

## Council 4 AFSCME

### **Please Oppose Any Amendment to the State or Municipal Binding Arbitration Statute**

Apparently, Senate and House Republican Appropriations Committee leadership will try to pass an amendment to postpone the correction officers' arbitrated award today. In order to do this they will do significant damage to the state binding arbitration statute. It is illegal for government workers to strike. All other workers have the right to strike. Binding arbitration is what state employees have been given in lieu of the right to strike.

The state binding arbitration statute has been "reformed" four times since its creation. Each "reform" has weakened state workers' rights and increased management's. This includes allowing the state legislature to overturn arbitrated awards – in other words "binding arbitration" is only binding on the employees! The last award rejected was for the correction officers in 1997. Allowing management to postpone arbitrated decisions and weaken arbitration further makes the process a mockery.

The state binding arbitration process has resulted in the uninterrupted delivery of vital government services (such as protecting the public from violent criminals) and labor peace for over thirty years. The state legislature's non-partisan Program Review and Investigations Committee found that management prevails in 60% of municipal binding arbitration decisions. Council 4 believes that the same probably follows suit with state arbitration – as Governor Rell won the arbitrator's decision of a lower COLA increase for correction officers and employees. Both sides followed the rules. Please abide by our current state law and oppose changing the rules in the eleventh hour.

Please call Dennis O'Neil (860-989-9143) or Brian Anderson (860-690-2597) if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.