

**Remarks by Phillip W. Weiss,
Delegate to the New York City Central Labor Council,
Representing Local 768, District Council 37,
Given at Bellevue Hospital Center,
Social Work Department Staff Meeting, May 26, 2004**

My name is Phillip Weiss. My civil service title is Supervisor I Social Worker. Presently I am assigned to the Bellevue Hospital Center Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program. My extension is 4445. In addition to my duties as a Social Work Supervisor, I also serve as a delegate to the New York City Central Labor Council, representing Local 768, which is the local that represents city workers in the Social Worker and Supervisor I, Supervisor II, and Supervisor III Social Worker titles.

As you already know, after two years of hard bargaining, District Council 37, which is the bargaining unit for Local 768, and the City of New York recently arrived at a tentative contract. The tentative contract will pay \$1,000 for the first year of the contract, a three percent raise for the second year of the contract, and a two percent raise for the third year of the contract. For employees hired after July 1, 2004, there will be certain reductions in pay and other benefits. Information concerning the terms of the tentative contract was published in the Public Employee Press and distributed to the membership.

Now that District Council 37 and the City of New York have agreed upon a tentative contract, the membership must now vote to either accept

or reject the contract. Although I am an elected officer of Local 768, I will not offer a recommendation on whether to accept or reject the tentative contract. That is exclusively your decision. However, I emphatically urge each and every one of you, if you have not already done so, to take the time to vote, and to do so today. I urge that you vote for three reasons: First, as a city worker, you have a vested interest in participating in a democratic process, the outcome of which will directly effect the terms and conditions of your employment; second, by voting, you will exercise a valuable right, a right that city workers did not always have; and third, by voting, you will further strengthen and affirm the viability of the collective bargaining process. It may interest you to know that it was not until July 21, 1954, nineteen years after the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act, that the City of New York granted its employees the right to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment. Prior to that date, city workers had no legal right to join a union or negotiate their salaries.

Your right to vote for a contract is a right that was won after years of struggle – a struggle that was led by social workers. It is a right that must not be taken for granted. So please, do not squander your right to vote. Your vote counts – but only if you take the time to cast it.

