



May 12, 2008

***Support The Public Safety Employer-Employee
Cooperation Act, S. 2123***

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, I urge you to support the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, S. 2123. This legislation would secure long overdue collective bargaining protections for tens of thousands of firefighters and frontline safety workers who do not currently have the right to negotiate wages, hours and working conditions.

Emergency workers continually put their lives on the line to guarantee the safety and security of the public, including being first on the scene during transportation-related emergencies. Working alongside transportation employees, public safety officers are a critical component in providing an effective and efficient response to and containment of crisis situations involving our nation's roads, rails, bridges, airways and waterways. By providing a voice to the men and women who protect public safety, this important legislation ensures that they have the tools and resources necessary to deliver the safest and most effective response possible. Furthermore, ongoing dialogue between labor and management encourages an open and productive partnership, enabling both parties to work together to address a variety of issues impacting department operations.

The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act supports constructive labor-management cooperation by securing a minimum standard of collective bargaining rights in those states where public safety workers currently lack the ability to negotiate over wages, hours and working conditions. This legislation also implements a blueprint for labor-management dispute resolution without mandating binding arbitration, allowing management the latitude to reject questionable terms or conditions that may impinge on their ability to operate an efficient emergency services department.

This legislation would not preempt existing laws in the majority of states that meet or exceed basic collective bargaining protections for frontline emergency and safety workers. Additionally, S. 2123 maintains the traditional autonomy of states to manage their own employees by relying on state courts to review and enforce laws and contracts. Furthermore, due to the unique and critical responsibility of frontline emergency workers, this legislation prohibits strikes by firefighters, police officers and emergency medical personnel.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Edward Wytkind, President • Patricia Friend, Secretary-Treasurer

The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act enjoys broad bipartisan support of 21 Democratic and 11 Republican cosponsors. Companion legislation passed the House on the suspension calendar by 314 to 97. I urge you to vote tomorrow to limit debate on this important piece of legislation that would finally guarantee our nation's invaluable emergency workers the same collective bargaining rights afforded to other employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President