

# NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

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Dear Labor Union Member Elected Official:

## **Re: Local Government Public Employee Bargaining Legislation Advancing in the State Legislature. S-3810 / A-5862: "The Responsible Collective Negotiations Act"**

As a union member, you understand the importance of a fair collective bargaining process. As an elected official, you understand the importance of controlling costs. There is state legislation that is currently advancing that seeks to make changes to the bargaining process for certain local government public employees that helps to achieve both. Please note that police, firefighters and K-12 teachers are not covered by the major provisions of the bill described below.

Under current law, local government managers may "impose" a contract on union workers. Although "imposition" is not common, the threat of imposition during contract negotiations is very real. Public sector workers are forced to bargain with an understanding that they have much to lose if they don't accept management's demands. The threat of imposition, combined with a public sector union's inability to strike, leaves these workers with few options at the bargaining table.

"Non-imposition" law currently applies to K-12 school contracts. This means that if a contract expires, the workers continue to operate under the terms of the previous contract until a new contract is agreed to.

This legislation seeks parity for other local government workers with existing law that already covers teachers. Furthermore, under current law, police and firefighters have binding interest arbitration so they also cannot have a contract "imposed" upon them. Non-teaching, civilian local government workers are the

only public workers that can have a contract imposed upon them and there is nothing they can do about it because it is illegal to strike.

Statewide local government lobbying organizations and some local government officials are opposing this bill and advocating for resolutions to be passed at the municipal and county level expressing their opposition to their state legislators. We are providing information to you so if such a resolution is debated in your area, you have the facts.

A separate letter has been sent to mayors throughout the state. It explains a second provision of the bill referred to as "scope of bargaining."

If this legislation comes before you for debate in the form of a resolution, please inform us at the New Jersey State AFL-CIO. Our Legislative Affairs Director Eric Richard can be reached at 609-989-8730 or [ericrichard@njaficio.org](mailto:ericrichard@njaficio.org) and would be happy to discuss the bill further with you or answer any question you may have about it.



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