



Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild @ RFA

June 8, 2007

Guild-CWA Lobbying Efforts Pay Off Full RFA Funding Restored

Guild-led efforts to preserve funding for the Tibetan and Cantonese language services crossed a major hurdle when a key House subcommittee rejected the proposed cuts.

The panel, headed by New York Democratic Congresswoman Nita Lowey, voted this week to fully fund RFA. The Republican-dominated Broadcasting Board of Governors had tried to completely eliminate the Cantonese service and severely cut the Tibetan service.

Immediately after finding out about the proposed cuts — and before they were publicly announced — the Guild began efforts to get them reversed, with Guild leaders plotting strategy with CWA legislative representatives. As soon as the cuts were made public, a top CWA lobbyist began lobbying the House subcommittee.

Later an AFL-CIO lobbyist also was assigned to help.

Meanwhile, RFA Unit Chair Karma Zurkhang, Vice Chair Liu Hong and Local Representative Paul Reilly took part in the CWA lobbying effort, personally visiting lawmakers on Capitol Hill during the CWA legislative conference in March.

This effort was greatly enhanced and augmented by visits made by individual Guild members from RFA as well as coordinated efforts with community groups. The only public subcommittee hearing dealing with the cuts was attended by more than 15 RFA staffers, along with a group of Tibetan monks.

Guild members also wrote letters and made phone calls to key subcommittee members.

The budget still must be approved by the full House and Senate.

We will continue to use CWA and AFL-CIO lobbyists to ensure the funding remains intact throughout the legislative process.

Tibetan Discharge Arbitration Resolved

The first scheduled grievance arbitration at RFA did not happen.

RFA management and the Guild reached a settlement of the case days before the arbitration was scheduled.

Under the settlement, RFA agreed to convert the discharge into a resignation and to give the former employee a stringer contract.

To date this was the only case in which the Guild has filed for arbitration at RFA.

Job Posting

Guild Contract Bargainers

The Guild RFA Unit officers are accepting applications from employees wishing to be on the 2007 contract negotiating team. Interested members should submit an application to Unit Chair Karma Zurkhang (Zurkhangk@rfa.org) by no later than June 22.

Duties: Prepare contract proposals, participate in bargaining (training will be provided if needed)

Duration: Bargaining preparation likely to start in July, with bargaining starting some time in August. The contract expires September 30, but bargainers should be prepared to work past that date if no agreement is reached.

Times: Variable, but in the past included many nights.

Qualifications: A strong commitment to helping your coworkers achieve a fair and equitable contract; team player with ability to make compromises when needed. Members with past Guild experience as steward, officer, or bargainer are strongly urged to apply.