

LAW OFFICES
DOWD, BLOCH, BENNETT, CERVONE, AUERBACH & YOKICH

8 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE - 19th FLOOR
CHICAGO, IL 60603
PHONE (312) 372-1361 FAX (312) 372-6599
www.laboradvocates.com

MELLISA J. AUERBACH
JEREMY M. BARR
BARRY M. BENNETT
ROBERT E. BLOCH
ROBERT S. CERVONE
J. PETER DOWD
JOSIAH A. GROFF
WILLIAM M. KINNEY
JUSTIN J. LANNOYE
DAVID P. LICHTMAN
GEORGE A. LUSCOMBE III
ELIZABETH L. ROWE
RONALD M. WILLIS
STEPHEN A. YOKICH

by electronic mail
(james.gleffe@cookcountyil.gov)

December 18, 2020

Mr. James Gleffe
Deputy Chief of Staff and Labor Counsel
Cook County Clerk's Office
69 W. Washington Street, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: December 11 unlawful threat

Dear Mr. Gleffe:

Your December 11, 2020 letter threatening to discipline the Cook County Clerk's SEIU Local 73-represented employees for participating in a strike has been referred to this office for reply. Your letter is unlawful and must be immediately rescinded, with due notice to all affected employees.

Your letter contends that the Cook County Clerk's 2017-2020 labor contract with Local 73 was somehow magically and automatically extended for another year, thus depriving Local 73 members of an opportunity to renegotiate their working conditions for a successor agreement. This false claim ignores that, pursuant to contract Section 15.1, the Union served timely notice nine months ago, on March 18, 2020, of its intent to negotiate a new labor contract to replace the old contract that expired on November 30. Your claim that the contractual "no strike" clause somehow remains in effect is likewise false because the labor contract had expired and the Union properly served its 5-day notice terminating the no-strike pledge and otherwise complying with the law.

Your letter further contends that Local 73 and the Clerk's office failed to engage in mediation. Notwithstanding earlier mediation efforts with all County entities, the Clerk and Local 73 negotiated today with the aid of a mediator, thus unquestionably fulfilling the statutory requirement that mediation has been used.

This letter accordingly is to demand that the Cook County Clerk's office retract its threat to discipline Local 73-employees should they exercise their lawful right to strike, and that its retraction be sent to every Local 73-represented employee who received your December 11 letter.

Should the Cook County Clerk fail to so comply, and allow its threat of discipline to remain in effect after today, Local 73 will promptly file additional unfair labor practice charges against the Clerk, and its striking employees will be deemed unfair labor practice strikers, who enjoy even further protection when exercising their legal rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. E. Bloch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert E. Bloch

cc: Dian Palmer