

Frequently Asked Questions About Proposed Contract

Q – Why should Intermittent Employees be brought into Union?

A – Because they are continuing to be used by management and their use is eroding the bargaining unit. They are doing bargaining unit work (Union work) and if they are, they should be in the Union. The hope is that the Union can exercise some control over the use of these employees and, hopefully, move some into full-time positions. Right now there are 54 “full time” intermittents and over 2,500 part-time employees.

Q – Why can't the contract be continued until the state can give better budget numbers?

A – The state refused to extend the contract beyond April 15, 2009. Reason: they need the cost savings in the next fiscal year that starts July 1, 2009.

Q – Why are inmates given some pay, medicine and shoes and Correction Officers are losing 3.076 hours per pay period?

A – The Union has no control by way of contract over how the state deals with inmates.

Q – Why can the state hire intermittent employees to avoid paying overtime?

A – That is the current practice today and the Union has no control now. If they are in the bargaining unit, maybe the Union can control, to some extent, the use of such employees.

Q – Will the time and one-half for overtime and for working a holiday be taken away?

A – No. Time and one-half will be paid for all hours actually worked over 40 and straight time plus time and one-half will be paid for working a holiday.

Q – Does everybody lose the same 3.076 hours? What if other bargaining units settle for less?

A – Each OCSEA member will have 3.076 hours of pay deducted, pre tax, out of each pay. Other than this, all hours actually worked in any pay period will be compensated. If any other bargaining unit and/or exempt employees in the E1, E2 and E3 classifications get a better “deal”, OCSEA will receive the same benefits. We have a “Parity/Me Too” clause in the contract.

Q – Who has the authority to reject the contract on behalf of the state?

A – A 7 person Board known as the “Controlling Board.” The Controlling Board meets in Columbus.

Q – What happens if the contract is rejected? How does the vote work?

A – If the contract is rejected than the Bargaining Team is authorized to call a strike. Those prohibited from striking (specific Safety Employees and some others) would go to “conciliation”

where a “conciliator” would make the final decision for those forces. During that process the Conciliator is required by the law to, among other things, take into consideration the “ability of the governmental employer to pay.” All employees would be working without a contract which means that the employer could impose any wages, hours and working conditions the employer (state) sees fit to enforce.

As to voting, the Union is required to submit the proposed contract and the fact-finders report to “the total Union membership.” If 60% of the total Union membership votes to reject, then on April 16, 2009, OCSEA and its members would have no contract with the state.

Q – Where is all of the federal stimulus money going?

A – It is all earmarked for special purposes and much of the money is going to meet the Governor’s expressed priority of funding and improving education in Ohio.

Q – What happens to the money that the state saves on only allowing 70% for the second week of sick leave?

A – Much of it is used, almost dollar for dollar, to fund the cost of sick leave that is converted by employees at the end of each year.

Q – Does the Union have a strike fund?

A – Yes. Presently the balance in the fund is \$2,500,000. This figure compared to the OCSEA payroll for a year (\$1,500,000,000) would not last long should there be a strike.

Q – Can management cancel a prescheduled cost savings day?

A – Yes, but not without some conditions. If such an event occurs, then management has to reimburse an employee for any expenses incurred (like travel and vacation expenses) and the employee gets to elect another day which cannot be cancelled.

Q – Under the new vacation accrual section, does anyone lose any vacation?

A – No. The only effect will be the benefit of accruing vacation a year earlier.

Q – What is happening in other states?

A – Most states are requiring pay cuts and furlough days which, for the most part, far exceed what our contract contemplates.

Q – Is longevity frozen?

A – No.

Q – Since 2007, how many people has the state hired?

A – For all of 2008 and the first month of 2009 the total was 4294 persons. A number of these hired were summertime limited employment. Removing them from the total, the breakdown is about one-third exempt and two-thirds OCSEA bargaining positions.

Q – When there is a layoff, why can exempt employees bump into the bargaining unit jobs?

A – The law lets them do that if they have previously been in the bargaining unit.

Q – Do I have to pay a spousal surcharge if both myself and my spouse work for the state?

A – Only if you elect to have a family plan policy. Each of you could take a single plan and not have to cover each other. That would not work where there are also children to be covered.

Q – Why can't we take longer to negotiate? Can we have a one or two year agreement rather than a three year contract?

A – The state will not continue our contract beyond April 16, 2009. The Governor must, by law, present a balanced budget to the General Assembly which must be enacted by July 1, 2009. The state, therefore, must know that there is a contract in place and what costs are associated with it or if there is no contract, then the state can set the pay scales at whatever they please and, thereby, balance the budget. The annual state payroll cost for state employees is over \$3,300,000,000 a year.

Q – Will everybody lose the same amount of time under the cost savings days plan?

A – Yes. Each employee will have deducted from each of 26 pay period checks hours totaling 3.076. You take that number times your hourly rate and that will be the amount deducted, pre tax, from each check.