

## How Is This A Bargain?

It is the opinion of this writer, that the burdened Taxpayers of this Commonwealth should strenuously oppose the continued travesty of Public Employee Unions - who rely upon Civil Service Rules and/or Policy that in effect have the force of law in Labor Relations with you their employer and taxpayer.

Are we getting "bang for the buck" - this writer and many others say "NO!" Abuses are rife with "the tail wagging the dog," especially when the term "public service" becomes a mockery of the original intent, i.e., *to perform a public service for the common good.* Generally, in the past, about 40 - 50 years ago, that meant to receive a modest compensation for one's labors and effort - because people were actually dedicating themselves to the common good. Today, the only common good being served with Civil Service and Public Employee Unions, for the most part, is to fill the pockets of the union members and especially officials with taxpayer funds and benefits..... **while doing as little as possible to receive that compensation.** The title "State Worker" has long been an epithet and/or derisive title for someone "... screwing the dog, .... a goof off, ..... laggard,..... low life at the public trough, etc." Hardly an honorarium - because most see those so employed as under performing and vastly over compensated.

Take for instance the MA High Away Department (c. 1960's) who painted the road lines (the White & Yellow lane marker stripes) and maintain signage. This writer observed as a summer student worker, that many of the full time employees, our bosses, were for the most part full time alcoholics; and not to mention the goof offs, that spent the majority of their early morning hours, on the clock, cruising back roads in a state truck. Student workers in the back of the large orange stake body observed, slowly moving while their bosses looked for bottles to cash in at a package store for their liquid lunch. When work became absolutely necessary, "the kids" were used to accomplish the tasks - "slow down boys, we want this job to last" - like installing delineator posts with reflectors on the entrance and exit ramps of the new Route 25 (later 495) then, under construction. One State Worker explained to me that their contract exempted them from lifting anything over 50 pounds and since the bags of glass beads, used as reflective material mixed with road paint, weighed 60 pounds - you know who had to lift and carry them. That also included the paint - White and Yellow 5 gallon buckets weighed 90 pounds each and Red Lead was 125 pounds. We kids got a serious workout when a trailer pulled up to the barn for unloading.

Look at the Carmans Union of the MBTA, the Probation Department, and especially the Mass Department of Correction with their employees Union Contracts. All Mass.State agencies and Departments have budgets for which the lions share of expense is for salaries, employee pay and benefits. All depend heavily upon Civil Service exams, Rules and Policies that are glued and infused into their labor contracts that virtually cripple nearly any true administrative guidance - very far from a private companies constraints and expectations on how employees are asked to perform and/or what hours or jobs to perform duties. Take for instance at MCI Norfolk, a correctional institution under the umbrella of the Massachusetts Department of Correction and the Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security. The employees are compelled to become Union Employees operating under a renewable contract that gives them rights and responsibilities most of which are governed by Civil Service and the Employees Union. Under this contract the Superintendent (the top administrator) cannot change an employees "duty station" and cannot send a "blue shirt" correction officer to open the gymnasium even when a "red shirt" Recreation Officer decides not to work (sick day, personal day, vacation - mental health, etc.). And, talk about "sweetheart deals," it's actually written into the contract that the Recreation Officers at MCI Norfolk [who in fact, do ABSOLUTELY NOTHING] are the only ones who can open the Gym and/or are first to be offered over time pay to do so. Not opening the Gym contributes exponentially towards a disorderly institution rife with idle time, drug and alcohol abuse, fights and other unsavory conduct. When anyone has idle time mischief usually follows. That goes for the professional staff as well - idle time creates time for mischief. State workers have been provocateurs of mischief for decades - what can prisoners expect but to follow the model.

Another HUGE FLAW in the above is Overtime Pay - which destroys any budget or attempt at fiscal responsibility by administrators. The Supervising Recreation Officer at MCI Norfolk made over \$88,000 in 2016, which may or may not have included over time. Not bad for a job where one DOES NOTHING except to maintain the status quo and obstruct any attempts regardless of need and/or common sense for the improvement of services or even maintaining the facility and it's equipment.

Should the taxpayers of this commonwealth stand for and/or tolerate this continued abuse? It most likely depends upon what side of "the bargain" you're on - the giving or the receiving.

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