

NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

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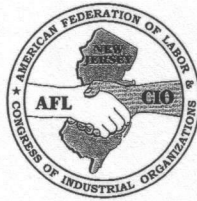
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February 27, 2012

Dear Members of the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee:

Re: Oppose S-2 Concerns Shared Services & the Suspension of Civil Service Rules

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is opposed to the provisions of S-2 that negatively impact civil service as well as language that allows local governments to override certain provisions of collective bargaining agreements as they pertain to layoffs, seniority, bumping rights and other rules.

To be clear – the New Jersey State AFL-CIO recognizes that there are smart ways to share services and merge local governments to benefit taxpayers. However, it must be done with a balanced approach that does not cast aside collective bargaining rights and the many positive aspects of civil service that protect middle class families, workers and taxpayers.

At its core, civil service works in protecting taxpayers and employees from the harmful effects of political interference in hiring and layoffs. Does the New Jersey State AFL-CIO recognize that changes can be made to civil service to give flexibility to local governments for various needs – absolutely. There were multiple provisions included in legislation last session or contained in the bill before you today that streamlined and modernized civil service and were supported by management. However, as we did last legislative session and we continue to do today, we are opposed to completely eliminating civil service rules as this bill does for a twelve month period during the implementation of shared service agreements as well as language that overturns negotiated language in collective bargaining agreements.

Taking such a drastic step such as dismantling civil service and overturning provisions of collective bargaining agreements is not necessary to advance shared services. How do we know this?

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Because only 34% or 190 out of 566 municipalities in the State are civil service and if civil service was the main impediment to shared services, then shared services would be flourishing between the vast majority of non-civil service towns – but they are not. I think we all understand why they are not – because civil service is not the main impediment to sharing services, home rule is.

Civil service is a core labor standard that provides opportunities and fairness in the hiring process and ensures that jobs are awarded based upon merit and testing. When these standards are removed, it opens the door to patronage and inefficiency in hiring and wastes taxpayer dollars due to these inefficiencies. This undermines real opportunity for prosperity and fairness in our personnel system.

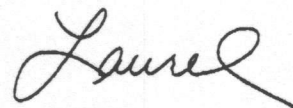
Employees and taxpayers alike benefit from civil service rules and they need to be maintained. After all, the economy is everyone's issue and both labor and management want to see a positive outcome. We want our towns and working families to flourish and in order for that to occur, we need a balanced approach to sharing services.

We look forward to continuing a dialogue with the sponsor to find a way to promote his mission of increasing shared services agreements, but doing so in a way that does not negatively impact collective bargaining agreements or dismantles a civil service system that has proven to assure equal opportunity and good government

Sincerely,



Charles Wowkanech
President



Laurel Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer

CW:LB:jn
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