

From: James D <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 4:19 PM
To: Web - City Clerk <CityClerk@cityoftracy.org>
Cc: Eleassia Davis <eleassia.davis@cityoftracy.org>; Dan Evans <dan.evans@cityoftracy.org>
Subject: 06 June 2023 Special Closed Session: public comment for Item 4/5A

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Madame City Clerk:

Attached, please find my public comment in relation to item number 4 “items from the audience” for today’s closed session meeting at 17:00.

If there is opportunity instead to enter these comments under item 5A of the published agenda, please do so, instead of under item 4.

Thanks in advance,
James D

Ladies and gentlemen, today I want to shed light on the questionable legitimacy of collective bargaining for public employees. While collective bargaining has long been seen as a necessary tool for labor rights in the private sector, its application in the public sector raises concerns and warrants a critical examination.

One of the primary issues with collective bargaining for public employees is the fundamental difference between public and private sector dynamics. In the private sector, companies compete in a free market, and bargaining power between employers and employees is relatively balanced. However, the public sector operates differently, as it is funded by taxpayers' money. The government, as the employer, must consider the overall fiscal responsibility and public interest, rather than solely catering to the demands of a specific employee group.

Collective bargaining in the public sector often leads to inflated costs and budgetary constraints. Public employee unions leverage their collective power to negotiate for higher wages, increased benefits, and improved working conditions. While these demands may be understandable from the employees' perspective, they can put a significant strain on already stretched government budgets. This, in turn, can result in higher taxes, reduced public services, or even layoffs in other areas, impacting the general public.

Furthermore, the concept of collective bargaining in the public sector raises concerns about accountability and transparency. Unlike private corporations, which are driven by profit motives, the government's primary responsibility is to serve the public's best interests. When public employees negotiate behind closed doors, there is a risk that decisions are made without sufficient public input or oversight. This lack of transparency undermines the principles of democratic governance and raises questions about whether the outcomes truly align with the broader public interest.

Another aspect to consider is the potential for unions to exert undue influence over the political process. Public employee unions often have significant financial resources and can mobilize members for political campaigns. This ability to sway elections and influence policy decisions can result in a situation where union interests take precedence over the broader needs of society. Such a scenario undermines the democratic balance and can lead to policies that prioritize the demands of a specific group at the expense of the overall welfare of the public.

In conclusion, while collective bargaining has its merits in the private sector, its legitimacy in the public sector is questionable. The unique dynamics and responsibilities of the government require careful consideration of the impact of bargaining demands on the public interest, fiscal stability, and democratic principles. Striking a balance between fair treatment for public employees and responsible governance is crucial, and alternative mechanisms that promote employee engagement and collaboration without compromising the public's well-being should be explored.

Thank you for listening.

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James Damasco, PE



Sent from my mobile device,
please pardon the brevity