



## **Governor Vetoes “Unit Clarification” Language But the Unions Continue to Pursue a Back-door Organizing Effort**

ASPRO formally asked Governor Jim Doyle for a veto of the “unit clarification” language added to the State Budget Bill by the legislature. This language directed the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC) to assign some academic staff positions to existing unions that represent other State employees. Click [here](#) to view ASPRO’s letter to Governor Doyle.

ASPRO also asked members to contact Governor Doyle to express their personal opposition to the language in the budget. It was noted that the language would essentially remove their “right to choose” a union by folding their positions into the classified ranks.

As usual, ASPRO members responded with enthusiasm (despite the short timeframe in which to act). We are very grateful for your efforts, and congratulations are in order. Governor Doyle vetoed the budget provision.

### **Not Over**

Unfortunately, as stated in the [Governor’s veto message](#), the WERC still has the authority to assign academic staff positions to unions representing State employees with similar positions in other State agencies. A union can petition the WERC to review academic staff positions and rule whether they should be folded into an existing union or not. The only good news is that the UW System and/or the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) can oppose the petition and present the employer’s position on why these positions should not become part of the unions currently representing classified employees.

### **Unions Will Petition WERC**

The unions, in particular the AFT affiliates, have made it clear that they will petition WERC to fold some Category A (non-teaching) academic staff into existing unions. Leaders of these unions have been quoted in media reports that this avenue will be pursued. They note that 4000 academic staff positions may be affected.

In a more dramatic move, ASPRO members have reported that they have received a letter from the WPEC (Wisconsin Professional Employees Council), an AFT-Wisconsin Local, stating that “we believe that your position is among those that should be moved into the bargaining unit represented by WPEC.” Click [here](#) for a copy of the letter.

ASPRO members have contacted us expressing both alarm and their strong opposition to such a move by a union. ASPRO members thought that a statute change giving collective bargaining rights to the faculty and academic staff meant that they would be able to vote on whether to be represented by a union and, if so, which union. This end-run by unions to avoid having to persuade academic staff to join their ranks is viewed as “undemocratic”.

### **Next Steps**

ASPRO has been active in opposing “unit clarification” by the unions and the Board has outlined a plan of action. The details of this plan will be unveiled in a newsletter you will receive next week.

Many ASPRO members want to know what they can do personally to protest the proposed “unit clarification effort”. Our grassroots plan will be included in the next newsletter.

### **In the Meantime**

Because not all ASPRO members are in the [Milwaukee](#) and [Madison](#) media markets, you may not have seen newspaper reports on this issue. Click the links above to see the articles.

We also suggest that you share this newsletter with colleagues who may be affected by a “unit clarification” petition by a union.