

Solidarity of State Employees in Bargaining Begins to Show

Questionnaire Quotes

"When I joined OSEA 20 years ago, the State was giving next to nothing. It has taken us a long time to get what we have and it is important that we don't let the State take it away."



Audience discussion at Bargaining Action Days was often pointed.

"We must have cost of living adjustments that are mandatory; but not at the cost of losing other benefits."



Central table member-negotiator John Clap speaks to Salem rally.

"It is unfair that, when you retire, the State will only pay half of your accumulated sick leave. We should receive 100 percent of what we earn."



Members sign petitions, ask questions following Portland rally.

"You can't afford to give up what you've fought to gain in past contracts. If you do as state bureaucrats are proposing, you won't even be the working poor—you will be the working poorer."

Thomas Gallagher
Executive Director

Job Security: A Key Issue

OPEU Proposal

No bargaining unit employee or bargaining unit position shall be adversely effected as a result of contracting out.

Layoffs shall be made agency by agency based on seniority—most recent hired, first to be laid off. Layoffs by seniority shall be in the following order: 1st trial-service employees, 2nd part-time employees, 3rd full-time employees.

Reprimands, reductions in pay, demotions, suspensions and dismissals can only be imposed for a just cause. There must be an appropriate degree of misconduct to warrant discipline. Progressive discipline must be used whenever appropriate.

Written, pre-dismissal notice and the opportunity to respond to the notice must be granted. The employee will be entitled to appeal any dismissal decision to ERB within 10 days of the effective date of such action.

A maximum 90-day trial service period. This period can only be imposed on employees upon initial appointment.

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Provisions for seasonal employees in the current central contract and personnel rules are fair and adequate and must be written into this contract.

Rationale

We have had problems in AFS and Oregon State Hospital with the State contracting out bargaining unit work in order to save money. The OPEU proposal would prohibit the State from hiring employees to do bargaining unit work for less pay or fewer benefits and then laying-off bargaining unit employees.

By contracting out work to non-state employees, the State often saves money because they can then refuse to pay into social security, offer retirement or health benefits or contribute to the worker's unemployment compensation fund. These benefits (known as OPEs), which state employees have won in past contracts, make up 34 percent of each employee's pay package.

Governor Atiyeh is proposing that the State spend \$168 million on salary and OPEs for state employees and \$288 million for contracting out during the next biennium.

The longer you work for an agency, the more job security you ought to have.

Basing the layoff system on seniority would expediate this process by avoiding problems with service credit computations and merit evaluations and would substantially reduce "bumping."

Under current rules there are long delays and multiple "bumpings."

By providing employees with what is known legally as procedural due process rights, arbitrary and inconsistent discipline and discharge actions by management personnel will be avoided.

For many positions, six-month trial service—which is the current practice—is too long. It enables the State to avoid granting employees job security that permanent state employees are afforded under the contract.

In addition, trial and probationary periods averaging 30, 60 and 90 days are the most common in the United States.

Seasonal or "intermittent" employees are entitled to at least the following rights (under the State's proposal "intermittent" employees would receive none of these):

- 1) Notice upon scheduling and unscheduling of work;
- 2) Layoff rights; and
- 3) Benefits, including leaves (i.e. time-off for illness, holidays, vacations), medical and dental insurance, overtime, penalty pay and shift differential.

State Proposal

No counter proposal.

No counter proposal.

The State has said that they are in substantial agreement with us on this issue, although they have no signed-off this issue.

Two-year trial service will apply to any state employee when that employee is initially appointed, promoted, demoted, transferred, reinstated or reemployed.

Since the State has a 25 percent turn-over of employees every year, in two years, 50 percent of all state employees would be on trial service status. The State could then transfer or promote and employ and put even more employees on trial service.

By its own admission, the management says large numbers of employees could be kept on trial service status indefinitely.

If work is available on an "irregularly fluctuating basis," because of conditions beyond the control of "the appointing authority," the position would be designated intermittent employment.

Questionnaire Quotes

"State employes should be competitive with other employes in pay, benefits, job security and safety in the workplace."



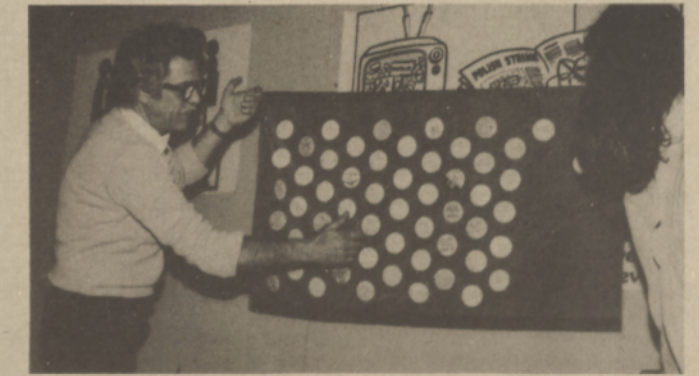
Business agent Jeff Schrader addresses Eugene bargaining rally.

"I like receiving more benefits, because they don't put me in a higher tax bracket."



Members sign petitions at Salem Bargaining Action Days rally.

"Increasing wages of state employes—not necessarily to the top of the scale, but at least so we are competitive with other employes—would help morale and would increase work productivity and quality."



Barry Rudd shows off union buttons that are available for Button Day.

"If you give up your rights or your benefits or the wage and cost of living increases you deserve, you'll never get them back."

Thomas Gallagher
Executive Director