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PRESIDENT STEVE CATANESE • SECRETARY-TREASURER JOANNE P. SESSA



TO: SEIU LOCAL 668 COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS
FROM: STEVE CATANESE, PRESIDENT
DATE: JUNE 26, 2020
RE: RIGHT TO KNOW APPEAL BY THE FREEDOM FOUNDATION

By now most-if-not-all of you have received a notice from the Commonwealth (COPA) that the Freedom Foundation has filed an appeal over COPA's refusal to provide certain information that was requested via a Right To Know request. Specifically, their appeal is to obtain your middle name and month and day (not year) of birth.

The Freedom Foundation attempts to deceive public sector workers by claiming to be on the side of working people. They are funded with the sole purpose of harming unions and convincing workers to leave their union in order to weaken organized labor's ability to advocate for workers. Their primary goal is to bust us and they will mislead you in order to do so. They want your information to pursue this agenda.

A few months ago, the Freedom Foundation submitted this specific Right To Know request to COPA. The Freedom Foundation's request demanded the following information about each worker: their full name, date and month of birth, job title, hire date, Commonwealth agency, worksite address, bargaining unit and bargaining representative. Personal information such as home addresses was not part of the request nor was it provided.

From the start, we deliberated with our in-house and outside legal counsel on this matter, engaged with our union partners on it, and made our objections to the unnecessary release of your information clear. Ultimately COPA responded to the request by providing only the information it was required to disclose by law and withheld your month and date of birth, and middle name. Much of the information disclosed was already publicly accessible online. The Freedom Foundation has appealed COPA's decision to withhold the remaining information that was denied.

After again consulting with our attorneys and the Commonwealth, at this time we believe COPA intends to mount a vigorous defense to the Freedom Foundation's appeal and that additional official union involvement would not add to the defense in any meaningful way. We have also confirmed that employees who have been granted personal security exemptions to disclosure did not have their information disclosed. Those employees likely received the email notification of the appeal simply because of the distribution list COPA used to notify employees of the appeal and not because their information had been disclosed. We are continuing to monitor the situation and act accordingly when needed.

Thank you for your tireless effort during this pandemic and continued strength.