



Probation Association of New Jersey

Serving New Jersey Since 1904

An affiliate of the American Probation and Parole Association

2409 Paynters Road

Wall, NJ 08736

Phone (732) 223-1799 Fax (732) 223-8363

Website: www.panj.org

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Business Manager

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First VP, Supervisor's Unit

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MEDIATION UPDATE

Brothers and Sisters,

PANJ Line Staff had their first mediation session on Monday April 21st and the Supervisors' had theirs on April 10th. These sessions were both in "caucus" meaning that the parties were separated with Union reps in one room and AOC reps in another. Both Line and Supervisor units have the same mediator, Kathleen Vogt. She started each session by explaining to us what her function is as a mediator. Mrs. Vogt cannot compel either party to sign off on an article or to settle. Her job as a PERC mediator is to work in a broader context, starting with "suppose one party can agree to..."

Line Staff started their session talking about the Grievance article. We went line by line with the mediator over both our proposal and the AOC's proposal, and compared it to the current language we have. The mediator did say that we have a very long, detailed Grievance article which she routinely does not see in current Union contracts. We did know walking in that our Grievance article is very strong, and that we are not willing to give up our rights. We were able to make movement on Grievance claims related to classification issues, electronic signatures, adding a couple of new arbitrators, and leaving the word complaint in the articles up until a certain point. Mrs. Vogt did say that she would have liked to chip away at more of the articles that are still open. Our team was pleased because it was more movement than we have had in months. We ended the Line Staff session talking about our Letter of Agreement. Our Letter of Agreement is so important to the health of our organization, and gives us the written right to pursue actions through civil service. The AOC reported to the mediator that they want the Letter of Agreement removed for clean-up purposes only. Therefore, we suggested to the mediator that she present to the AOC that we house the Letter of Agreement in an article that already exists in our contract instead. We will have an answer to that question at our next session. The last thing that Line Staff spoke about was our Health Benefits article. During negotiations the AOC presented a Health Benefits proposal but did not discuss it with us.

Supervisors' started their session with discussing economics and 9.8. We decided to start with economics to see if we could make any movement. We presented an 18 step compensation package as a counter proposal to their economic article. Unfortunately we didn't make any movement, but we will keep re-visiting it in our next sessions. Supervisors' also presented a proposal with respect to Article 9.8. That article is so important to our members and we suggested several ways to make the article fairer.

Mrs. Vogt ended the sessions by letting us know that now that she has our proposals, our current contract and has asked the AOC to provide her, via email, with their proposals; she will put together a write-up for us for the next session and intends to make more movement as we go along.

Both units have a joint prep session scheduled for next week, and the next mediation sessions will be held on the 21st of May for Line Staff, and the 29th of May for Supervisors. We will continue to keep you posted as we move along.

In Solidarity,

Ellen Cribbin
1st Vice President
Line Staff

Gavin Cummings
1st Vice President
Supervisors