (CRCC, CO2)

Corey McCloud (CRCC, MM4)

Doug Beatty (MCC, CO2)

Shane Zey (MCC, CO2)

James Palmer (MCC, CO3)

Pam Olekas (OCC, Corr. Records Supervisor)

Ronnie Matsen (SCCC, CO3)

Sally Thiessen (SCCC, CIS2)

Eric Smith (WCC, CO3)

Talisa Boad (WCCW, CO2)

Eric Burt (WSP, CC2)

Paul Moore (WSP, RN2)

Justin Riley (WSP, CO2)