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What Can the Union Do for Me - - - A True Story

District A's Collective Bargaining Agreement expired June 30, 2011. At a grievance hearing in July, over another matter, the subject of WRS deductions for employees who deferred their salary through the summer months came up. Administration indicated that they were intending to withhold the new WRS deductions from the August paycheck that occurred after the effective date of the law.

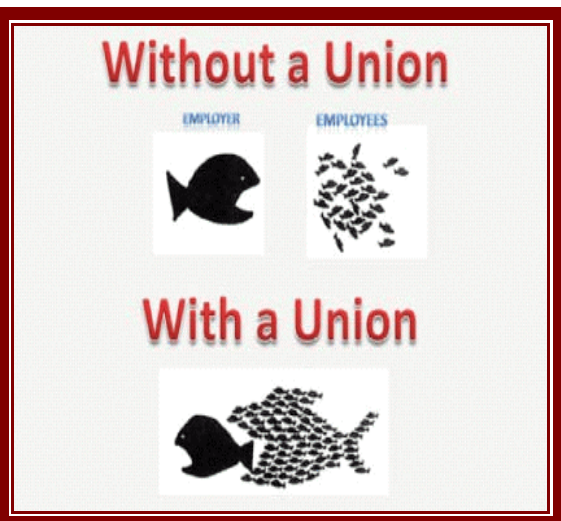
The Union Rep explained that the August check would be for wages earned prior to the effective date of the law and though they were paid out after that date, the new rule did not apply because of when the money was earned. Further, this would mean that those employees who took their payroll over the school year, or those that took their payroll over twelve months (but took a lump sum payment in June) were not charged for the WRS deductions.

The Union Rep pointed out that if the Administration did that, then only those employees who allowed the District to hang on to their money throughout the summer would be financially penalized.

The summer came and went and when the August check was issued, the District did indeed withhold the new WRS deduction from those wages earned prior to the new law. The Union took the issue on, did some further research and contacted the entire Board of Education explaining the situation, along with supporting information from the WRS. The Union further explained that they were prepared to take the issue further if need be.

Within a week, employees were notified that they would be reimbursed for the improper deduction.

NTU took this issue on because the Administration clearly overplayed their authority and truly disadvantaged union members. As an aside, all employees benefitted from this action even though some have chosen not to continue their membership in the Union.



What Membership Offers:

- Free legal services for issues involving individual employment contracts, non-renewals, licensure, school board hearings, personnel and medical records, family medical leave, disability, unemployment, workers compensation, sexual harassment, Wisconsin Retirement System, special education and public records.*

Though an individual employee could have pointed this issue out to the Administration, if they would have done it anyway, would that individual have been able to take their case directly to the Board? Or, would there have been consequences from the Administration for doing so because of the new employee handbooks? And, would the individual have been able to take the issue to the next level had the Board not done the right thing? Did the Union play an important role here? You decide what would have happened in your District.

We believe this Union has served a real purpose on many issues within two months of the collective bargaining agreements expiring. Watch for additional stories in upcoming newsletters.

PAC Contributions Refundable!

Any member wishing a refund of NTU-PAC contributions may request a refund. Refunds must be requested individually and in writing to President Jack Iverson, P.O. Box 1400, Rhinelander, WI 54501 no later than **October 31, 2011, or within 60 days after joining, whichever is later.** Only requests postmarked on or before that date will be honored.

WEAC-PAC contributions are also refundable if a request is made in writing to WEAC President, Mary Bell, P.O. Box 8003, Madison, WI 53708, by **October 31, 2011, or within 60 days after joining, whichever is later.**

Please indicate whether you are a teacher or support staff employee, part-time or full-time, the name of your Local, and the address to mail the refund to when making your request.

Fair share payers automatically receive a refund and need not request it.

Does Wisconsin Really Have an Out-of-Control Public Employment Sector?

NTU has built a coalition with other Unions including those that represent public sector employees. Therefore, it is important that we attempt to set the record straight for our fellow Union brothers and sisters as well as for ourselves.

Wisconsin continues to have fewer state and local employees per capita than the national average, according to numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau. The number of state and local employees, per capita, in Wisconsin increased slightly from 2009 to 2010; however, it is still well below the national average.

State and local government employees include

workers in a wide variety of functions, including those working as teachers, educational support personnel, highway workers, correction guards, firefighters, and police officers.

Comparing the number of full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) relative to each state's 2010 population, Wisconsin was 5.9% below the national average and ranked 39th, meaning only 11 states had a leaner public sector.

Wisconsin is also lower than the national average in payroll spending for government employees. The per capita spending for the March, 2010 payroll for all state and local employees in Wisconsin was 8.0% below average, and ranked 31st. The payroll per FTE was 2.2% below the national average, although Wisconsin was above the median on that measure, ranking 18th nationally.

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance has noted that Wisconsin has more units of government than most other states, measured relative to state population or geographic area. Based on that fact, one might infer that our state would have more public employees, particularly at the local level, but that is not the case.

Just as Wisconsin has considerably fewer public employees per capita than the national average, our spending on salaries and wages is lower than the national average. Measured on a per capita basis, spending on state and local salaries in Wisconsin has been below the national average since 1998. Since then, per capita state spending on public employee salaries in Wisconsin has steadily dropped compared to the national average.

In 2008, the most recent year for which figures are available, Wisconsin spent 8.4% less per state resident on public employee salaries than the national average. Wisconsin ranked 30th among the states in per capita spending for public sector employees in 2008, compared to 18th in 1993.

In light of the significant local aid cuts in the 2011-13 state budget, it's likely that the number of government employees in Wisconsin will decrease in the coming years, at least at the local level. In July, 2011 the loss of 15,000 government jobs totally offset the very small increase in private sector employment. Since January, 2010, state and local government employment has fallen by 482,000 jobs.