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# PRESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER

October, 2000

## UNIFICATION COMMITTEE ENDS HIATUS

By John Morton, Editor

During the state takeover of the courts, the Unification Committee was the name given to the working group of labor and management representatives who developed the Letter of Agreement. This document set forth management and employee rights and allowed the unification legislation to go forward. In the Letter of Agreement the Unification Committee gave itself a continuing role, but the committee did not meet for a long time prior to September 5, 2000. PANJ members had many issues that resulted from unification of the courts which were appropriate for the committee. George Christie and Peter Tortoreto sent many pieces of correspondence to members, requesting a meeting. PANJ would like to thank the other unions and Chairman Dale T. Badoud of the JCAU for joining with us to re-ignite this significant effort.

The latest meetings of this committee have already born fruit. On September 29, management and the majority representatives for the unions in the Judiciary signed a settlement agreement to correct for factors not taken into account in Equalization and Vicinage Adjusted Pay (VAP) calculations. After state takeover, Bergen, Middlesex, Ocean, Atlantic and Burlington counties were identified as having had county health benefits which exceeded the value of those now provided by the state. The benefits packages were compared and the employees were given a stipend to cover the cost of lost benefits. The Letter of Agr