



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

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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

March 26, 2019

**BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING:
*Child & Family Services Agency***

**Wayne L. Enoch, LGSW
President
AFSCME Local 2401**

Madame Chairperson and the Committee on Human Services, thank you for allowing to submit testimony for the Performance Oversight Hearing of Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

I am Wayne L. Enoch, President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 2401. I have been an employee of the District of Columbia Child & Family Services Agency (CFSA) for twenty six (26) years. I am also a long time District of Columbia resident.

AFSCME Local 2401 is the Collective Bargaining Unit of over 1800 employees from various agencies within the government. Our members are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of the District's most vulnerable citizens. AFSCME Local 2401 has members at 10 agencies, including the Department of Human Services, Child and Family Services Agency, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Health Care Finance, Department of Disability Services and Office of Contracts & Procurement. At CFSA, AFSCME Local 2401 is responsible for the Collective Bargaining of a number of positions; which includes Social Worker, Family Support Worker, Resource Development Specialist, Clerical Assistant and many more.

I am unable to be present for the February Oversight Hearing; however, I wanted to provide insight for the working conditions of the employees that this Local represents. This testimony is sent to inform you that there are some good things going on at CFSA but as with any workplace, there are areas that could be enhanced. As the union president, I am fully aware of areas that could use improvement as well as areas where the agency surpasses the mark.

Currently, CFSA is in the process of what it has called a "Reorganization" within the Entry Services Administration. Although the agency calls it a reorganization, I do not feel that it has followed the procedures as outlined by the DC Human Resources "General Information Guide: Reorganizations & Realignments" (March 2007, revised March 2008). To the best of my knowledge, there is no other guide that governs this process.

On January 16, 2019, the agency informed labor of its plans. Chief among these plans is to return to the traditional type of Child Protection Investigation units as it was a few years ago. I have heard mixed reviews about this. There are some veteran employees who feel that we have done this before and wonder why the agency feels the need to return to the previous structure. There are others who feel that they were never really given the opportunity to function solely in the functions that were initially designed (FA and Investigations). Staff seem to be somewhat accepting of the restructuring, yet are not fully pleased. I feel that they are operating from a sense of indifference because the agency changes so much. That is concerning to me because it impacts morale.

As the union president, my chief concern has been the agency's technique of staffing the Institutional Abuse Unit. Prior to the restructuring and union notification, social workers in a unit were to of planned changes and asked if they would like to replace the already staffed and functioning Institutional Abuse Unit. During the official notification, we informed that the supervisor and staff of a Family Assessment Unit would assume the responsibilities of the Institutional Abuse Unit. The union expressed concern about this, as it does not follow the procedure of staffing based on Seniority and it gives the appearance of the agency moving people where they want them and favoritism, without competition and seniority. That is another issue that impacts staff morale. The agency's response has been that the agency can move units and the Administrator chose this supervisor and wanted to move the unit, intact. Local 2401 does not agree with this type of movement and has strongly expressed our concerns, however we did not file a grievance.

On the positive side, CFSA has become as example of how Labor and Management Partnerships should function. The agencies Labor Management Partnership Council (LMPC) continues to meet regularly to discuss issues that are relevant to improving the workforce and improving the services that the agency provides to the District's citizens.

As the LMPC, over the last year, we have partnered to provide many new and already existing Well-Being initiatives. We have recognized the chief professions within the agency during Social Work Month, Administrative Professionals Day, Nurses Day (with the Nurses union). We have started Morning Meditations. Also, there was a strongly supported "Fun Day". Perhaps the main new initiative has been Meeting Free Middays, which take place every Wednesday. During that time, meetings are not scheduled and everyone is encouraged to do something towards their wellness. Whether it is stepping out for lunch or participating in one of the scheduled activities (e.g. Spanish class and Yoga).

The LMPC's most recent initiative is the Workplace Innovations Subcommittee. With this committee, we are looking at ways to address changes in technology and how we can function as an agency. With past initiatives like Telecommuting we need to look at how we are doing work and what we can do to make sure we take advantage of every avenue available to perform at the highest level possible. Subjects currently under the scope of this committee include Skype conferencing, Stand Up Desks and Treadmill Desks.

Because the agency has a fully functioning LMPC, I feel that management is often more able to know some of the concerns of the staff. Because they are comprised of management and labor, during the LMPC meetings as well as subcommittee meetings, management is able to hear from Labor leaders as well

as line staff. Sometimes we are able to avoid grievances by working together towards a common goal. As I mentioned, Local 2401 has members at other agencies. I am struggling to get the LMPCs functioning at most other agencies. I am encouraged by the work of CFSA towards Well Being and the LMPC.

Thank you for hearing from me today. I also look forward to more conversations, collaborating and sharing of information about CFSA as well as other agencies associated with AFSCME Local 2401. This Local is very receptive to hearing from you and providing any feedback you would like from our members.