

## FACT CHECKING JOHN TERRANOVA'S LETTER TO EMPLOYEES

**JT FALSE CLAIMS:** *"AFSCME's letter regarding its latest offer is nothing more than attempt to mislead its members and the public... AFSCME has described its offer... as a "wage freeze." In fact, it is nothing of the sort. In their offer, AFSCME has demanded steps for the last two years of the contract. Meanwhile, in an administrative hearing, AFSCME has also demanded steps for the first two years of the contract. So, AFSCME is asking the State to pay four years of steps. Not a wage freeze."*

**FACTS:** Wow. How could someone sandwich so many falsehoods into one little paragraph? No, AFSCME did not attempt to "mislead" members and the public regarding a "wage freeze". In both the press release that the union issued and the message sent out to members, the union plainly and clearly listed **four** different changes to our core economic positions. One of these was 'no increase in base wages for four years'; another was 'step increases in FY18 and FY19'. The term 'wage increase' has always been used to mean a general increase to base wages for all employees, as opposed to "step increase" which references movement through the pay plan. In fact, the governor's own proposals differentiated between wage increases and step increases, proposing freezes in each.

**JT FALSE CLAIMS:** *"AFSCME also continues to refuse to compromise on simple, common sense measures like overtime after forty hours and reasonable suspicion drug testing."*

**FACTS:** Talk about standing the facts on their head. The AFSCME Bargaining Committee has repeatedly offered to renew negotiations on all outstanding issues, including hours of work and drug testing, and a willingness to compromise to reach a fair contract settlement. It is the Rauner Administration that has consistently refused all further negotiations and refused to make any compromise. On the specific issues listed, Rauner has insisted that the union's only option is to go along with his plan to implement his 'last, best and final' terms without any compromise or changes whatsoever. If the governor genuinely wants to work toward compromise on any issue, all he has to do is return to the bargaining table.

**JT CLAIMS:** *"On health insurance, AFSCME has offered to increase premiums 2.5-3% annually. This tiny increase would result in taxpayers picking up an even greater share of state employee health insurance costs than they do today, because medical costs increase at a far higher rate."*

**FACTS:** This claim isn't exactly false, just misleading. Those are the health insurance terms that AFSCME put forward. However, JT fails to note that they were based on the recommendation of an independent arbitrator in the State Troopers interest arbitration who chose them because the Rauner Administration refused to budge from

its demand that employees pay 100% more for their health care, which the arbitrator said was 'unreasonable.' JT also fails to note that AFSCME made clear in putting forward this new framework that it is not the union's 'last, best and final offer' and we stand ready to return to the bargaining table for further negotiations.

**JT FALSE CLAIMS:** *“Given the State's financial conditions, the State's offer is very reasonable. You don't have to take my word for it; nineteen other unions have agreed to similar offers.”*

**FACTS:** That's not even close to true. In the case of the Teamsters, Rauner actually agreed to pay **more** toward their health care coverage so employees' costs will not increase; in the case of the construction trade unions, he agreed to wage increases based on increases in the prevailing wage in their sector; and in the case of conservation police, he agreed to 'no layoffs' for four years. None of these qualify as "similar" to the harsh terms he is trying to impose on AFSCME members.

**JT FALSE CLAIMS:** *“On subcontracting, the State's offer continues to offer protections for employees from layoffs, as well as the opportunity for employees to compete against private vendors for additional work.”*

**FACTS:** 1) The “protections” against layoffs are greatly reduced under Rauner's terms by restricting bumping rights; 2) These limited layoff rights have nothing to do with the “subcontracting” language the state proposed and there are no additional safeguards against layoffs in that provision; 3) Employees will only have the “opportunity” to compete against private vendors if the employer allows it—and if employees do submit a bid for work they are already performing, the employer can reject that bid with no explanation or appeal process—and proceed to subcontract the work.

**JT FALSE CLAIMS:** *“In reality, AFSCME's latest offer is just a re-packaging of the same unrealistic demands that it has made from the outset of negotiations.”*

**FACTS:** Simply put, no person with even the most minimal mathematical skills would claim that moving from a proposed wage increase that averaged 2% annually to 0% annually is merely “re-packaging”.

**JT FALSE CLAIMS:** *“If the strike is unlawful, employees can be terminated for striking. The previous tolling agreement between the State and AFSCME had a “no strike, no lockout” clause, making a strike under the tolling agreement illegal...”*

**FACT:** This is just an attempt to intimidate employees. Public employees have a legally protected right to strike without fear of termination or other reprisals. If there is a strike, it will be a lawful one, and employees' legal right to strike will be protected. The Rauner Administration is in court now saying the Tolling Agreement is

no longer valid. That's the basis of his claim that he can impose his terms on employees. If the governor will agree to honor the terms of the Tolling Agreement and not impose his terms, then a strike can be avoided. But the governor can't legally have it both ways. Either the Tolling Agreement is in effect or it isn't.

**JT CLAIMS:** *“Even if a strike by AFSCME is determined to be legal, employees may be replaced.”*

**FACTS:** The Administration could not replace even a small fraction of 28,000 skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated employees. There are many lengthy procedural requirements that must be met before someone can be hired as a permanent state employee. And it takes months just to get a grade before someone can even be considered.

**JT CLAIMS:** *“The State has had extensive conversations with outside resources who are willing to step up in the event of a strike. Additionally, the State's procurement laws contain an exception that allows the State to immediately engage outside vendors.”*

**FACTS:** While undoubtedly such “conversations” have occurred, it is unlikely in the extreme that local governments and/or vendors have the necessary qualified staff to step in and do the jobs of state employees. The many very important and necessary jobs that AFSCME members perform cannot be performed by someone else without years of experience. There are very few state positions which someone from the outside can just step in and do even if they meet the basic qualifications for the job.