

Office and Professional Employees International Union: No progress on negotiations after unfair labor practices strike

Posted on Thursday, Jun 29, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison, WI – Three weeks after ending their Unfair Labor Practices (ULP) strike, the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 39 says that they have been unable to make progress on negotiations with employer TruStage Financial Group. OPEIU 39 and TruStage, formerly CUNA Mutual Group, have been negotiating a successor agreement since the beginning of 2022; the existing collective bargaining agreement expired on March 31st, 2022.

Negotiations broke down in January 2023, and OPEIU 39 filed ULP charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for unlawfully refusing to meet with the Union to negotiate, failing to provide information legally required for bargaining, surveilling union members, and terminating the Union's Chief Steward Joe Evica without cause.

In May, TruStage requested nonbinding federal mediation after the Union announced that members overwhelmingly voted in favor of authorizing a ULP strike. The Union accepted, but the negotiations did not make sufficient progress and OPEIU proceeded with a ULP strike beginning May 19th and halted on June 4th. On June 3rd, OPEIU 39 President Kathryn Bartlett-Mulvihill delivered notice to Jim Denholm, TruStage VP of Human Resources and Chief Negotiator for the Employer, that the Union had terminated the strike and would unconditionally return to work.

The Union ended the strike citing positive movement in negotiations during the labor stoppage, but TruStage immediately relapsed to its previous behavior. Sarah

Larsen, a member of the Union's bargaining committee, said, "We've been 455 days without a contract and back to work for 24 days since ending our strike. Of the four planned bargaining sessions since returning, TruStage has cancelled two. The bad faith, surface bargaining we've seen from them signifies a process that has become paralyzed by employer obstruction."

Joe Evica, Chief Steward for OPEIU 39 at TruStage, noted, "Union members have been coming to the table with thoughtful proposals meant to help reach a fair settlement while TruStage continues to bargain in bad faith. TruStage's actions and use of expensive anti-union lawfirms like Jackson Lewis show they have no regard for employee well-being."

"When TruStage talks to the press, they always say the same thing," explained Will Roberts, Multi-Media Specialist and member of the Union, "they say that they're bargaining in good faith and are committed to a market competitive package. How well has the market done at providing retirement in the last thirty years? What they have been doing is either cancelling bargaining last minute, or they show up with no proposals and then leave. How is that good faith?"

For further information, contact:

Kathryn Bartlett-Mulvihill, President

president@opeiu39.org | <https://opeiu39.org/CMGUnited.aspx> | https://twitter.com/CMG_UNITED