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County Commissioners Approve Tentative Labor Agreement

Today, a majority of the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners approved a tentative agreement between the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services (HCJFS) and AFSCME Ohio Council 8, Local 1768. This is a three-year agreement that covers employees who provide an array of services to the citizens of Hamilton County, including child protection, welfare, child support, and employment services.

The Union is set to vote on the tentative agreement on Friday October 17. Union officials notified HCJFS last week that they intend to strike on Monday October 20. It is the County's hope that union members will vote in favor of the tentative agreement and that a strike will be avoided.

AFSCME (The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) represents about 1,000 of the total 1,500 HCJFS employees. Of the approximately 1,000 employees in the bargaining unit, a little more than one-third are union members.

The contract between HCJFS and AFSCME Local 1768 expired May 10, 2003. The parties have been in negotiations since April 2003. The parties have followed the process set by Ohio law for negotiations between a public agency and a union.

Following seven negotiation sessions in April and May, the parties went to fact-finding in an effort to resolve outstanding issues. In July, the Board of County Commissioners voted 2-1 to reject the fact-finder's recommendation. The parties conducted post fact-finding negotiations in August with the help of a mediator. Discussions between the parties have continued and culminated with this tentative agreement.

The tentative agreement demonstrates commissioners' support for HCJFS employees, whose work is important to the well being of this community.