

Brothers and Sisters,

These were extremely difficult negotiations. We independently researched income for the state comparing it to the previous fiscal year's income and thought our economic proposals were modest and took into account the dismal state of Ohio's finances. In fact, our wage proposals were pegged to the amount of income the state would, in fact, have at its disposal during the upcoming fiscal year and stratified according to the amount of taxes which would actually be collected.

Even though our proposals were, we thought, very conservative, this approach did not prevail -- either for wages or for the idea of "cost-savings days" proposed by the state. A major reason for this was the fact that other collective bargaining agreements already agreed upon contained a "me too" provision which would have given those members any additional benefits which we negotiated.

The state initially wanted to take "cost savings days" by doing away with holiday pay. They adamantly promoted this point of view and we, equally adamantly, opposed the proposal. They finally moved away from this position only during the mediation process. We then proposed that any "cost savings days" which might be imposed through the fact-finding process be pegged to actual income, like our wage proposals. For much the same rationale as the wage proposals, this did not prevail in mediation.

Throughout the negotiation process, we were keenly aware of the impact that proposals in other sections of the contract would have on our members and vigorously pursued our proposals. Although we did not prevail on all of our proposals, a number of substantial changes, initially proposed by both sides, are reflected in the attached summary of contract changes. The bargaining committee stood solidly together throughout the entire negotiating process and the committee's contributions were absolutely critical to succeeding on a number of these proposals advanced by the union.

The fact-finder hands down the entire contract unless the totality is rejected by a 60% vote of either the controlling board or the full members of the union. We urge you to vote at the nearest location. A copy of the dates and times of voting is also attached. We must report the vote timely to the State Employment Relations Board or the fact-finders report will be deemed accepted. .