

# FY '11 Budget to Include Unprecedented Job Cuts, Wage Cuts, and Possibly Furloughs

When Montgomery County Executive Isaiah Leggett delivers his budget plan to the County Council on March 15—you and your family will be in the crosshairs. The recommended FY '11 budget will call for hundreds of jobs to be eliminated, wage reductions for targeted positions and possibly furloughs. Your union gleaned this information from well-placed sources, but not from the county executive because despite repeated union demands, he has resisted meaningful collaboration in the development of this budget.

As you know, the union has been in negotiations for your new contract since October. Throughout this process our focus has been on saving jobs and minimizing the impact on you, your family and your career. After four months of intense negotiations the parties turned to mediation which could not resolve the impasse. From there the contract was sent to arbitration.

At issue: What specific steps will be taken before a reduction in force can be invoked, and how would a subsequent layoff of members be handled? The union's final proposal is that the ultimate decision should be based on seniority. County's final position is that, although they will "consider" preventative steps to be taken and seniority, they could use other factors to decide who will be laid off. Both sides presented their cases on Feb. 27th and 28th, and the arbitrator's decision is expected in the next couple of weeks.

The Executive's resistance to working collaboratively with you through your union to balance the budget and protect the largest number of jobs possible is a bitter disappointment. He has resorted to a multitude of legal challenges through the Mega law firm of Venable LLP (billing the county a minimum of \$400 per hour) to stymie our efforts to reach agreement. The executive's actions at the bargaining table belie claims that he made to those of you who attended the joint Executive-union worksite meetings since late last summer.

## Friends Don't Do This Stuff to Friends.

Mr. Leggett calls himself a friend of labor, however, I was raised to believe that once someone becomes your friend, you might have occasional fights, you might not always agree, but you never do anything to hurt a friend.

## We're Still Winning...

### On Retirement

Despite the Executive's action at the bargaining table, the union has revised the Retirement Incentive Plan (RIP) to address the objections that the county council raised when they said it was not properly targeted to the specific occupational series that were facing the greatest layoff pressure. We have amended the plan in order to optimize the short and long-term results. You will be receiving the details on that plan in the next few weeks with ratification meetings to be held in late March early April.

### And on Jobs

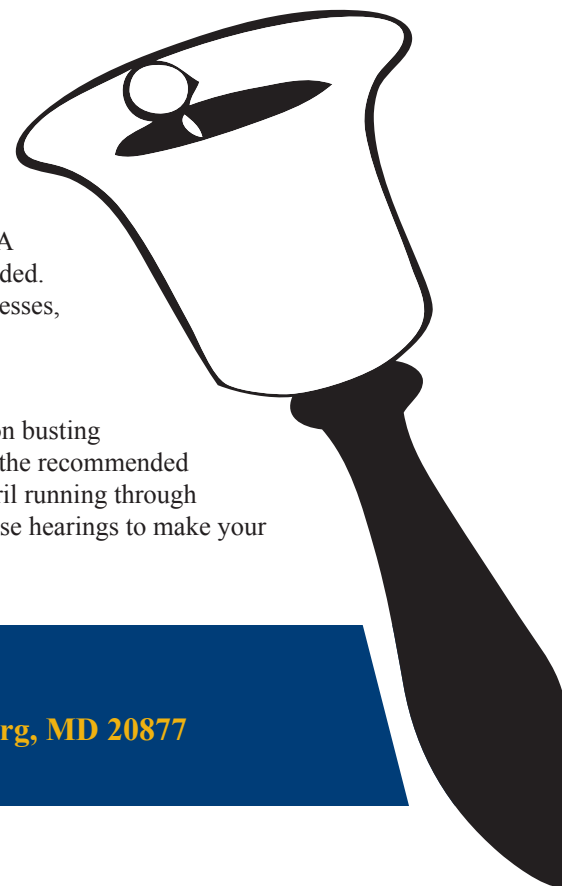
In January, the union also pushed back against an interim budget plan that would have eliminated 64 union jobs—52 of those were bus operators! We forged an alliance with various community-based organizations who helped pack council hearings on the matter and that decision was rescinded by the council.

### What Hiring Freeze?

The county has been operating under a hiring freeze since 2008. During that time approximately 1,300 new people have been hired, adding some \$25 to \$30 million to the payroll. (The union was forced to get the facts about those hirings through bargaining.) A number of those new hires were to management slots that had long been vacant and not needed. Yet, the executive continues to resist our calls for a hard look at the county's operating processes, structure and management as mandated by the negotiated cost efficiency committee.

### Dig Out Your Gold Shirts—We're Going to Ring the Bell!

It's clear from a cursory look at the situation that Mr. Leggett is intent on a deliberate union busting strategy. On March 15, the fight goes from the bargaining arena to the political arena when the recommended budget is submitted to the county council and the budget review process begins in early April running through May 15. We'll ring the bell to signal to all bargaining unit members to come out during those hearings to make your voice heard as you did two years ago.



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