

## Open Letter – Why I Resigned: You Can Be Better

Executive Director Dugovich:

I have dedicated almost my whole professional career to AFSCME and Labor, and I believe strongly in both. I have recently heard rumors and hearsay about why I decided to resign. I would like the opportunity to share my own story in my own words.

**Why Did I Resign?** Morally and ethically, I could no longer stand by the choices you and Mr. Thompson were making that were adversarial to the interests of the members. I also could not stand by with the backroom deals and arbitrary denials of help to members and to the staff. Those type of actions in 2016 with Snohomish County negotiations, directly and negatively impacted the settling of a contract that was fair to the membership. This behavior was repeated in Bellingham. When you threatened me with discipline this last Fall if I asked for any more trainings, I lost all remaining respect. I am disappointed in you, but more disappointed by the loss of potential Council 2 underneath your leadership.

**Problem – Questions By Membership/Staff:** Allow questions and curiosity with no retaliation. Questions show that members are engaged in their union. I had to operate off a two-question limit, that if I crossed, you would direct me to perform the action required with no further discussion. Members that ask questions are given general non-informative responses. **Solution:** Let people ask questions and answer them honestly and forthright. Embrace all members no matter how difficult they may be to work with.

**Problem – Training:** For the last two to three years, you have blamed the lack of trainings on an employee's illness while denying staff the resources, abilities, and opportunities for others to work in her stead. You denied me and my membership numerous opportunities for training. The way you direct staff to organize the trainings is not reasonable and does not allow for success. Further, hiring employees with no experience or training, or having a development plan over locals, significantly hurts both the staff and the members.

**Solution:** Provide three to four trainings each year for each district with a variety of topics. Examples of topics may include contract campaigns, steward, union/executive board leadership, and internal/external organizing. All of these trainings are free from the I.U. In addition, I would suggest developing a training program for new staff reps with no experience.

**Problem – Equal Staffing:** When I left, some Staff Representatives had 20 locals with over 2,300 members. Others had no locals or members to represent. **Solution:** Reorganize assignments to have 750 members for each staff representative. Hire two organizers to focus on internal/external organizing.

**Problem – Legal Support:** Hiring legal help with no labor experience is unethical and places members at a serious disadvantage. The fact that many staff had/have more legal knowledge than the labor attorney you hired is unthinkable. Removal of the San Juan Island Local President and the Staff Representative from the unit clarifications and arbitration meetings with management was inappropriate at best. **Solution:** Hire another attorney out of law school focused on labor law. This would bring a passion to this type of work, increase the basic labor law knowledge of Council 2, and be affordable.

**Problem – Salary:** Your total compensation of at least \$381,249 in 2016 for Council 2's type, size, and lack services is extravagant. For a total compensation of \$180,000, a qualified director would provide more of the following: transparency, arbitrations, trainings, membership engagement, organizing, and development of local leadership within two years. **Solution:** Adjust your salary to be in accordance with the market and redistribute the funds back to the members in staff, trainings, and programs.

Please feel free to use these ideas to improve Council 2 on behalf of the members.

Respectfully,

  
Matthew Miller – Proud AFSCME

***A Union should be by the members FOR the members***