

Good morning, everyone. I am Officer Essica Littlejohn, and I want to thank you for joining us. I appreciate your taking time to listen as I speak on behalf of 13 labor organizations that represent city employees.

We called this press conference to announce that, on behalf of our organizations and the employees we represent, we have filed suit against the City of Memphis for violating our First and 14th Amendment rights and the city's own impasse ordinance.

As union representatives, we work together to ensure that the employees we represent are treated fairly. We want to make sure that our members get the compensation and benefits that they are entitled to receive.

You have heard that the city's budget includes a 4.6 percent wage cut for city workers.

All of these changes took place months *after* we signed agreements with the city's leadership to keep wages the same.

The Unions share the city administration's concern for Memphis' budget challenges.

That said: a deal is a deal. Once you've signed a contract, you have to stick to the terms. You can't change the terms because you feel like it --or because it's easier that way. A deal is a deal.

More than 25 years ago, our local government passed an impasse ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is to provide a timeline for city workers --like us --to negotiate for our wages and benefits in an orderly manner while making sure the city still meets its deadlines for creating the budget each year.

As I mentioned, we share our city leadership's concern for Memphis' budget challenge.

So, when we negotiated our agreements, we **did not** ask for pay increases.

Instead --we determined that wages would remain the same. We negotiated on other matters that improved operations for the city and our organizations. We looked forward to working under these new agreements --and when negotiations ended, we thought we were done.

Except we weren't.

Imagine our surprise and disappointment when we heard that our city council passed a budget for FY2012 that violated terms that we clearly outlined in our agreements months ago. The City has NEVER negated progress made during negotiations.

I guess for some, a deal isn't always a deal.

Thank you for your time. We'll answer any questions at this time.