



IBEW LOCAL 30
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers AFL-CIO-CFL

May 28, 2021

Good Morning Sisters and Brothers,

As we are now in the 15th month of the Pandemic, I want to begin by hoping you are well and that this message finds you in fine spirits. This message was going to be an update on our ongoing and seemingly endless negotiations, but it will end up being a combination update, newsletter, and Memorial Day address. On the furlough front, I can report that our negotiations continue. Since I last wrote you, New Jersey received its full \$6.2 Billion payment from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) as signed into law on March 11, 2021. Under the ARPA, funds were sent to states to pay for the services of essential workers whose pay had been impacted by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. While we remain at odds over what this union should have to pay, by way of concessions, this new development throws a wrinkle that none of us were expecting. In every corner and quarter of this state, our rank has made sure that the work for which we are responsible has continued. As IBEW International President Lonnie Stephenson said just a few short days ago at the 75th Annual Third District Progress Meeting, "Every IBEW Worker is an Essential Worker". Our Union had a considerable input into the ARPA, and I will do what I can to hold this administration to its obligations to care for those who remained on their post and in their station in the face of danger throughout this pandemic. Simply stated, if we don't continue the fight for the recognition of the work we've done, who will?

For those of you who are new to the bargaining unit, and to state it again because I can never get tired of thinking about it, our contract as it was ratified on 01-31-20 called for a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment to be paid on the first full pay period after July 1, 2020, July 1, 2021, and April 1, 2022. Last summer, this administration unilaterally, and quite likely illegally, withheld the first of the three COLAs that were due. Our position, from then to now remains the same: our COLAs are part of a three-year wage adjustment plan that we settled upon when we ratified our contract. What did we have to give up to get this wage adjustment that finally, and after 38

years, put us on par with the people we manage? We had to surrender NJ Direct 15 for the NJ Direct / Unity Plan. Not for nothing, paying less for less insurance it is not reform, and a 250% increase in the cost of medications is not reform either! To date, no one who is a member of Local Union 30 has had to take a furlough day, and we continue to oppose the concept as a matter of principle.

As for our July 1 COLA, while I have not been told it is being withheld, I would be surprised if they would end up paying the second COLA after having withheld the first. What I do know for certain is, if it is not paid in July, its' not being paid is a result of a decision made long before today. While this Union continues to negotiate in good faith, even after a five-month delay from September 2020 to February 2021 caused solely by the state, we continue to bargain and represent the needs of every manager. Our rank did not run and hide, our rank didn't sit idle for months, but day in and day out, even in the darkest days of the pandemic, we did our jobs for our staff and for our public and I am proud that I stand in solidarity with all of us who made a difference when those less than us would have withered. IBEW Local Union 30 continues the fight for our rights as workers and our right to a fair and equal wage, and IBEW Local Union 30 continues to win!

As you know, this weekend is Memorial Day weekend, and Monday is Memorial Day. Though the practice of society publicly recognizing the sacrifice of soldiers who fell in battle dates to Greece of 500 B.C., its American origins can be traced back to the Civil War. Originally known as Decoration Day, it came to life during and after the Civil War when burial and remembrance became a very universal social experience. In fact, Civil War hero General John A Logan, was instrumental in having the holiday recognized on a national basis. The Decoration Day Holiday as established in 1868 originally fell on May 30th. It was renamed Memorial Day in 1882 and was officially renamed by Federal law in 1967. In 1968, the observation date was moved from May 30th to the fourth Monday in May. Unlike Veterans Day, which recognizes all veterans, Memorial Day is a time for all of us to reflect on all the brave men and women, fathers and mothers, children, friends, and neighbors who went off to battle and never returned. As Americans, we are all the beneficiaries of the liberty that these people died defending. Let us use this Memorial Day to remember those fallen in service to this country and to appreciate the wealth of liberty they left behind in their ultimate sacrifice.

As I conclude this message, I wanted to take a moment to let you know that our first live and in-person General Membership Meeting in over 14 months was held on 05-19-21 and was very well attended. The election of officers for Local Union 30 went off without a hitch and all were unanimously re-elected to another three-year term. Your officers look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve you. As the Business Manager, and even in these trying times, it has been a herculean task but also one of the single most rewarding experiences of my life being at the helm of this great Union. I speak for all of us when I say, we do not fight for the things we fight to be contrarians. We fight for our rights and for the cause of right, for as managers and for decades on end we were wronged. No manager should ever have to suffer the indignity of earning less than the people they manage. That fight for fairness, equity, and respect was started by the

Public Sector Managers Association in 1991, and 30 years since, the battle continues. We all work in positions for which we never get enough thanks or appreciation relative to the responsibility we have and the work we do. Thus, I wanted to take this moment to thank each of you for all that you do in your various stations within our government and for the citizens of this great state that we all have the honor of serving.

In solidarity, forever!

Al

Al Laubsch

Business Manager – IBEW LU30