

# CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



## NEWS>>

### **COUNCIL RESOLUTION URGES CITY OF CHICAGO TO END WAGE DISPARITY**

#### **City's Refusal to Give 911 Supervisors Equal Pay Could Result in Costly Arbitration**

Alderman Brian Doherty, 41st Ward, introduced a resolution to the Chicago City Council on Wednesday, June 9, 2010, that urges the city to correct wage disparities for two sets of workers doing the same job.

The resolution recognizes the gender and racial disparity between the Supervising Police Communications Operators (SPCOs) and Supervising Fire Communications Operators (SFCOs) and urges the city to eliminate the wage gap. Additionally, the resolution says the Council will conduct public hearings to further investigate inequities between the two units of Supervising Communications Officers, if necessary.

Nearly half of the city's 24 SPCOs are female, and not one of the 11 SFCOs is female. On average, 911 police supervisors earn only 84 percent of what their counterparts in the fire department earn. SPCOs have an average salary of \$6,744 per month; SFCOs make \$8,048 per month.

"The amount of disparity is very obvious. There is no parity," said Doherty. "Looking at the amount of money and the number of people being affected, creating parity would not have an adverse affect on the city's budget."

Doherty also sent a letter to City Budget Director Eugene Munin, encouraging him to assist in correcting the problem.

The city has been in contract talks with the SPCOs since 2008, but its refusal to budge on this issue could force Teamsters Local 727 to file for arbitration, a lengthy process that could cost the city thousands of dollars.

Despite these glaring wage and gender disparities, the SPCOs and SFCOs have nearly identical job descriptions and minimum qualifications. Both sets of workers:

- Function as first-line supervisors.
- Oversee communications operators who receive and process 911 emergency calls.
- Dispatch police (SPCOs) or fire/emergency medical units (SFCOs) to the scene.
- Must have three years experience as communications operators.

# CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



SPCOs and SFCOs also work in the same physical office space, so the disparities are visibly obvious each day they go to work.

“It makes you crazy to think that the third-largest municipality in the country is condoning this discrimination. It’s just unacceptable,” said Porcha Melton, who has been an SPCO since 2005. “We’re viewed by our bosses as not worthy of the same recognition and compensation as the fire supervisors, people who work in the same room as us that we have to look at every day. It really causes morale to sink to the sewer.”

John T. Coli, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 727, said Teamster representatives will continue to fight to end this injustice.

“Simply put, equal work should mean equal pay,” Coli said. “We’re committed to making sure these wrongs are righted.”

According to the latest census statistics, women in the United States earned only 77 cents on the male dollar in 2008. In fact, women’s wages have increased just a half-cent on the male dollar for the past four decades.

Teamsters Local 727 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, which represents more than 100,000 hardworking men and women in Illinois and Indiana.