Privatizing public services

Except for our members in MSU’s Detroit College of Law, CTs are public employees and have good reason to be concerned about privatization.

The CTU has a history of opposing privatization of public services, especially when there is no gain to the public from the transfer. Too often, we have seen privatization pushed for political and philosophical reasons, not in order to save taxpayer dollars or improve services.

Privatization has shown time and again to cost more in the long run. The actual workers may receive less money—especially when privatization schemes eliminate unionized employees—but private owners can experience significant profits. Budgetary overruns and hidden costs are common.

After privatization, services often decline as experienced and trained public sector workers are replaced with lower-skilled workers earning lower wages and benefits.

In addition, public accountability is compromised. As public officials seek to shift more and more governmental work to private companies and organizations as a way to hold down government personnel levels, more and more government work is hidden from public scrutiny. With contracted government we suffer both as public workers and as taxpayers who want an efficient, effective and honest government.

There is usually no going back. Once a service has been privatized, once the physical resources have been sold off and the experienced personnel given the boot, it is usually too expensive and cumbersome to go back to the old ways.

The CTU can and does work to counteract privatization and its effects on our members. For example, we are vigilant in responding to rumors about privatizing units on campus.

In addition, our representation of workers at MSU’s private Detroit College of Law shows that we won’t stand by and let MSU bring employees on campus to do CT work without union protection.

In this election year, we have another way to fight the trend toward privatization. We must elect candidates who do not put corporate interests above those of our working families. We need to elect candidates, including Trustees, who are not willing to sell our jobs to the lowest bidder.

It pays to vote union!

Position paper #4 in the 2002 Elections Series
The Issues and Education Committee of the Clerical Technical Union of MSU