



The following is a Letter to the Editor published in the State Journal-Register on Sunday, July 17, 2016:

Letter: AFSCME misleading on employees' strike status

This paper recently reported on the possibility that AFSCME Council 31 employees could go out on strike, perhaps as early as Sept. 1.

As Deputy Director for Labor Relations at the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, one of my goals is to avoid a strike. I therefore feel compelled to correct one item of factually false information the union has provided.

AFSCME incorrectly claims that an employee who fails to join the strikers at the picket line and remains on the job becomes an "at will" employee and thus can be fired without just cause. Not so.

AFSCME members are not "at will." The state's last, best and final offer in contract negotiations includes the provision that employees can be discharged or disciplined only for just cause. If the Labor Board determines that the parties are at impasse and the state has implemented its last, best and final offer, AFSCME members and fair share employees alike who remain on the job would continue to receive these protections.

Employees do not lose these protections simply because they fail to join the picket line. Indeed, employees would be protected not only by the state's last, best and final offer, but also by the state's Personnel Code and accompanying rules, which extend the same workplace protections, as a matter of state law, to AFSCME employees.

While we hope employees reject AFSCME's irresponsible strike talk, we firmly believe that a decision to strike or to continue working belongs to each employee and will respect each employee's decision. AFSCME should do the same. That starts with providing accurate information on this critical issue.

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