
Unions sue city of Memphis in federal court to reverse pay cuts

By Amos Maki

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Attorneys representing city union workers have asked a Federal District Court judge to reverse a 4.6 percent pay cut given to city employees.

The injunction request was filed Friday.

"We filed a motion for preliminary injunction on Friday, essentially asking the court to reverse the 4.6 percent pay cut," said attorney Timothy Taylor.

In July, 13 unions representing about 5,000 city of Memphis workers sued in U.S. District Court to stop the city from implementing the 4.6 percent pay cut for their members.

The city is expected to file its response to the lawsuit today.

The lawsuit seeks damages, an injunction and a judgment that the city violated its own ordinances.

Attorneys for the unions are seeking class-action status because of the number of people affected.

Nine City Council members voted June 21 for Mayor A C Wharton's budget for the coming fiscal year that included a reduction in the number of paid holidays city employees get from 13 to one.

Some council members who voted in favor later said they did not realize they were voting for a pay cut.

The unions -- representing sanitation workers, police, firefighters, electricians, dispatchers, machinists and building tradesmen -- claim the city violated provisions of a bargaining and impasse ordinance passed after a 1978 referendum giving workers collective-bargaining rights.

Last week, a council hearing on the salary reductions and layoffs was postponed until the legal battle over the issues is over.



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