

"Be Careful What You Ask For AFSCME, You Just Might Get It!"



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Who Will Pay Dues to One and Service Fee to the Other?

To the Editor:

Cumberland Times-News

I have been reading with much interest the various letters in reference to "The Fair Share Act" and would like to offer my own thoughts on this most controversial subject. There is an old saying, "Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it." Back in 1996, Gov. Parris Glendening issued an executive order allowing for limited collective bargaining for a number of state employees.

This was done as a pay back to AFSCME for their endorsement and support. At that time certain employees were excluded from the collective bargaining order. Most notably excluded were employees of the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, St. Mary's College of Maryland and Baltimore City Community College. Also missing from the order was any provision which allowed for any service fees or forced union membership. In spite of these exclusions, AFSCME vigorously campaigned and spent a great deal of money to win the elections in order to become the exclusive representative for covered employees in six of the nine bargaining units. They knew there were no service fees but they wanted to be the exclusive representative. Be careful what you ask for.

As stated earlier, "The Fair Share Act" does not apply to university employees. Why is it fair for other state employees to pay a service fee if university employees are not required? Could it be that Maryland Classified Employee's Association is the exclusive representative for a number of university employees? It is my understanding that bargaining unit employees would vote on any negotiated fees. If this is the case, aren't they putting the cart before the horse? Wouldn't it make more sense to inform all state/university employees covered by collective bargaining of the proposed service fee amount and then let them vote bargaining unit by bargaining unit whether to accept them or not? If any bargaining unit votes to accept service fees, introduce legislation to allow it. This has nothing to do with being fair and everything to do with putting more money in AFSCME's pocket as well as trying to reward them for endorsing Gov. O'Malley.

For anyone who does not believe service fees will generate a great deal of money, consider the following: In the state of California prior to service fees being implemented, approximately 20 percent of state employees were members of AFSCME. After service fees were implemented, AFSCME's membership grew to over 70 percent of the state employees. Another thing service fees do is eliminate competition. Who is going to pay dues to MCEA and a service fee to AFSCME?

Last, I would like to make the following suggestion to other state employees who believe as I do that AFSCME is weak and ineffective that whether "The Fair Share Act" passes or not, we should begin to join Maryland Classified Employee's Association in great numbers and then petition MCEA to file for a decertification election and decertify AFSCME as the exclusive representative of each of the six bargaining units and then elect MCEA as the exclusive representative for those six bargaining units.

Be careful what you ask for AFSCME, you just might get it.

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You can also view the article at http://www.times-news.com/archivesearch/local_story_067234747.html

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