



# NEWS BULLETIN 10/23/03

## AFSCME Florida Council 79

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

## FIRST DCA REAFFIRMS STATE WORKER RIGHTS IN AFSCME MASTER CONTRACT

This is a major win for state employees represented by AFSCME. The most significant part of the decision for AFSCME is the Court's reversal of Circuit Judge Kevin Davey's finding that the Governor could forcibly impose contract language on state employees through the General Appropriations Act. Nearly 70,000 state employees are covered by the AFSCME Master Contract.

"We believe it's time for Governor Bush to call off the war on his employees," said AFSCME Florida Council 79 President Jeanette D. Wynn. "Service First is an unnecessary and expensive administrative scheme that puts public servants in a hostile environment during a time of financial crisis when we should all be pulling together."

The 1<sup>st</sup> DCA ruled that the General Appropriations Act could contain no provision on any other substantive matters, specifically stating that the Governor's last contract proposals represented a modification of the State Master Contract. The court agreed with AFSCME that neither the Governor's last offer nor the proviso language of the GAA is related to any specific appropriation and therefore violates the Florida constitution. The Court's opinion has the effect of re-enforcing the status quo contract.

"This decision reaffirms that AFSCME members continue to enjoy their State Master Contract rights relating to discipline, discharge, leave and layoffs," said President Wynn. "We urge the Governor to respect the Court's decision in this matter. Denying employees their hard-won contract rights is expensive and ultimately futile."

The DCA's opinion provides an opportunity to resolve these matters in a deliberative, professional manner. AFSCME welcomes this opportunity and will place a proposal before the Legislature to adopt an effective impasse procedure that will allow legislators to participate meaningfully in resolving contract issues at impasse. It is our position that the Legislature can adopt a process that respects the purview of the executive branch and the rights of the employees, while keeping the best interests of the citizens served by state of Florida paramount.

AFSCME stands ready to return to the negotiating table with the Governor, and looks forward to working with our friends and allies at the legislature to develop a meaningful impasse resolution procedure.

*AFSCME Florida Council 79 is the state's second-largest union, representing more than 110,000 employees working for the state, public universities, school boards, cities and counties, and private nonprofit hospitals.*