

From: Communications Workers of America, District 1

American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, Council 1

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International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers

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UNIONS SET RECORD STRAIGHT ON SWEENEY-OLIVER NEGOTIATIONS

DEMOCRATIC LEADERS NEVER PRESENTED SERIOUS OFFER

The Executive Branch unions (CWA, AFSCME, AFT, AAUP and IFPTE) -- the same unions that proposed over \$200 million dollars in health care concessions and cost containment at the bargaining table -- did engage in discussions with Senator Sweeney and Speaker Oliver's representatives regarding potential compromise legislation.

Last Wednesday afternoon, Sweeney asked us to publicly support a bill that would have set a worthless salary premium cap on an undefined "lowest cost" health care plan. His so-called plan did not specify deductibles, coverage, co-pays, or any details to indicate that public workers choosing this option would receive anything more than bare-bones, catastrophic coverage. Instead, Sweeney proposed that these details be worked out by health care committee that might not include representatives from our unions with *the final authority for deciding the plan belonging to the State Treasurer.*

Sweeney's proposal was not in writing and did not include any language on other sticking points: options for local government collective bargaining, non-imposition of future state worker contracts, or a statewide collective bargaining table. To make matters worse, the Sweeney proposal included, a prohibition on out of state healthcare. We were told that that provision had to be in the bill.

No union leader in America would accept such a worthless, ill-defined offer.

Throughout the conversations, we consistently told Sen. Sweeney and Speaker Oliver what our bottomline was : a real statewide healthcare bargaining table to hammer out the details of health care coverage, and a an affordable health care option for public workers that provided quality care especially children.

Last Friday, we were approached by a separate group of Democratic legislators who sought to restart negotiations. We reiterated our consistent bottom line – true health care bargaining and affordable, quality coverage, and the right to choose where their families could get health coverage.

That offer was rejected by Sen. Sweeney last Sunday and by Speaker Oliver on Monday, making clear their intention to join Gov. Christie's union-bashing and act unilaterally.

Sen. Sweeney and Speaker Oliver have betrayed Democratic values, and are now lying to the public and their fellow Democrats about what they have done. The simple truth is that Sen. Sweeney and Speaker Oliver never made a good faith offer.

We wish to express our great appreciation to the true democrats who throughout this debate have supported collective bargaining in New Jersey. We remain willing to negotiate even now.