



Dear USA Members,

Good News !

The USA's contract was included in the Senate's version of the supplemental budget and voted on by the Senate last Thursday (3/24). Now, the Senate's version of the supplemental budget has to be reconciled with the House version and sent to the Governor for signing. Hopefully this will all happen in the next two weeks.

I want to give special thanks to Senator Jo Comerford for adding an amendment to the Senate budget just before the deadline. After USA ratified its contract on the morning of Tuesday, March 15, UMass Labor Relations was informed that we had a deal. We had hoped that it would be expedited to the governor, but there were some delays, including an effort by management to make a couple of changes after ratification, but USA stood firm that a deal is a deal and we would not accept any changes. Management got it to the President's office a day later where it sat until President Meehan could sign it another day later before getting it to the Governor, the union, and the legislature. Your bargaining team was quite concerned over the delays given the deadline of Monday, March 21 for any amendments to the Senate's budget. Therefore, I contacted Senator Jo Comerford's office on Thursday, March 17 and I explained our frustration with the delays by the UMass Administration. Worried that we would not make the supplemental budget in time, Senator Comerford's office promised to help. Senator Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester), supported by Senator Gobi (Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex), Senator Feeney (Bristol and Norfolk), Senator Rausch (Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex), Senator Jehlen (Second Middlesex), and Senator Pacheco (First Plymouth and Bristol) moved the new amendment that included not only USA's contract but also PSU-Bs and five other state employee contracts.

The bargaining team is grateful for Senator Comerford's help and appreciates her support along with the other Senators.

The questions now remain on when, and how, these cost of livings increases, COVID bonus and COVID hazarde pay will be paid. I do not have answers to those questions at this time and have asked the Administration. I will most likely know once the budget has been approved and signed.

Thank you for your continued patience because I know everyone is anxious to get their retro raises and that you have been waiting a very long time. I will send out a membership message once I have more information about the status of the supplemental budget and pay increases in the agreement.

In solidarity,
Leslie Marsland, USA President