



Paying our “work insurance”

Although most of us don't like to pay for insurance, most reasonable people understand the value in having that protection if and when we need it.

We pay good money to insure the things that are most important to us. We insure our lives, our health, our homes, our cars, our property, our pets and our bank accounts, just to name a few.

So what about our jobs? After all, our livelihood not only provides for our families but also all those other things we value enough to insure. Doesn't it make sense to pay to insure our work as well?

Well, turns out, it does. It's just that we call that insurance something different.... We call it “union.”

When we pay our union dues, we do so with the understanding that in return, we get back things we value. Some of those things are things we can see, like increases to our pay and a contract that locks in our benefits, but many are things we never see, and sometimes take for granted, but we should have comfort knowing they're there if we need them.

One of the most intangible but important things we get in return for our union dues is security and protection.... if and when we need it. If our contract is violated, if a boss decides to punish us unjustly, if we get passed over for a promotion we rightly deserve, if we are falsely accused of misdoing, we have the security of knowing our union will be there to protect us and go to bat for us. In short, we are investing our money to ensure that someone has our back.

With the anti-union Supreme Court case decided, union members will have the option to quit our union, and pay nothing, but still retain

many of the benefits of our union contract -- but not all. I want everyone to realize that quitting has consequences, chief among them the loss of some of those important union protections we value.

As a result of the Governor and Legislature updating the Taylor Law to help strengthen public unions in the wake of this Supreme Court case, CSEA WILL NO LONGER OFFER THE SAME PROTECTIONS to people who choose to quit our union. In fact, non-members who find themselves in trouble may find that there is nobody who has their back.

With the recent law change, if you are called in for questioning or an interrogation related to a disciplinary issue, and you are not a dues-paying member, you will no longer be entitled to be accompanied by a union representative. You will also not be entitled to the services of a union attorney at no extra cost, should you need one to defend you. Unless, that is, you re-join our union, agree to pay a large retainer fee, and commit to not quitting for a certain time period moving forward.

I think most reasonable people understand that you don't get something for nothing, and that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If someone tries to convince you to quit our union and promises that nothing will change, they are simply lying.

You want to make sure nothing changes moving forward? Then you need to commit to sticking with our union and keep on paying your “work insurance.” We all do this, and we will maintain a strong union to protect us all, if and when we need it.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.