



**NJ STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH
BARGAINING UPDATE
June 26, 2023**



One day longer, One day stronger

Our CWA Bargaining Team has continued to meet with the State to try to reach a tentative agreement before our current contract expiration of June 30th. CWA has met with the State for 20 sessions, including several sessions throughout late May and early June.

As we know, our current contract remains in full force if we do not have a new ratified agreement before that date, but our goal has been to reach settlement by that date if possible.

We are writing to say we will need more time to get to a complete package that our Bargaining Team would recommend to members. From day one, CWA committed that we are not done with bargaining until we address every issue which members indicated is a priority in the best way possible. We are not there yet. We know that we can do better than what the State is offering, and we will continue negotiating until we have a contract that adequately addresses the needs of our members.

CWA made large and comprehensive demands over wages, telework, and other important issues. We took strong positions, and we are sticking to them. Our members set clear priorities for this contract: significant wage growth that breaks away from the patterns of the past eight years, protect the telework program and ensure that the program is equitable and enforceable, and protect against unaffordable and rapid healthcare increases. We are also trying to improve on prior contract language in areas like layoffs and privatization that protect us in the future. In addition, we are looking to ensure that promotional opportunities are available to our members and are not handed out to political appointees, bypassing civil service procedures.

Here is the status of the highest priority issues:

- **Salary and Wages:** We have made progress on modernizing the step system and creating growth, but we are looking to make more progress. Across the board increases are also still a sticking point. CWA made strong demands in these areas, and we have more work to do to reach a final salary package.
- **Healthcare:** We have made progress to protect the Unity PPO plan and contain costs. Our current contract contains a process to reopen negotiations if future premiums increase by a certain amount. This type of reopener clause remains under discussion for our next contract. Again, healthcare is part of a final package, so our work isn't finished on these issues.
- **Telework and Civil Service Issues:** We must secure a process to deal with telework during the period that civil service regulations are created for a permanent program. We also

must secure a quick and fair process to deal with disputes that arise on an ongoing basis. The State wants to retain as much control over telework as possible, so we are in intense discussions over how to resolve our issues as part of a final contract.

CWA Strong! Member mobilization has strengthened negotiations this far. We still have more work to do.

As a recap, here is the timeline of negotiations so far:

- Fall 2022 – Commenced bargaining preparation, which included surveying members on ***your*** priorities for these negotiations.
- February 16 – First bargaining session.
- March through April – Solidarity Days every Thursday to support negotiations.
- April 26 – “Fair Contract” Petition with 10,000 signatures delivered to Governor’s Office by over 300 CWA members.
- May – Solidarity Days continue.
- May 31 – Worksite Picketing at over a dozen locations with thousands of CWA members.
- 20 sessions with the State so far... and counting.

CWA members know that contract negotiations go as long as it takes to reach a quality final package. We know our members are eager to know more details, so please stay in touch with your Local for membership meeting dates and communications.

The CWA Bargaining Team cannot win the contract we need without your support. If we are unable to make sufficient progress at the bargaining table, we will be asking for your help in demonstrating to the State that we are united behind our demands for a fair contract.

IN SOLIDARITY!

CWA Bargaining Committee