

July 11, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On June 21<sup>st</sup> CEUI members voted at worksites around the state on a tentative agreement that made changes to the SEBAC Pension & Healthcare Agreement and the NP-2 contract. The agreement was rejected by a narrow margin of 194 votes (1692 no votes cast and 1498 yes votes cast). More than 1,000 members did not vote.

On Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup> we mailed out questionnaires to NP-2 members in order to find out why they voted yes or why they voted no to the proposed concession agreement. Additionally, we asked about priorities of the members as we move forward. I want to thank all of you who took the time to return the questionnaires with your thoughts and concerns. In reading well over 1,000 of the responses, I can tell you that opinions were as divided as the vote. While we do agree on what is important - our jobs and pension & healthcare benefits, the debate is clearly over how to keep them. Some members feel that if we do nothing, this crisis will blow over and there will be no changes to our benefits and that our jobs are safe. It is clear that our world has changed and without an agreement we will not keep what we have.

Many of you raised issues that indicated that you didn't have the facts or did not understand the agreement. In hindsight, it is clear that the one hour worksite meetings that were approved by management were simply not enough to explain such a complex agreement. In order to address some of the questions and/or issues raised on the questionnaires, we have enclosed some facts and answers to questions.

In review of the priorities going forward, members identified job security and pension & healthcare as the top two priorities. However, we were surprised to find that many members listed collective bargaining rights as a very low priority. Therefore, it is clear that we need to do a better job educating members about the importance of having collective bargaining rights. These rights were granted by legislation and can be taken away by the legislature. Without these rights, we have no voice in the workplace and therefore no ability to preserve our jobs and benefits.

What is on all of our minds is... where do we go from here? We are now facing the elimination of up to one of every four of our jobs. We are seeing legislators who have always supported us saying that we are out of touch with reality. Furthermore, the legislature has significant public support to pass legislation taking away our rights and our benefits. In fact, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, Senate Bill 1301 was passed by a vote of 30-6. SB 1301 removes the use of overtime and longevity in the calculation of our pensions effective 2017. This bill is now sitting on the House calendar and could be called for a vote any day. At this point, we have no confidence that this bill will be voted down in the House. In light of the devastation we face with SB 1301 and further legislation that could come down next, I believe we need to reach and vote on another agreement.

Many members have submitted petitions to the Union in support of a future vote. They have also formed a "Committee for an Agreement". These members are committed to saving our jobs and our benefits through member support and member education. Our members need to support each other! Make no mistake, there are a number of forces working against us to confuse the issues, distort the facts, and create fear and mistrust where it has no basis. These forces have published lies about the agreement you voted on, they have made promises to you that cannot be fulfilled, and some have said that you will never be laid off. They distort the facts so they can inflame the public when members vote to reject the agreement. They want to see our jobs eliminated and our work contracted to low bidders. We cannot allow this devastation to hit our families.

The bottom line is, we are facing a bad economy, a hostile, anti-worker wave sweeping the country, the pending loss of our jobs, and legislation cutting our rights and benefits. We must get to an agreement that protects our jobs, benefits, and our families.

In solidarity,

Ron McLellan