



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

December 3, 2009

Mr. Gino Renne, President
UFCW Local 1994, MCGEO
600 S. Frederick Avenue, Suite 200
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

Dear Gino:

You had asked me to review the proposed legislation which would permit employees of County library systems in Maryland to join unions for the purpose of collective bargaining, and to give you my thoughts and opinions on how collective bargaining has worked in Montgomery County. I am pleased to be able to respond to you and to strongly endorse the concept of collective bargaining.

In 1986, the County recognized MCGEO as the exclusive bargaining unit for 3,200 employees based on employees signing an authorization card which was then verified by an outside third-party neutral. As you are aware, general government employees of Montgomery County, including employees of our library department, have had the right to form and join unions and negotiate with the County on wages, benefits and working conditions since that time. I was then a member of the County Council and supported this legislation. Since becoming County Executive in 2006, I have continued to endorse the right of employees to union representation in matters which affect them directly. Moreover, I have also come to appreciate the role unions play in advocating and supporting employee professionalism and development. UFCW Local 1994 has worked with the County through the Labor-Management Relations Committees to quickly resolve employee concerns at the lowest level possible, and offer useful suggestions on how to better serve County residents.

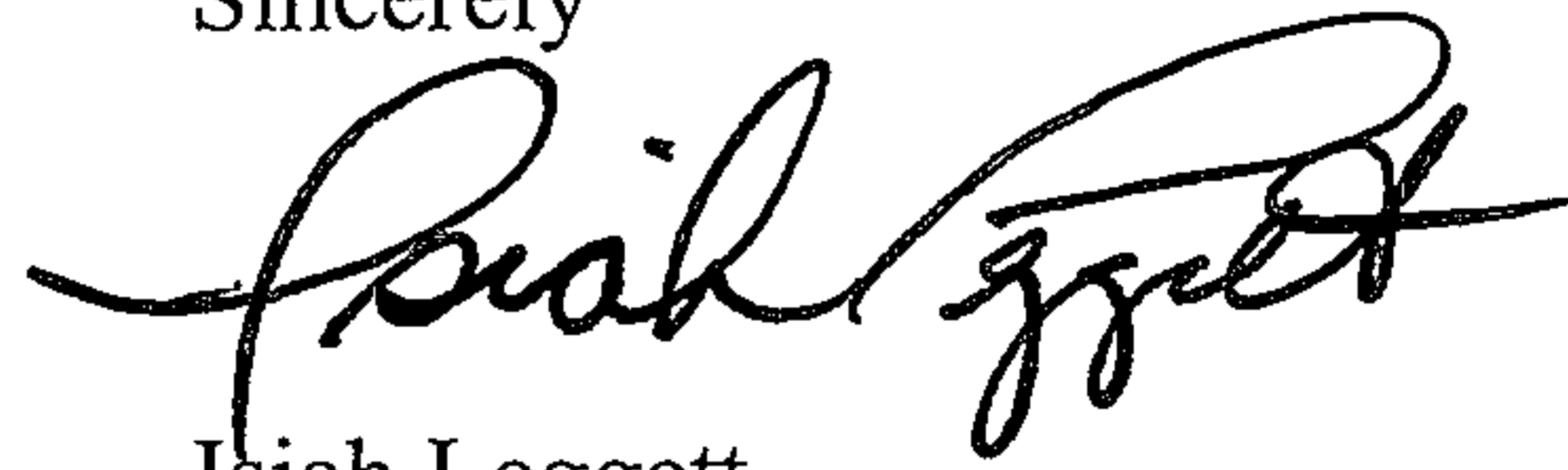
More recently, UFCW Local 1994, MCGEO and the County entered into a mutual Gainsharing arrangement which will formalize the process of seeking continuous improvements by front-line workers. Verified savings resulting from improved work flows, process reengineering, and customer service will be jointly shared and the affected employees will learn additional skills. This is just one example of the positive impact made when professional and support employees have an independent organization advocating on their behalf which not only looks to protect their jobs and economic benefits, but actively works with management to improve work place efficiency, productivity, employee morale, and professionalism.

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I have also reviewed the proposed statewide legislation. As currently drafted, I have found nothing in the text to cause concerns from a management perspective. The proposed bill allows employees to form unions but also protects the right of employees not to join or participate in union activities. Further, the bill also prohibits unions from interfering in any way with the rights given to management, and requires unions to bargain in good faith. In terms of impasse resolution, the bill allows a neutral third party to mediate and/or issue a fact-finding report. Both methods are totally voluntary and either side may reject a fact-finding report, thus the potential fear that an outsider will impose a settlement is without any basis. The role of library trustees is preserved by having to ratify any agreement which has a present or future fiscal impact. Finally, the bill prohibits employees from engaging in a strike or a work slowdown.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that in the 23 years Montgomery County Government has had collective bargaining it has served the interests of labor, management and the residents of the county. I supported it as a matter of fairness and equity when I served on the County Council, and continue to support it as County Executive.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isiah Leggett", written in a cursive style.

Isiah Leggett
County Executive