

Gazette.Net

Maryland Community News

Published: Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Vote against Question B to support county police, their families

The Gazette is entitled to its own opinion, as expressed in its editorial recommending a vote in favor of Question B [Oct. 17]. But it's not entitled to its own facts.

ÿ The Gazette states that the right to bargain over the effects of management decisions leads to delays in police management implementing decisions. That is false. The statute plainly states that if an issue significantly affects public safety, the decision can be implemented immediately under the law. Even if it is a non-public safety matter, under the law the maximum period of time for "effects bargaining" before implementation is 50 days.

ÿ The Gazette omitted the fact that in the 30 years this law has been on the books, that 50-day time limit has never been reached — never. So where is the evidence of delay?

ÿ The Gazette falsely described that the county's "effects bargaining" law grants "sweeping" bargaining rights over "effects" of management decisions. As just stated, in fact, the statute imposes strict time limits.

ÿ The Gazette also falsely states that only the county police have the right to bargain over effects of management decisions. In fact, all public employees have the right to bargain over effects. But unlike the police, which has strict time limits under current law, other county public employees, including firefighters, have the right to bargain over effects without time limits, but sometimes must resort to time-consuming and expensive litigation.

Question B is only about one issue: the right of police to discuss — within strict time limits — about management decisions that affect them and their families. The law has been on the books for 30 years. That is it.

County residents who believe in giving our police that time-limited right to talk, and also believe that the truth matters and the Council should not be allowed to overturn a 30-year law based on falsehoods and misinformation, should vote against Question B to support your police and their families.

Marc Zifcak, Silver Spring

The writer is a master police officer and past president of Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 35.