

**CONTACT:**

**Timothy Taylor**  
[ttaylor@gmlblaw.com](mailto:ttaylor@gmlblaw.com)  
901.528.1702 (o)

**Deborah Godwin**  
[dgodwin@gmlblaw.com](mailto:dgodwin@gmlblaw.com)  
901.528.1702 (o)

## **MEMPHIS UNIONS FILE LAWSUIT AGAINST CITY**

**MEMPHIS**, Tenn. (July 11, 2011) -- Facing 4.6 percent wage cuts for city employees imposed by the Memphis City Council in its final budget, 13 unions representing more than 5,000 workers filed a class action lawsuit against the City of Memphis. The lawsuit cites a violation of employees' First and 14th Amendment rights and the administration's failure to follow the "Impasse Ordinance" (Sec. 5-4-13).

Charging that city officials did not bargain in good faith, the following groups filed the suit in federal court: the Memphis Police Association (MPA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1733 (AFSCME), Communication Workers of America Local 3806 (CWA), Operating Engineers Local 369, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1784, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 474 (IBEW) and International Association of Machinists Lodge 3(IAM), as well as the Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement Masons, Painters, Plumbers and Roofers Unions.

"Because the city failed to follow the ordinance and bargain in good faith with city workers, the unions and the employees they represent were deprived of the benefit of the Impasse Ordinance," said Timothy Taylor, attorney representing the plaintiffs in the class action suit. "More to the point, a deal is a deal."

The Impasse Ordinance was enacted after Memphis voters approved an amendment to the Home Rule Charter in 1978. That amendment required the City Council to establish an ordinance that provided a process for arbitration of any economic issues in labor disputes with city employees. Under the ordinance negotiations are to be completed before a budget is adopted, so that the city administration and City Council have fixed costs of employee salaries.

The amendment prohibits city employees from striking and specifically expresses the citizens' desire "that all negotiations of employment agreements between the city of Memphis and its employees be conducted in a spirit of good faith and with the intent to reach an equitable agreement in a reasonable period of time ..."

This spring, during months of negotiations between union representatives and city officials, the unions negotiated in good faith. Due to the city's budget deficits, the city asked for no wage increases for a third straight year. During these negotiations, the administration never proposed wage cuts or other economic concessions. All unions came to an agreement with the city that wages would remain unchanged.

As part of budget negotiations between the city administration and the City Council in June, a 4.6 percent wage reduction for all city employees was passed. For more information, visit any of the following websites: [www.afscmelocal1733.org](http://www.afscmelocal1733.org), [www.iaff1784.org](http://www.iaff1784.org), [www.memphispoliceassociation.org](http://www.memphispoliceassociation.org) or call Timothy Taylor at 901.528.1702.

## UNION CONTACTS:

For more information about the mission and purpose of any of the unions in this case, please contact the individuals below:

American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1733 Chad Johnson 901.525.2458	Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local 3806 Robert Santucci, Executive Vice President 901.388.2227	Crafts Association (Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement Mason, Painters, Plumbers and Roofers) Mike Haley 901.726.4060
International Association of Firefighters Local 1784 Joe Norman 901.386.3129	International Association of Machinists Lodge 3 A. Gibson <a href="http://iam2763.org/">http://iam2763.org/</a>	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 474 Mike Haley, Recording Secretary 901.726.4060
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 369 C.H. Pate, Business Agent 901.754.7599	Memphis Police Association Michael Williams, Vice President 901.523.7075	

## LEGAL CONTACTS:

Questions regarding the class action lawsuit should be directed to one of the following attorneys representing the plaintiffs:

Deborah Godwin  
901.528.1702

Timothy Taylor  
901.528.1702

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