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July 26, 2010

Dear Unit President:

Subject: AME President Cheryl Felice Seeks a 60 Day Extension to Early Retirement Incentive Program

When Governor Paterson offered the County Executives throughout New York State the opportunity to sign on to an Early Retirement Incentive package (ERIP), he provided the approved bill but left the many particulars of eligibility up to the County Executives. The time-period for the ERIP, however, can and should be extended by the Legislature, to 60 days.

Local Law 35-2010 (IR 1724-10) adopted 7/7/10 in Suffolk County, gave Mr. Levy full power under state law to designate who can participate in the ERI. **This is where the problems began for our Suffolk County workers – because the only “limitation” placed on that eligibility in LL 35-2010 was a prohibition of ERI for employees funded at least 50% by state and/or federal aid.** An exception to that 50% rule was also provided in LL 35-2010 for 5 designated positions in the Office of the Aging and for employees at the departments of Health and Social Service.

When - Mr. Levy issued his AEM (All Employees Memo) #21-10 on July 14, 2010, he listed 13 categories of the *ineligible titles* - such as Consumer Affairs, law enforcement, lawyers, and JJFSNF. This means that it is Mr. Levy, not the local law or County Legislators, who is ultimately and unilaterally blocking certain people from being able to participate in ERIP.

Legislators should be aware that Mr. Levy's AEM **contradicts the Local Law** in the section wherein he states, “Those employees whose salary is at least 50% funded with federal and/or state aid... most likely will NOT be approved for inclusion.” **Local Law 35-2010 did not grant any such discretion.**

AME asks our 18-member Legislature if your own express language is being ignored – and contravened by the County Executive **and even more disturbing – Mr. Levy was the sponsor of the legislation that is being ignored!**

On June 22, 2010 – After addressing the SC Legislature in Riverhead on AME's endorsement of the ERI and our encouragement to the Legislators for the **full inclusion of all county workers**; AME President Cheryl Felice held a “full house” union membership meeting that night – again, notifying members of the ERI; its benefits; and its **severe limitations to many county workers, due to Mr. Levy's own eligibility restrictions.**

In that public sector workers work at the direction of elected officials (albeit the County Executive and the SC Legislature), President Felice advised our AME members to call their respective legislators – to

advise you of their desire to retire with full participation under the ERIP!

- **IR-1726-2010** – sponsored by Mr. Levy and pending before the County Legislature, **links expansion of the “open period” from 30 to 60 days (to September 21, 2010) – to the sale of the nursing home!**
- This bill is **very misleading** – because the title of the bill and the accompanying backup documentation create the impression that the bill is enlarging the number of employees eligible for participation. **THAT IS NOT SO! This bill only deals with expanding the “open period” from 30 to 60 days.** And why? *It appears that the Executive’s Budget Office is overwhelmed by the huge volume of applications for this ERIP – and the burden Mr. Levy has imposed on them in calculating all of the costs of each application! They do not appear to have enough time – and they need more time to handle this paperwork burden!*
- **HOW TO RESOLVE THIS DILEMMA?** AME asks our Legislative body to simply extend the ERIP period to 60 days.
- As the union that represents just about 7,000 workers, with a large amount expressing interest in this ERIP, AME President seeks your help in eliminating any unnecessary anxiety and resulting innocent mistakes that could be made – based on incorrect, confusing, and misleading information.

On behalf of the AME officers and its members, your assistance to the workers who make Suffolk work, is appreciated.

Unity wins,



Cheryl A. Felice
President