

SEIU/NAGE Trial Court Bargaining Bulletin

Wednesday, February 13, 2008

GAME ON!

Management Refuses to Offer Us an Agreement Comparable to Local 6!

Mediation was held between management and the union on Monday, February 11. The date was rescheduled from the original February 7 date by order of the mediator.

The union proposed a settlement based on the Local 6 deal, including an additional step for all employees and improved vacation eligibility. The union's proposal also included overdue improvements in the uniform allowance, as well as clarifications and improvements in the Local 6 evaluation proposal.

Management offered an eighth step for *some* of the employees that do not have them: ACOs, APOs and ACCOs (but not for COIs). They did *not* offer additional steps to any other employee. They offered to raise the uniform allowance only from \$300 to \$350. They proposed the Local 6 evaluation agreement and improved accrual for the 5th week of vacation. Through the mediator they told us there was no more money for other improvements.

The union committee made a counter-offer that would provide eight steps for everyone and reclassification upgrades for workers who already have 8 steps. Management sent the word back that money for everyone and some of the language concessions we wanted them to make were deal breakers for them.

At that point the mediator asked whether the union was willing to drop our economic demands. **We caucused and then told her no.** *It makes no sense for us to agree to an inferior contract to Local 6 and then sit and watch as AOTC management demands huge raises for judges and clerks from the legislature.* Clearly, management is making the same mistake they made this summer of trying to buffalo the workers.

The mediator then told us she would prepare the paper work for fact-finding.

What's Next

The union will aggressively pursue the fact finding process. In fact finding, many key language issues that have frustrated workers will be reviewed by an independent outside arbitrator. The process is time consuming, but it puts us at the table with the boss.

Over the next two weeks we will develop a new action plan to move the ball down the field. We will need *everyone's* help.

While our year-long fight has been frustrating, we have made real progress by standing together and standing firm. We need to stand up now and stick together to get the fair treatment and respect we deserve. The real question for management is: Why do they want to give us the Local 6 deal on evaluations, but not on pay?

We will schedule meetings in the courts starting late this month so that we can all discuss next steps together. We are united and standing fast!

Quote of the week:

“I don't think there's any way you can assess the performance of a judge.”

Judge Mulligan at the State House, January 31, 2008