



IBEW LOCAL UNION 30

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS AFL-CIO-CFL
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Good Morning Sisters and Brothers,

It has been a whirlwind few weeks for IBEW Local Union 30! To start, after 11 months of hard fought negotiations the membership overwhelmingly ratified the COLA Deferral / Pension Security Plan that saw that the members of this Local Union take no furlough days. Two weeks after that, we were back on the road for another ratification that brought a group of Assistant Section Chiefs from the Office of the Attorney General into Local 30. And so, without further ado, and for all of you new members getting to read one of our newsletters for the first time I'd like to make a formal introduction: Existing members of IBEW Local 30, I would like you to meet our new Assistant Section Chiefs. Assistant Section Chiefs, I'd like you to meet the membership of IBEW Local Union 30. My name is Al, and in short, we're all here! It is my hope that you'll have the chance to come out to one of our membership meetings so that we can all do this live and in person. As for anyone I spoke to while on the road, if I owe you an email response, I will get to it as I am on vacation this coming week, the first vacation I have had since November 2019. If you don't hear from me, please write me again as I'm sure your email got lost in the shuffle of Return to the Worksite Plans and other correspondence.

I was there when the votes were counted for both ratification meetings, and while the numbers for ratification were overwhelming, I know there were a few of you who voted your conscience, and voted no. I, for one, am glad you did. Look, as negotiators, we do the best job we can to get the best deal we can and then we present that measure before you, our membership, for a vote. Up or down, you have the right to vote, and I would be remiss if I did not mention how important that right is and should always be to any manager of this Local. It was not too long ago that things were inflicted upon us without a say and without a voice. This Local remains committed to be the voice for all of our members, even those who voted no. As for our successful negotiations, we are the only non-law enforcement union that saw no furloughs. In addition, while the benefits of the contract reopener are back-loaded, we'll be seeing significant wage increases that will blunt our current inflationary trend. Lastly, and most importantly, the reopener protects our pension rights so that we can retire with the dignity that was denied so many of us throughout our long careers in management. Our successful negotiation was the direct result of all of our negotiators having skin in the game. It really makes a difference as it gives us a level of understanding that some other organizations lack, as well as the reason to stand upon our principles of fairness, equity and respect in order to get the best deal possible. Like I said repeatedly throughout our process, this Local is not the shell for any governor but exists to represent you!

As managers, we have the inauspicious task of running the day to day operations of our government. When people ask me what management is, simply stated it is the art and science of completing tasks through the labor of others. Regardless of Department,

Division, or Directive, this is the single thread that unites us all. Administrations come and go, but our task never changes: to be good stewards of our program areas and to make sure that our tasks are completed in the name of the good people of New Jersey and the citizens we are sworn to serve. This is why we wanted the Assistant Section Chiefs as they are a natural fit to this organization. As managers it is also our job to follow the edits and directives of the executives that manage us all. This brings us to the Return to the Worksite plans being implemented throughout government service. So far, I have been in the discussion and review with 12 of the 16 departments and the plans and implementation schedules vary significantly. I used the term Return to the Worksite as these plans are not a Return to Work as no one in our rank ever stopped working. Moreover, and just by sheer numbers, nearly half of all managers we represent never stopped going to the worksite. I know we have received requests for this Local to take a position on people to either remain managing from home as well as on people returning to work faster. Given how diverse our assignments are at present, it is an area that is impossible upon which for the Local to take a single position. The one thing we can take a position on deals with exemptions that exist in each plan. If you have a need for medical purposes or reasons relating to childcare, follow the instructions and make your submissions to your people in Human Resources or as directed. If there are any issues, such as a request denial, or unreasonable modification after you have followed the procedures, please reach out to us.

Another part of most of the Return to the Worksite plans I have reviewed is an emphasis on Mental Health. Recently I have read several articles likening what essential staff has gone through over the course of the pandemic as being very similar to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Indeed, none of us took our jobs with the expectation of working 12 hour days for weeks or months on end. While I am glad that there is an emphasis on mental health I am concerned about the reliance on the Employee Advisory Service Program for this service. For many years, EAS has been the boogeyman of upper management and often a place that people land with issues tied to discipline. Moreover, I, like many of you, have concerns about their confidentiality. What I do not want to see is a manager, who may need some help coping, ending up being ostracized for the feelings that they have, which are completely natural. If it really is OK to not be OK, anyone who is not OK shouldn't have to fear being drummed out of the Corps as a result of it. If you haven't figured it out yet, our jobs are the loneliest jobs in all of government service. More often than not, neither the staff below us nor executives above us understand what we go through on a regular day much less what we've gone through during the pandemic. If you need help, I encourage you to get it, and if you just need someone to listen reach out to us, we're here to help!

As for help, there is a significant number of Managers who we represent and for whom help has been denied for these many years, and those are our &98 Managers. Over the course of three contracts we have made every effort to assist these managers but were rebuffed by both the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) as well as the Civil Service Commission. What is at issue here are the wage improvements enjoyed by so many of our members that have been denied to them because an &98 manager only receives a Cost of Living Adjustment but no annual increments. In short, any &98 who has been in title prior to Public Law 78 still has not seen their take home pay improve to before Public Law 78 levels. It is the group of managers for which we have the smallest membership density, and I do not blame them one bit for not joining. I have been working with our friends in the Legislature and what we have not been able to accomplish through negotiation we seek to accomplish through changing the law. For this Local union this is a necessary course of action because we cannot have fairness, equity and respect while at least some of us remain the same kind of second class citizens we all were in the days before Unionization. I long for the day I could beat my sword into a ploughshare, and once this last fight is over, maybe I'll be able to do just that. Until then, our fight for equality continues.

Onto general news, the Fifth Annual IBEW Local Union 30 Scholarship Program is about to get under way to get us back on the correct schedule that was impacted by the pandemic. So, if you're a college student or the proud parent of a college student or a recently graduated high school senior, you have the chance to participate in this worthy and worthwhile program in time for the Fall Semester of this year!

As I conclude this message, I want to wish you all well as we continue to emerge from the

pandemic. For some of us, the challenges of rebuilding our organizations await. For others, this will be a reset from the ways of old to the ways of now. While I remain optimistic that the best days for all of us lie in front of us, I am admonished to remember that old habits die hard. Case in point: we signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) concerning the Assistant Section Chiefs with GOER on July 2. That following week while we were out getting the MOA ratified both Local 30 and the ASCs found out that “somehow” and through some “mysterious circumstances”, the health benefits of 48 ASCs were cancelled back on July 2. While I was born at night, I was not born last night and sometimes coincidence is a little coincidental. Just like I told the membership of Local 30 during its ratification process, there are some horrible people on the other side, holdovers from the last administration, and they remain. To cancel the health benefits of people newly represented by this union and to deprive medicine to their sick children is an outrage, and if it isn't to you then dammit, it should be! Though things have been straightened out, I say this not to play upon your emotions, but to illustrate one of my favorite quotes from John F. Kennedy: “Forgive your enemies, but never forget who they are.” We still have enemies, they resent our success, and resent it enough to harm defenseless children in the process. While there is much work that this Union has done, there is, apparently, much more work left to do. In closing, I hope this message finds you well, and we all appreciate your continued support! I look forward to seeing you at our meeting this coming week and hearing from you all soon!

In Solidarity, Forever!

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