

This is your fault! How dare you want your negotiated raises!

By President Ismael "Vince" Canales

I would like to first take this opportunity to thank everyone that showed up at today's County Council hearing in support of our efforts to attempt to defeat the County's proposed Employee Furlough Plan- CR-81-2008. The County took the easiest way out to address an alleged \$57 million dollar shortfall by furloughing every county employee for a total of eighty (80) hours between now and June 2009. This measure was taken as a result of every county labor organization refusing to give-back any provisions contained within their negotiated settlements.

This resolution was not initially on the County Council's regular meeting agenda. It was transmitted to the County Council on September 15, 2008 and placed on the additions package for the upcoming meeting today, September 16, 2008. The Council heard this resolution and passed it **unanimously** in approximately fifteen (15) minutes.

During this charade of a meeting, several glaring concerns arose. First, the Council did not initially intend on allowing any public testimony. It was only after requests being made to the Chair of the Council were several of us granted two (2) minutes apiece to present our testimony. Notification to employees and citizens within the County of this proposed resolution did not occur until the night before. Due to the alleged immediacy of this resolution, citizens were also left out of this process.

Members of the Council were approached and simply asked to delay hearing the resolution until the following week. This would have allowed everyone to have an opportunity to review, prepare and speak on the resolution. The Council stated that this was a "crisis" and they had to move forward on this matter. This reason for moving forward so quickly was **false**. We were all fully aware that plans within individual agencies did not have to be submitted to the County until September 23rd which would have allowed time for this resolution to be heard the following week.

It was apparent that the County and the Council were not interested in hearing any alternatives to address this matter. The County's position was very clear..... **Since you wouldn't give me your raises, I will just take them!** The County Executive in the last few days has consistently stated that the County's woes are all the unions, and its memberships, fault! Forget the County's consistent mismanagement of County resources. Forget the County's giving away of County land for pennies on the millions of dollars. Forget the County's lavishing of County contracts on friends and supporters. These are just a few glaring items that immediately come to mind.

The County will state that this is simply whining on the union's part. The County will also insinuate that this is each and every one of your faults for being so unwilling to "work with them" during these alleged poor fiscal times. The reality of this situation is that the County has failed its citizens and its employees. And for its shortcomings, it should be held accountable!

After consultation with our labor attorneys, we are looking into several possibilities and will advise the membership of any impending changes. Don't forget a few months ago, the

County Executive proudly stood before the media and the citizens announcing that Gorgeous Prince George's had achieved a triple A bond rating. What happened???