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January 9, 2017

The Honorable Bruce Rauner
Governor
State of Illinois
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Rauner:

It was almost exactly one year ago today--January 8, 2016--that your representatives walked out on negotiations with our union as we sought to reach a contract settlement for some 38,000 state employees represented by AFSCME. At that time and repeatedly over the intervening year, our union made clear that we were prepared to continue negotiating and to modify the proposals that we had on the bargaining table.

Instead your administration has persisted in publicly attacking those proposals while refusing to participate in any further negotiations that would have allowed for modifications to them. Moreover, you have expended significant public resources on a bevy of legal maneuvers to stymie the collective bargaining process, insisting that you should be able to impose your own terms on employees.

The terms you seek to impose--a four-year wage freeze, coupled with a 100% increase in employee health care premiums--would equate to a \$10,000 pay cut for the average state worker. An income reduction of that magnitude would have very serious and harmful consequences for the great majority of employees and their families.

AFSCME members are not the only ones who believe that your demands are unnecessarily extreme. Settlements reached with other unions in state government do not contain such steep increases in healthcare costs combined with wage freezes. Perhaps most tellingly, in the recently completed interest arbitration for Illinois State Police/FOP Troopers Lodge 41, an independent arbitrator rejected your Administration's plan to increase employee health premiums by 100%.

We know well that Illinois residents rely on the vital services state employees provide. We want to keep Illinois working--without the potential disruption of a statewide strike.

Since your administration has refused to meet with us, last week the AFSCME bargaining team met and voted to take the initiative to seek common ground by publicly putting forward a new framework that significantly modifies our previous positions on core economic issues. We believe the following terms represent a framework for a contract settlement that is fair and responsible:



- ✓ Employees would forgo any base wage increases in all four years of the contract.
- ✓ Employee contributions toward health insurance premium costs would increase by 2.5% immediately and an additional 3% in both FY 18 and FY 19, along with increases in co-pays and deductibles—the same terms which the independent arbitrator found to be acceptable in the State Police interest arbitration.
- ✓ The amounts you have already proposed to expend on employee bonuses--\$1000 per employee in the first year of the contract and 2% of payroll in each subsequent year—would be equitably distributed to all employees as one-time payments in each of those years.
- ✓ In order to prevent large pay differentials among employees performing the same work, the 40% of employees who have not reached the top of their pay plan would move up to the next step in that plan in FY 18 and 19.

I want to emphasize that these terms do not represent our “last, best and final offer” on the issues listed—and, moreover, that we are prepared to engage in further negotiations on the full range of other outstanding issues.

As you know, lawmakers of both parties have called on your administration to return to the bargaining table. By putting forward this settlement framework, our union is making very clear that we are prepared to make the serious effort necessary to reach an agreement that is fair to all. We would hope that you respond in kind by directing your representatives to resume negotiations. Working constructively to find common ground, we can affirm to the people of Illinois that compromise, not conflict, is the means to move our state forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roberta Lynch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Roberta Lynch
Executive Director