

## **DRAFT LETTER TO COMMISSIONERS**

Dear Commissioners Ben Pearlman, Tom Mayer and Will Toor:

I understand that some employees of Boulder County are organizing a union to have a voice on issues such as health care. Their concern is understandable, given the skyrocketing out-of-pocket expenses and deductibles employees have had to pay.

I believe that employees, no matter where they work, have a right to organize a union to have a voice in the workplace. It is a travesty that neither federal nor state law provide this basic freedom for public employees. But you have the ability to correct this in Boulder County by passing a resolution establishing a union recognition process for County employees.

I urge you to pass a resolution that incorporates the best practices from other states. Boulder County has established model practices in many areas, and should be a leader within Colorado and nationally on labor rights as well.

The draft resolution presented by SEIU incorporates many best practices and would be good for Boulder County. Interest-based labor management partnerships and binding arbitration to settle disputes are proven and effective methods to promote employee-management cooperation and problem-solving.

The resolution should provide that the County remain neutral on the question of a union and allow covered employees to decide, free from management advocacy pro or con. This is provided for in Oklahoma's law. Even in a good work environment, a supervisor's opinion can be intimidating. I cannot understand why you will not commit to remaining neutral and allow employees to decide.

The resolution should also provide for reasonable access for employees to meet with union staff representatives in County buildings during break times or before or after work. Discussions about employee issues are different from other types of issues and should be able to occur in County break rooms and conference facilities under reasonable terms.

I believe that public employers have a particular duty to show leadership on health care. The level of health care coverage provided by large public employers sets an example for other employers in the area. As the eighth largest employer in our county, I urge you to improve the County's health insurance plan.

We rely on our County's employees to provide critical services to members of our community. We expect our County Commissioners to provide leadership in support of county employees' freedom to organize a union. We ask that you act expeditiously to reach agreement with SEIU and enact an effective resolution to establish a union recognition process in Boulder County.

Thank you for your attention to this vital issue. I look forward to your response.