

February 13, 2008

Dear Attorney General Swanson:

We write on behalf of the union organizing committee in the interest of promoting the best possible workplace, furthering the mission of the Attorney General's Office, and providing the best possible public service. Toward that end, we extend the following requests to you.

First, we ask that without further delay you recognize the will of the staff to be represented by a labor union. There is nothing to stop you from meeting and conferring with us about terms and conditions of employment now, including job stability and security, just cause for discipline and discharge, and our ability to perform our required professional duties free from any undue political influence. We do not need formal certification to sit down and begin to work together to resolve our concerns about our working conditions.

Second, we ask that you work with us to amend the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) to unambiguously include the attorneys and other "at will" professional staff of the Minnesota Attorney General's Office (AGO) for purposes of formal certification for collective bargaining.

The union organizing effort is focused on fostering the best possible working conditions for attorneys to do the best possible work on behalf of the citizens of Minnesota. We believe that this goal is best achieved by a stable, experienced, and dedicated work force. It must be emphasized that the organizing effort is entirely driven by attorneys and legal assistants who are or have been on staff at the AGO since your election as Attorney General. It is not supported by any outside political interests, nor is it the product of any political vendetta. It is solely staff-driven, and any allegations to the contrary are inaccurate.

There are currently about 135 at-will attorneys on the AGO staff. Legal professionals in the Hennepin, Ramsey and St. Louis County attorneys' offices, the city attorneys' offices of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and other public law offices are represented for purposes of collective bargaining. Unfortunately, the attorneys at the state's largest public law office remain unrepresented. Staff in the represented offices finds that their represented status allows them to better exercise their professional judgment and to freely raise concerns both with their clients and with their administration. They are able to do the work of the public without the pressures and demands of external political forces creating concerns about their job security.

We believe that a unionized, classified staff would stabilize the AGO, enabling us to focus on providing the best possible legal representation to our state agency clients and, more broadly, to the citizens of Minnesota. The AGO organizing committee contacted

AFSCME for support and guidance to achieve these goals as that union already represents professional employees at other public law offices in Minnesota.

In May of 2007, the AGO organizing committee obtained signed union cards from a strong majority of the attorneys on staff, and you were then asked to voluntarily recognize our will to be represented. You declined to do so. You also rejected our request to meet and confer about the terms and conditions of employment. This was as surprising as it was disappointing because you had pledged to labor organizations that you would support and honor workers' rights as a cornerstone of your tenure as Attorney General.

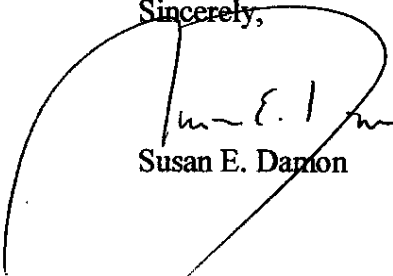
Since our organizing effort began, we have witnessed a number of conditions at the AGO that are of serious concern, including the abrupt and apparently unwarranted dismissal of employees engaged in the unionizing effort, the anonymous dispersal of anti-union literature in employee mailboxes and offices, and the rapid departure of one-third of the attorneys in the office. New employees reportedly are contacted either before their start date or immediately thereafter, misled about the origins of the organizing effort, and discouraged from signing union cards. In addition, nearly all staff attorneys have recently been approached and asked to sign either an anti-union petition or a declaration of support for you, both of which have been seen as intimidating, coercive and divisive. None of these acts contribute to a productive work environment; instead, they hinder the staff's ability to serve the citizens of Minnesota.

Once again we ask you to recognize the will of your staff to form a union. We invite you to work with us to reach agreement on the terms and conditions of our employment with the AGO. While you can certainly meet and confer with our organization without any legislative change, you can also honor your campaign pledge and be a champion for labor by including as part of your 2008 legislative agenda the amendment of PELRA to expressly provide formal collective bargaining rights for the AGO staff.

We all share the goal of maintaining the highest quality legal talent in the office in order to best serve the citizens and agencies of this great state. The organizing effort can only assist this goal. We ask that you work together with us to achieve it.

We look forward to hearing from you soon in this regard.

Sincerely,



Susan E. Damon



Daniel S. Goldberg



Amy R. Lawler