



NEWS RELEASE

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State Treasurer puts cronyism above fairness in contract negotiations

Westerville – Employees in the State of Ohio Treasurer’s (TOS) Office are today asking why political appointees received an average 15 percent wage hike last year, yet the office is refusing to give a general wage increase for secretaries, clerks, IT workers and other employees.

Employees who are represented by the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association recently sat down with managers in the Treasurer’s office to negotiate a “wage reopener” to their contract. Both sides negotiated a contract in April 2012, which included a clause allowing the union to “renegotiate” wages for the last year of its contract. TOS union employees have received no general wage increase for seven years.

The group met for only two days, with just a half-hour of face-to-face discussions. But yesterday, management walked away from the table after refusing the union’s request for any wage increase at all.

Treasurer’s office negotiators said the denial was for reasons of economy. However, large management wage increases that went to 33 political appointees in the state Treasurer’s office cost taxpayers \$288,000 last year. OCSEA members were asking for a 5 percent raise, for a total of \$111,000. OCSEA’s proposal for wages was 62 percent less than management’s gift to itself.

Not only has increased compensation gone to political cronies, the Treasurer’s office budget has run a *surplus* totaling \$4.7 million over the last three years, union negotiators countered. In addition, a 10 percent reduction in staff and position consolidation has kept costs down and the office’s operating budget lean.

OCSEA leaders say it’s a slap in the face to workers who are long-time, dedicated employees and have worked for years without additional compensation. “How can these management negotiators look these middle-class clerks, IT workers and support personnel in the eye and tell them “no,” when they themselves were given huge raises,” asked OCSEA President Chris Mabe. “If we’re supposed to be ‘sharing the pain,’ what happened?” It’s not sharing if only one side is hurt.”

OCSEA represents approximately 30,000 public employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions, including 45 employees in the State Treasurer’s Office. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).