

Municipal Workers Bill of Rights

Nationwide more than 657,000 jobs have been lost in the public sector since the start of the recession. North Carolina is among the 10 states nationally with the highest rates of public sector lay-offs since 2008. For example, between 2008 and 2009 alone, the cities of Charlotte and Raleigh laid off more than 2,000 public sector workers.

Municipalities have sought to balance city budgets through combinations of reduction in force policies, short staffing, low wages for workers while managers receive substantial wage increases, anti-unionism, and the like along with service cut backs and substantial increases in fees for public services.

As public sector workers continue to fight for the repeal on the ban of collective bargaining rights for public sector workers, public sector workers must wage a struggle for fair standards that every worker has a right to expect to be able to perform quality work. Therefore, in February 2012, the Municipal Workers Council of UE Local 150, The North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, initiated a campaign for the enactment of Worker Bill of Rights in cities throughout NC, that would include the following tenets:

- 1. Wages:** The right to a family supporting living wage and annual across the board general wage increases (gwi), eliminating the need for a second or third job to support a family.
- 2. Meet and Confer:** Require "Meet and Confer" sessions at least annually with city managers and operational department heads, resulting in settlement of issues and an annually renewed, written "*Memorandum of Understanding*".
- 3. Minimum Staffing Standards:** Establishment of minimum staffing standards by department, annually reviewed, in order to protect the lives and health of employees and adequate provision of city services.
- 4. Union Representation:** The right to include union designated representatives at all steps of the grievance procedure.
- 5. Temporary Workers:** The right for temporary employees to be made permanent after 60 days.

6. **Privatization:** No contracting out of city jobs or privatization of city services.
7. **Health and Safety:** Establishment of quarterly meetings of employee chosen safety committee representatives with managers to maintain or construct standards that protect the lives, health, and safety of all workers.
8. **Health Care Costs:** Annual review of health care costs for the purpose of reducing costs for employees.
9. **Union Access:** The right to union access to city workers on city property during non work times and locations.
10. **Payroll Dues Deduction:** The right for workers to use payroll dues deduction to pay union dues.
11. **Dignity and Respect:** The right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of job classification.
12. **Non Discrimination:** The right to non-discriminatory, fair, and equal treatment in job opportunities and promotions regardless of race, gender, age, national origin, immigration, sexual orientation, disabilities, or religion.
13. **Policy Changes:** The right to 30 days written notice of proposed policy changes after meetings with workers in affected departments.

