

## Riverside County Bargaining Update October 7, 2016

This post will not be brief, so please bear with me.

Yesterday your negotiating team met with the County's negotiating team. Yesterday was actually our first meeting. We had been scheduled to meet last week, but the County cancelled that session.

Yesterday we presented most of our proposals, and we'll be presenting the rest of ours at our next meeting. The County will also present their proposals at the next meeting.

While we haven't yet received the county's proposals, we do know that they are coming to the table committed to making radical alterations in your pay structure. Specifically, we believe they want to reduce your merit increases from two steps to one step per year. This means that a new employee would take 20 years to reach the top step. Obviously changes of this sort are extreme, and are not something to which we would ever agree. And we believe that the County will impose those changes when we refuse to agree to them.

SEIU is currently in bargaining with the County, and we have heard that their resolve at the table may not be as strong as ours. Obviously, if SEIU fails to show any grit at the table, it will make it tougher for us to avoid having whatever agreement they make imposed on us by the County.

Because of the extreme nature of what we believe the County is hoping to do to you, LIUNA members will need to have discussions of a sort that we haven't really had to have before. Accordingly, we are planning for a variety of scenarios. It is always our hope to reach an agreement through a process of good faith bargaining. However, it would be foolish for us not to be prepared for the possibility that our

traditional approach may not be sufficient for this particular situation.

For a long time Riverside County employees languished as the lowest wage earners in the region. We should all be proud of the fact that in recent years we have completely turned that around. The County never seemed to be bothered by the fact that you were the lowest paid county workers among the "benchmark" counties. They do, however, seem to have a problem with you NOT being the lowest paid county workers. Accordingly, it appears that they want to bomb us back to the stone age. Permanently.

I am not trying to paint an overly grim picture, but I do want to be candid with you about what we believe is going on right now.

On the plus side, we have an extraordinary bargaining team, composed of a diverse group of County employees. Each person on the team is committed to the well being of the entire membership, and not at all driven by individual agendas. And, most important, each member of the team is absolutely committed to doing whatever we need to do to protect the ability of our fellow LIUNA members to provide for themselves and their families..

I cannot guarantee a favorable outcome, but I can guarantee you that LIUNA will never agree to any wholesale degradation of your livelihoods. Hopefully, the members of other unions in Riverside County will insist that their organizations are similarly committed.

Our next meeting is on the 24th, at which time the County will formally present their proposals. A full update will be posted after that meeting. Also, we do go into much more specific detail at our meetings than we do in our public postings, so please plan on attending this months meetings. I look forward to seeing you there.

Back in 2012, the women and men of LIUNA 777 proved that there are no union members anywhere with more guts and resolve. I am confident in the knowledge that our collective resolve will see us through in 2016 as well.

In Solidarity,