

Matt Rector  
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Treasurer



AFT Local 1581  
AFL-CIO

March 5, 2010

Carol T. Somerfleck  
P.O. Box 234  
Hagatna, Guam 96932

Dear Ms. Somerfleck,

Buenas yan Háfa Adái. I'd like to apologize for our meeting last Tuesday. If anyone thought they were disrespected let me assure you that it was not and never is my intent. That being said, I freely admit that I am human and therefore not perfect.

I was quite disturbed by the meeting as a whole. I tried my best to explain where we were on some of the issues that we were facing. We did not create the illegal furlough of teachers and even though at the time many teachers refused to believe that they were even furloughed and what was done was wrong, we persevered and invested lots of resources to winning back the money that was illegally taken from the teachers and continue to do so to this day. Your well deserved anger at this should be directed towards the people that took your money not the ones that are fighting to get it back. That being said, I'd like to thank you for reminding me how much this weighs upon teachers and how anxious you are to get involved to help get your money back. Therefore, on the eve when we go back to court again, we will begin a campaign to get our Superintendent to pay teachers the money that is owed to them.

They all claim that there isn't enough money, which is true thanks to the tax breaks received and low wages paid by big corporations, but they always seem to find enough to pay the contractors and vendors. Isn't the mission of DOE the education of children and aren't teachers the ones that do said education? Not the contractors. Of course the same issue applies to the owed back pay for DEED and Summer school teachers. Of course we must remember that there would be no owed back pay for these teachers if we hadn't for the first time in the 40 year history of GFT negotiated into our contract that teachers would be paid their actual hourly rate and not be capped at step 4.

As to the person that wants to stop paying dues, by resigning from the union, that is her choice, but as we expect management to follow the rules we too must do the same thing. Since I became president, I have ensured that we do everything by the book and follow the constitution to the letter, which wasn't the case in the past. It is not in my power to violate our constitution nor would I want to. Even though I have been repeatedly attacked and slandered by the anti-union/family forces that have kept our families in poverty and our school system underfunded by half for decades, I have to admit I was shocked when without any justification or basis of fact I was called a liar, insulted and attacked. This does not excuse my poor handling of the situation though and once again I apologize.

While we always wish we could win more, our accomplishments over the last five years have been substantial. Your contract not only is one of the best in the nation and has put millions of dollars into teacher's pockets but it has literally protected public education for the children of Guam. It is only our contract that has protected reasonable class sizes. For decades politicians and superintendents have tried to balance the budget on the backs of our students and teachers by increasing class sizes. Even the Governor's task force on education for the military buildup recommended that they renegotiate the union contract to raise the student teacher ratio and have teachers start performing the jobs of school aides. It's only the union contract that protects teachers' professionalism by keeping them from having to do yard, lunch and bus duty.

Sisters and Brothers, I apologize once again if I offended anyone. I am incredibly proud of all that our union has won and protected and maybe I was a little too passionate in its defense. If anyone has any questions or would like to meet with me please feel free to give me a call at 755-4390 or drop me an email at [mrector@gftunion.com](mailto:mrector@gftunion.com) . Si Yu'os Ma'ase for your time and understanding,

Together We Win,

Matt Rector  
President