

November 12, 2008

CITY OF HARTFORD
COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL
550 Main Street, Room 208
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: Statement on Resolution #31, "Suspension of Layoffs"

President Torres and Council Members;

My name is Elizabeth Kavanah and I work as an environmental health sanitarian for the City of Hartford. I am also the President of the CSEA/SEIU Local 2001 Chapter that represents the City's professional employees.

I am here tonight to **urge adoption** of Council Member Segarra's proposed **Resolution #31**, which calls for suspending further lay-offs among the City's workforce. We believe it will empower our members, and all of the City's public service workers, to lead for the quality services that residents and businesses count on.

We are also concerned about the impact if City leaders continue trying to balance the current and future years' budgets by cutting vital public services. The reality is that Hartford still hasn't fully recovered from devastating cuts back in 2002, and we're worried cutting public services again not only won't stop the bleeding, it will also prolong the pain.

I'd also like to announce that we have created a new Quality Services Committee within our Union Chapter. The goal is to solicit innovative ideas from our members on how to "weather this economic storm," while saving taxpayers money and delivering efficient, effective services.

We have already compiled a list we plan to present to the Court of Common Council and Mayor Perez.

Some of our members' suggestions were simple and require little more than the support of management in the agencies where we work. These include collecting unpaid fees and fines owed to the City, which would generate much-needed revenues.

Others were more complex, such as establishing 4-day workweeks and alternate work schedules. The results could include conserving energy costs, as well as reducing absenteeism and eliminating the need for some overtime among City workers.

Still, others were long-overdue changes to bring City services into the 21st Century, such as replacing the utilities in aging facilities with cleaner, cheaper "green" sources.

These and our many other ideas share one thing in common. That is our commitment to our number one priority; to make sure that public health, safety, and quality of life are not sacrificed for short-term budgetary relief.

Again, I **urge adoption** of Council Member Segarra's **Resolution #31** calling for suspension of further lay-offs. It is a step toward turning the economic crisis into an opportunity to develop long-term solutions that will empower our members to deliver quality services.

Thank you for hearing our voice on this critical matter.

Elizabeth Kavanah, RS

Environmental Health Sanitarian, City of Hartford Health & Human Services
President, CHPEA, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001

CC: Mayor Eddie A. Perez