



Science in Action

Wisconsin Science Professionals Local 3732

Volume 13, September 2009

WSP Board Meetings: December 5th @ 9:00 a.m. All members are welcome to come to our board meetings, however meetings maybe closed to deal with grievance issues. Meetings are held at the AFT-Wisconsin Headquarters at 6602 Normandy Ln in Madison.

Furloughs — More Things to Know

By now hopefully everyone is well aware that WSP leadership, with the consent of the membership, signed an agreement (MOU) with the State allowing Agencies to implement furloughs. Also by now we would expect that those same Agencies have communicated to their employees that they can take furloughs and what the process is for doing that. If you are having trouble scheduling furloughs, or you have questions about your situation, or your Agency hasn't communicated the necessary information to you please let us know by contacting your district representative or the WSP President (president@wspunion.org). If you don't know who your representative is go [here](#) and click on the officers and district reps link at the bottom. Or navigate to www.wspunion.org and click on "About Us" on the left.

Now that furloughs are here, there are some things you should keep in mind:

- ◆ Don't schedule furlough days on both sides of a holiday. You must be in pay status either before or after a holiday to be paid for that holiday. Your supervisor should know this and stop you from doing it, but it's ultimately your responsibility to keep it from happen.
- ◆ When setting phone messages or email out of office replies please let those trying to contact you know that you are unavailable due to the furloughs. People need to understand that service will drop if they send us home.
- ◆ Don't make up the time. Don't work 48 hours in week 2 (and donate those 8 hours because you're a professional) to cover the work you didn't get done in week 1 when you had to take a furlough. Yes, we're all professionals, and yes we all feel we need to "get the job done", but if management can squeeze the same amount of work out of you and still cut their payroll costs they may get used to the idea.
- ◆ Watch your leave time balances. With 8 extra days of "leave" per fiscal you may end up with extra time at the end of the year. Plan ahead and remember that under 6/6/5 you can carry-over 40 hours of vacation, but that may just add to the problem in the next year. Don't give away your time by not using it.
- ◆ Not all Agencies, or even divisions within Agencies, are required to implement the furloughs in exactly the same way. They must hold to certain guidelines and adhere to their own plans, but those may differ from each other (e.g., because of the academic calendar, the UW campuses all have different days for the four fixed furlough days). As long as the Agency plans fall within the broad boundaries of the MOU they are allowed.
- ◆ Employees that have work schedules or FTE appointments outside the norm (e.g., part-timers, those working hours more or less than their stated FTE, etc.) should double check how their

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furloughs are being handled. If it doesn't seem correct make sure to ask your HR people and/or a union representative (see contacts above).

- ◆ With the exception of doctors, lawyers and teachers, Option #2 a reduction in gross pay by 3% for the full two years, and Option #3 a small weekly reduction in hours, were never an option for any of the FLSA exempt employees. Although it was spelled out in the voting information, there seems to be some confusion about this out there. The State simply would not allow FLSA exempt employees (i.e., professionals) to have those options. That being said:
- ◆ While WSP has mostly FLSA exempt positions those in the pay progression and some people from the old forensic scientist classification are non-exempt. For those people options #2 and #3 may be available depending on the Agency.

Bargaining Update

Your bargaining team is currently scheduled to meet with representatives of the State on September 15th. This will be the first face to face meeting. Currently the bargaining team and the bargaining support committee are working on a list of language proposals. We have not begun discussing wages and benefits and we do not know what kind of time table the State will wish to work on, however we should all be prepared for a lengthy negotiation given the current climate. If you have any bargaining concerns feel free to email bargaining co-chair Matt Roach at mjroach@wisc.edu.

Important Dates and Events:

All Union After Work Get Together — Sep 24, 2009

The Avenue Bar (back room)
1128 E. Washington Avenue, Madison

The 78th Annual Convention of AFT-Wisconsin

Wednesday evening, Thursday, and Friday, October 28-30, 2009,

The Plaza Hotel & Suites,
201 No. 17th Avenue, Wausau, WI 54401,
(715) 845-4341 or (800) 754-9728.

<http://www.aft-wisconsin.org/Convention/Call.pdf>



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Receiving E-Newsletters

It has come to our attention that some members have not been receiving the e-newsletter. If you know someone that is a member, is not getting the newsletter and wants too, please have them send an email to membership@wspunion.org.

The Average Joe

Author Unknown

Joe gets up at 6 a.m. and fills his coffeepot with water to prepare his morning coffee. The water is clean and good because some tree-hugging liberal fought for minimum water-quality standards. With his first swallow of water, he takes his daily medication. His medications are safe because some other liberal fought to ensure their safety and that they work as advertised. All but \$10 of his medications are paid for by his employer's medical plan because some liberal union workers fought their employers for paid medical insurance -- now Joe gets it, too.

Joe prepares his morning breakfast; bacon and eggs. Joe's bacon is safe to eat because some anti-capitalist fought for laws to regulate the meat packing industry. In the morning shower, Joe reaches for his shampoo; his bottle is properly labeled with each ingredient and the amount in the total contents because some crybaby fought for his right to know what he was putting on his body and how much it contained. Joe dresses, walks outside and takes a deep breath. The air he breathes is clean because some environmentalist wacko fought for the laws to stop industries from polluting our air. He walks on the government-provided sidewalk to the subway station for his government-subsidized ride to work. It saves him considerable money in parking and transportation fees because some fancy-pants liberal fought for affordable public transportation, which gives everyone the opportunity to be a contributor.

Joe begins his work day. He has a good job with excellent pay, medical benefits, retirement, paid holidays and vacation because some lazy union members fought and died for these working standards. If Joe is hurt on the job or becomes unemployed, he'll get a worker's compensation or unemployment check because some liberal didn't think he should lose his home because of his temporary misfortune.

It is noontime and Joe needs to make a bank deposit so he can pay some bills. Joe's deposit is federally insured by the FDIC (or the NCUA, if he's part of a credit union) because some socialist wanted to protect Joe's money from unscrupulous bankers who ruined the banking system before the Great Depression (and then again recently). Joe has to pay his Fannie Mae-underwritten mortgage and his below-market federal student loan

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because some elitist liberal decided that Joe and the government would be better off if he was educated and earned more money over his lifetime. Joe also forgets that in addition to his federally subsidized student loans, he attended a state funded university.

Joe is home from work. He plans to visit his father this evening at his farm in the country. He gets in his car for the drive. His car is among the safest in the world because some America-hating liberal fought for car safety standards to go along with the tax-payer funded roads. He arrives at his boyhood home. His was the third generation to live in the house financed by the Farmers' Home Administration because bankers didn't want to make rural loans. The house didn't have electricity until some big-government liberal stuck his nose where it didn't belong and demanded rural electrification. He is happy to see his father, who is now retired. His father lives on Social Security and a union pension because some wine-drinking, cheese-eating liberal made sure he could take care of himself so Joe wouldn't have to.

Joe gets back in his car for the ride home, and turns on a radio talk show. The radio host keeps saying that liberals are bad and conservatives are good. He doesn't mention that the beloved Republicans have fought against every protection and benefit Joe enjoys throughout his day. Joe agrees: "We don't need those big-government liberals ruining our lives! After all, I'm a self-made man who believes everyone should take care of themselves, just like I have."

Corporations can not force the poor conditions on American workers they would like to be able to. You can thank the unions for that. So they are now moving their operations overseas to places with no unions. Look at the conditions the workers in those countries endure. Little to no environmental standards, child labor, minimal pay with no health coverage, filthy living conditions — all so you can enjoy the standard of living fought for by unions.