



**Chicago
Federation
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Forrest Claypool
Chicago Transit Authority
567 W. Lake St.
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Dear Mr. Claypool:

I am writing to express my concern with your handling of the looming CTA budget deficit, specifically pertaining to your union employees and their leadership. It is unacceptable to pit the riders and general public against the people who provide transportation when there have been no meetings or serious discussions on "work rules" and other issues you presented to the press. Your actions suggest you are more concerned with winning a public relations campaign than managing the agency you lead out of a crisis.

Any term in a collective bargaining agreement can misrepresented in the media without proper context. You can even say it is out of line with the private sector, because, the nomenclature between the private sector workplace and the public sector differs. But what is even more unacceptable, is not having enough respect for your workers to communicate with their elected representatives.

While lining up public support on an issue or campaign may have been of critical importance to you as a candidate or a legislator, it is devoid of management skill when acting as an administrator, legally bound to bargain in good faith. I would expect that face to face meetings with your workers representatives to address our collective challenges at the CTA is not an abhorrent concept for you.

Furthermore, you fail to acknowledge that CTA employees have made drastic sacrifices over the last few years on behalf of taxpayers and riders. Failing to acknowledge these sacrifices is disrespectful. It was the actions of the unions that helped reform the pension system and saved it from disaster. That agreement, while good for the city and taxpayers, ultimately cost some union leaders their jobs. The unions recently paid an additional price with more than 1,000 layoffs two years ago when the CTA budget faced another massive deficit.



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With experience in government operations, you know full well that collective bargaining is a collaborative process where both parties negotiate in good faith. Circumventing this collaborative process by acting through the media, threatens the very collective bargaining process that the entire labor movement holds sacred. Creating a "Scott Walker/Wisconsin-like" atmosphere in Chicago will only lead to problems, not solutions.

On behalf of the entire Chicago labor movement and the half a million union members that make up the Chicago Federation of Labor, I urge you to sit down in good faith with the leadership of the unions representing workers at the CTA to discuss the current budget deficit and stop attacking workers through the press.

Sincerely,

Jorge Ramirez
President