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May 29, 2020

Via email to chrisd@council2.com

Chris Dugovich, President/Executive Director
AFSCME Council 2
3305 Oakes Avenue
Everett, WA 98206-0750

Dear Brother Dugovich:

I urge you to retract your letter dated May 22 to Bellingham City workers, which I received by email from Jael Komac. I believe strongly that Bellingham workers would best be served through AFSCME representation and that the actions of former Local 114 leaders and a Council 2 staff member were misguided and self-serving. But the approach you took with this letter is equally misguided. It poses a threat not only to other units represented by Councils 2 and 28, but to the entire union.

First and foremost, your letter undermines exclusive representation – a pillar of union strength. As you know, delegates to the 2018 AFSCME convention passed a resolution defending and promoting exclusive representation because solidarity cannot be achieved when workers are divided in different camps within a unit. The delegates understood that in a post-Janus world, abandoning exclusive representation makes it easier for the right-wing Freedom Foundation and its ilk, union busters and raiding organizations to stoke workplace divisions and weaken our union.

As a reminder, here is the [resolution](#) delegates passed.

By undermining exclusive representation, your letter opens the door for the Guild and other independent associations to demand dues deduction from employers across Washington State. You have long stated that the Freedom Foundation is driving the Guild's activity. If that is the case, your letter plays right into their hands.

Second, you seem to offer members who leave the Guild what amounts to associate membership in AFSCME, including access to exclusive AFSCME member benefits such as free college. As you must be aware, there is no constitutional basis for associate member status within our union. Like it or not, the Guild is now the exclusive representative of Bellingham City workers. And by choosing to join the Guild, they have forfeited exclusive AFSCME benefits.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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Rather than put members of Council 2, Council 28 and all of AFSCME at risk, I urge you to heed the advice of our union delegates to prevent other members from leaving: create and lead a responsive union that engages everyone – current and future members alike. I strongly encourage you to focus on building the strength of Council 2 by moving nonmembers in bargaining units to membership and establishing a robust external organizing program. As always, my staff remains willing and able to help strengthen Council 2 for the benefit of its members. Please take advantage of the opportunity.

In solidarity,



LEE SAUNDERS
President

LS:lb

cc: AFSCME Council 2 Executive Board

