

NEW YORK LAYOFF GOING TO VOTE SOON: 3,500 JOBS IN THE BALANCE



When it comes to the workers in New York layoffs have been a serious battle. In what seems to have become an epic drama for the fate of the roughly 3,500 members of the Public Employees Federation, the second-largest union of state workers in New York, who are slated to get pink slips in the very near future if the union members do not vote yes on a new contract. What are the terms? Well, the voting members of the Public Employees Federation would have to vote yes on the following changes to the terms of their four-year contract: - A three-year freeze in all of their wages. - A raise of only 2% in the final year of the contract. - Paying a higher percentage of the costs for their health insurance premiums. - Waiting on payment for the nine furlough days mandated by the contract until the end of the contract term. - Losing \$1000 in bonus to be paid to members. Union Lobbying The union has been lobbying hard to get its members to vote yes on this version of the contract because they know it is a hard sell. A very similar version of the contract was already rejected by the union member in the recent past. A previously reached the tentative agreement between the union leaders and the governor failed to be voted in with 54 percent of the union workers voting against the contract and 46 percent voting for it. That means all of their lobbying has to change at least five percent of the workers minds, but this is complicated by another factor. Complicated by Knowing When the first vote was going on no one knew who was going to be the target of the layoffs. All they knew was that the governor was getting ready to let go of about 3,500 jobs if the contract was not agreed upon. So, some people may have agreed to the contract out of fear that they would be the ones to lose their jobs. That has all changed. After a very serious breakdown in the contract negotiations the governor went ahead and issues the 3,500 layoff notices to the workers who were going to be let go. So now the majority of worker who would have voted yes to keep their jobs know that they are not in jeopardy of losing their income. This gives them no particular reason to vote for the reduced terms in the new contract. In case you are wondering about the impact of the 3,500 people who are bound to vote yes to the new contract in order to save their jobs, they actually represent a small fraction of the Public Employees Federation voting members, who are more than 50,000 strong in New York. The Deadline If the contract is not approved by the union members then the workers who did get their layoff notices will be out of a job on November 4th. As the deadline approaches we will keep you posted.

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