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| AFSCME DC 37**AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM****EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HENRY GARRIDO*****Update on Collective Bargaining Negotiations with the City of New York***September 29, 2022Dear DC 37 Family,**We need a raise. NOW.**Yesterday, we met with the City of New York’s negotiating team for the first collective bargaining session. We were explicit in our demands— we need a new contract that fairly compensates city workers, protects us from current and future contagious outbreaks, continues our premium-free health benefits and keeps us safe on the job while serving our communities.The City made one thing clear: *in order to get the raise we deserve,* *we must resolve the issue of healthcare*. Without a long-term solution to control inflated hospital charges and other increasing healthcare costs, the City of New York will be forced to charge workers for health insurance, a benefit we have been able to protect and provide at no cost for active members, retirees and our dependents for decades. That means any pay increase we secure will be completely absorbed by your out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare.I want to be transparent with you: **The healthcare system for city workers and retirees is in peril.** This is due to many factors, including the rising costs of prescription drugs, unscrupulous behavior by some hospital systems that charge up to 300% over Medicare rates and other in-network hospitals, and the resulting costs of COVID-19 testing with these providers.One of the most important roles of any union is to ensure our benefits are funded. For years, DC 37 has saved billions of dollars by coming up with concrete ideas to leverage our power and economy of scale. We pushed for the HEAL Act this year to vastly improve transparency and competitiveness around hospital pricing and contracting practices. We initiated the process of changing the way we procure prescription drugs. Our union has successfully sued over 18 different pharmaceutical companies to keep the prices of generic drugs in check. But as the cost of healthcare continues to rise to unsustainable levels, the fund that pays for our benefits was depleted over the summer.We need permanent, long-term solutions. That includes amending old laws that favor insurance companies and pressuring hospitals to change their behavior or be pulled out of network. It means holding accountable those we elected to office to ensure adequate healthcare funding is available for our benefits. And it means transitioning our retirees to the Medicare Advantage plan, which provides premium-free access with more coverage than the current plan and will result in an estimated $600 million in annual savings.**You need and deserve a raise. We’re working diligently to get this for you.** But I’ll be frank: this round of bargaining is going to be very difficult. If we don’t fix the cost of healthcare, you will feel the impact in your pocketbook more than ever.Share this message with your union sisters and brothers. Let them know their union is fighting for them and their families every day. **We will get through this— Union Strong as ever.**Thank you for your service to New York City and your commitment to DC 37.In solidarity,Henry GarridoExecutive DirectorDistrict Council 37**###*****Important Reminder:*** ***If you are a DC 37 member, you should be receiving DC 37 Action Alerts & News at your non-work email address, definitely NOT your work email address as this can be a violation of workplace rules. If you signed up using a work email address, please change it to a non-work email.*** |

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