



Science in Action

Wisconsin Science Professionals Local 3732

Supplement II, May 2009

The Governor's 2% Solution

Governor Jim Doyle has seized the moment. By launching his anti-state employee message on May 7th he has not only bargained with state employees in the press, he has also propped up his sagging approval ratings. Yes, Wisconsin has some very real and very large budget problems. However, there are some things that need to be remembered. The Wisconsin Science Professionals agreed to delay our 2% raise to June 2009 to help deal with the state's budget problem. We did that over a year ago. The 2% pay raise for Science Professionals is less than 1/16 of 1% of the recently announced additional \$1.6 Billion deficit. In 1982 WSP was asked to reopen the contract with the state and the answer then was no. It was the right decision then and it still is the right decision.

Since the last letter from WSP, We have heard from many members of WSP asking why we will not consider reopening our contracts and giving back the two percent raises that are scheduled to go into effect on June 7. Your WSP leadership has made this decision in light of the following:

- **Reopening our contracts would not guarantee that any positions would be saved.** WSP has not been asked to give the 2% back. The unions that have had conversations with the Governor and DOA officials have no offer to prevent layoffs in return for the 2%. In subsequent conversations, these unions have confirmed that no layoffs of positions would be prevented from a salary give-back. In other words we would be giving up something for nothing.
- **Reopening our contract would make us vulnerable to many serious losses beyond salary.** Our contract has provisions in place meant to protect workers in times of workforce reduction. Opening our current contract opens the ENTIRE contract for renegotiation and creates a very real potential of losing or weakening the layoff and furlough clauses that protect us in these uncertain times.
- **Reopening our contract would irreversibly weaken our power as a union.** Unions exist to empower workers; this is especially true in difficult economic times. Giving back a negotiated salary increase in a tough economy is a signal to the administration that a collective bargaining agreement is meaningless and can be rendered meaningless just when members need it most.
- **Reopening our contract would damage our relationship with other unions.** If WSP reopens their contract it will be a blow to the solidarity of the many state unions. Now is not the time to let the State divide and conquer.

In short – by reopening our contracts, we have absolutely nothing to gain, and everything to lose!

The Science Professionals like all state employees want to help the state with its budget problems. And we have offered constructive steps that the Governor and the legislature could follow to help reduce the projected budget deficit through our affiliated union AFT-Wisconsin. Please remember that with the coming furloughs the unions will already be giving back 3%(School aids are only being cut 2% and shared revenue 2.5%. **We are contributing more than our fair share.**) of their wages for each of the next two years. As this situation continues, the leadership of WSP will continue to keep you abreast of developments, just as we will look to you for feedback and activism.

Gary Steffen
President, Wisconsin Science Professionals

This is a member-to-member communication from the Wisconsin Science Professionals to its members pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes 11.29. Members should check workplace rules regarding political action in the workplace before responding.