

February 10, 2009

Town of Tolland  
Town Council  
21 Tolland Green  
Tolland, CT 06084

Re: Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreement for Town Hall Employees in CSEA, SEIU Local 2001

Chairperson Frederick M. Daniels and Council Members;

As president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, which represents approximately 6,000 municipal public service workers across Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony in support of the collective bargaining agreement ratified by our members who work for the Town of Tolland.

I currently work as a lieutenant for the State Department of Correction, where I have served for nineteen years. I am also the First Selectman of Sprague, so I'm in a unique position to understand the perspectives of not only our Union's members, but also of you, the governing body of Tolland.

While each of our municipalities faces its own budget challenges, it is imperative that we not place the burden of resolving these issues on the individuals who are providing vital public services that are needed now more than ever. As our respective Towns' elected leaders, we need to be creative in resolving our financial difficulties and look for long-term solutions. We can do this without jeopardizing the welfare of the men and women who have been willing to work with you in implementing cost-saving measures, such as the 4-day workweek.

I urge you to support this tentative agreement which, after a lengthy negotiation process, your employees ratified the day after they received the Town's proposals. The offer was accepted not because it reflected everything that our members sought, but because they recognized their responsibility to acknowledge current economic conditions. It was bargained in good faith, and they are asking that the Town Council approve the contract in good faith.

The reality is that the Town employees' wages will end up contributing to the stimulus of our local economy. They won't invest in foreign emerging markets; they will invest in goods and services provided by local businesses. That's just what the smart economists — both conservative and progressive — have ordered.

These same economists have also warned against cutting public services during an economic downturn because it actually deepens the crisis and makes recovery more difficult. The risk of failing to approve this agreement is that it could result in driving away the hard-working men and women who provide these vital services for your constituents. After all, they have families to provide for, too.

Thank you for time and attention in this matter. Our Union members look forward to a continued strong relationship with the Town Council in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Osten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "O".

**Catherine Osten**

President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001

cc: CSEA SEIU Local 2001 Executive Council Members  
CSEA SEIU Local 2001 Legislative Action Committee Members  
Municipal Division Council Officers & Chapter Presidents

CAO:dmo