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State employees want governor to match words with deeds

Wisconsin's largest state employee union is asking state legislators to encourage the Walker administration to make good on its recent rhetoric about working together.

The Wisconsin State Employees Union, AFSCME Council 24, on Tuesday wrote legislators asking them to prod Walker into opening talks with state workers.

“All of us have heard the rhetoric from the Walker administration lately about working together and resolving issues, but I guess that doesn't hold true when it comes to dealing with 22,000 state workers,” WSEU Executive Director Marty Beil wrote in the letter.

On Aug. 18, the union formally requested the state begin bargaining, as modified by Act 10, with five units represented by the WSEU. As was the case when the union requested bargaining at the beginning of Walker's term, the request has been ignored and unacknowledged.

But, in the wake of recall elections that cost two Walker allies their jobs, the governor has suddenly begun talking about the need for cooperation and compromise. “This is a chance for him to match words with deeds,” Beil said.

Beil points out that under Act 10, WSEU remains the certified bargaining agent for five units of state workers.

“By this letter, we are requesting that you communicate with the Walker administration to fulfill their statutory responsibility, set out in Act 10, and proceed to bargain with us.

“We believe that there is an obligation to make sure the Administration follows what the legislature passes and enacts. Anything else would be willful disregard for the law,” Beil wrote.

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