



## **A Couple of Updates And a Gentle Call to Action**

### **Smart Furloughs – Will ASPRO’s views be heard?**

As reported in the [December issue](#) of the *ASPRO Advocate*, Representative Kelda Roys of Madison introduced [Assembly Bill 551](#) to assure that furloughs were imposed only when they made financial sense. She noted in particular that researchers funded by private dollars or federal grants (that is, not by State funds) should not be furloughed. Neither should workers whose shifts are backfilled at overtime rates (such as lab assistants). AB 551 has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Labor.

Back in December it was expected that a public hearing would be held yet that month. ASPRO members expressed an interest in testifying in favor of the bill. But, it is now February, and a hearing has not been scheduled. Rumor has it that the lobbyist for a large union representing state employees suggested to the Chair of the Labor Committee, Representative Chris Sinicki, that she put AB 551 in the bottom drawer of her desk and forget about it.

In the meantime, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Faculty Senate unanimously voted to support AB 551.

We know that many ASPRO members support this bill. It only makes sense to impose furloughs only when the state will save money. ASPRO encourages you to contact Representative Chris Sinicki and ask her to hold a public hearing on AB 551 because you want both those who support and those who oppose the bill to have the opportunity to express their views.

Representative Sinicki can be reached by emailing at [rep.sinicki@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:rep.sinicki@legis.wisconsin.gov) or by calling 608.266.8588. Remember that it would be unethical and inappropriate to use University time or resources to make this contact. Please use your personal phone, or computer and email account to get in touch with Representative Sinicki.

### **Unit Clarification Update**

As you know, more than one union has submitted petitions (click [here](#) and [here](#) to see copies) to the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC). These petitions ask WERC to fold hundreds of academic staff positions into their classified staff unions without allowing the academic staff to vote on whether they want to be represented by a union. Unit clarification is especially detrimental because, as a member of the academic staff, you have statutorily granted governance rights that no other state employees (except the faculty) have. Being moved to classified service would strip academic staff of those special rights.

As expected, the [UW System](#) filed a motion to dismiss the petitions arguing that the WERC does not have the necessary authority. The [Office of State Employee Relations](#) (OSER) filed a similar. The next step is for the unions to respond to these motions. ASPRO will keep you abreast of any new developments.

### **Contact Us**

As always, please feel free to let ASPRO know your thoughts, concerns or questions by emailing [aspro@aspro.net](mailto:aspro@aspro.net).