



# Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

**Strength in Numbers 95,000**

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## LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT



### KUDOS TO WESTMORELAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR STANDING -UP TO THE “JANUS” DECISION

**Westmoreland County's largest bargaining unit will have up to 30 minutes to persuade each new hire to join the union**

Westmoreland commissioners OK union pitch to all new employees

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Westmoreland County's largest bargaining unit will have up to 30 minutes to persuade each new hire to join the union under an agreement approved Thursday by county commissioners.

The deal is a response to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling issued this summer that bars unions from assessing fees to employees who decline representation. It was strongly criticized by Republican Commissioner Charles Anderson, who called the agreement a mechanism to “beat up” employees to join.

“We’re bending over backward to help unions. I’d like to see a level playing field. I’m not against unions,” Anderson said.

The deal approved Thursday is with the Service Employees International Union Local 668 and Healthcare Pennsylvania, which represents 671 county workers at the courthouse and Westmoreland Manor.

Terms call for the county to give the union a monthly account of new employee names, job titles, their department, work location, home and cellphone numbers, home addresses and personal and work email addresses.

Union representatives will be given at least 30 minutes as part of new employee orientation sessions or in-person meetings to pitch membership in the bargaining unit.

Commissioners Gina Cerilli and Ted Kopas, both Democrats, signed off on the deal, saying it formalizes processes that were previously in place to promote union membership.

"I take great offense to the term 'beat up,' " Kopas said in response to Anderson's assessment of the agreement. "No one has ever been beat up physically or emotionally around here."

Cerilli said support of the local unions is what prompted the deal. "The unions are the backbone of the middle class here," Cerilli said.

County employees who hold union jobs were previously required to pay dues to bargaining units even if they didn't want to be members of those organizations. Their pay and other benefits were identical with what union members received. County officials said the SEIU and its sister healthcare unit are the largest bargaining groups for the county's 1,800-member workforce.

Human Resource Director Amanda Bernard said 124 employees previously paid fair-share fees to the unions although they were not members.

Annie Brown, a union chapter president and a nurse at Westmoreland Manor, praised the agreement. "We are pleased that Westmoreland County understands the role union representation plays for both working women and men and the people they serve. This memorandum of understanding, which among other things, clarifies the way new employees learn about union membership in light of the (Supreme Court) decision, is proof that county-elected officials value the work performed by SEIU members across the county and the need for jobs that provide living wages and affordable health care."

County officials said similar deals are expected with the other unions that represent county workers.

View Complete Article at: <https://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/13981034-74/westmoreland-commissioners-ok-union-pitch-to-all-new-employees>

