

Letter-to-the-Editor:

Subject: Workers for contract providers of human services are not “greedy” either, they too should benefit from new revenues

Date: February 12, 2004

Thousands of human service workers toil in anonymity providing cost-effective services as employees of private human service providers under contract to Dane County. Much attention has been given recently about the merits of using new revenues, such as those expected from the casino agreement, to benefit public employees, many of whom are represented by unions with a “pot of gold” clauses in their contracts.

Employees of human services agencies deserve their fair share too. Dane County did not give these agencies a “pot of gold” clause in their contracts. However, these workers deserve equal benefit if the casino (or other) new revenues become a reality.

MARC employees, represented by AFSCME Local 412, have not had a raise for three years due to the ravages of Dane County budget cuts and rising health insurance premiums. Many human service employees toil at the Dane County Living Wage of \$8.85 per hour with minimum fringe benefits.

Public officials must give equal consideration to the thousands of human service workers serving people with developmental and other disabilities, as well as frail elderly, children and youth, and other citizens with special needs. Equal treatment is a step toward social justice, and preservation of a contract system that is saving Dane County millions of dollars a year. It is only fair that these employees be considered worthy too.

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