

Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to ask you to support **Mike Butkus**, in the 2017 Local 2 election, for the position of **Director of Contract Enforcement**. I am a 13-year member and am currently detailed to the Pension Fund as the Fund Secretary. I spent the first five years of my career at Truck 25 in the 9th battalion and the last 8 years at Engine 47 in what is now the 19th battalion. I'm grateful to have worked beside the firefighters in these two battalions. My father was still a candidate at Engine 61 the year I was born, 1968. Because of this job, he was able to provide a great Catholic school education for my three sisters and myself. I grew up in St. Bede parish, attended Mt. Carmel H.S., and with the help of my parents was able to earn a degree from Marquette University. I hold a CPA certificate and worked in finance and accounting for over a decade before getting the call for the CFD. In October of 2003, at the age of 35, I moved my two kids and 9-month pregnant wife from Elmhurst to Edison Park, took a 60% pay cut and overpaid for a house, and started my career with the fire department. My family and I have never looked back.

Back in 2003, some said my decision was foolish, but they would only understand if their father was a firefighter. The men I looked up to as a kid were firefighters. The men at Engine 61 were larger than life; before they were firefighters they served in the Pacific, Europe, Korea and Vietnam. As a 10-year-old boy pulling out of the apron on 54th and Wabash while riding in the front seat with these men riding the back step, on our way to a fire run, was impressionable beyond words. The smells, sounds, laughter, jabbing at the kitchen table and good natured brotherhood were magical to a 10-year-old boy. These men were giants. For those of you that know my father Jim (Spider to most), he stands, on a good day, at about 5'7" - nevertheless, in my eyes he was a giant. The names and stories I heard about the men at Engine 61 instilled in me a desire to follow my father's footsteps. If you received a ballot to vote in this election, then you know how special this career, in this City, can be. I think it should stay that way.

The men from Engine 61 are not the only ones I knew that served in wartime, all my uncles served in the military - Marines or Army. They taught me manners, work ethic and encouraged me to stand up for what I believe in and to speak my mind. The Jesuits at Marquette and the Carmelites at Mount Carmel taught me about moral obligations to society and being aware of the role my faith called me to take. These men - father, uncles, firefighters, priests and teachers - force me to speak up about what I know to be true. To ignore these men, would be a sin in my eyes. When I think about the standard these men set and the opportunity they provided, I do get angry about how we did not live up to be the men they were. I am afraid to disappoint these men that set the standard for this job.

Some of you may be aware of my positions as the Pension Fund Secretary. I don't feel I was elected to tell people what they wanted to hear, I was elected to give you clear accurate assessment of the health of our pension fund. With my background and experience I considered running for the Secretary Treasurer position in this election. But Mike O'Neil has been such a great source of information to me when I was first elected, that I think it would be a disservice to the entire Local 2 membership to oppose him. I strongly feel that Mike's long tenure, steady and consistent hand, is one of the Executive Board's greatest assets.

I have publicly made the argument that certain members of the current Local 2 Executive Board have been reckless in maintaining the fiscal integrity of the pension fund. The current Director of Contract Enforcement, Marc McDermott, has taken exception with my statement and has stated that Local 2 only gets benefits, they aren't responsible for funding. I could not possibly disagree more with his assessment of Local 2's responsibility. If any member of my bargaining unit does not feel it is his responsibility to get me funded benefits that ultimately result in cash, in my hand, after I agree to perform the agreed to work, then they need to go.

This Executive Board has an obligation to make certain the cash is there when promised. It is irresponsible to get pension benefits without assuring there is funding to support those benefits. Of course the City will give us more benefits if they don't have to actually give the pension fund money to fund them; they're politicians, they love a free lunch. But Marc McDermott should not be a party to their irresponsibility. He argues the Illinois Constitution protects our benefits and we don't have to worry about funding. Let me remind you, CFD retirees can't go into the grocery store or pharmacy and pay for essentials with a copy of the Illinois Constitution. The money needs to be there. The fact that the pension fund has never missed a benefit payment yet, is not a promise, it only tells me what happened yesterday. This Executive Board needs to look beyond yesterday and figure out what is going to happen next. I believe Marc McDermott has been there too long and has no sense of accountability or concept of fiscal integrity for our benefits, be it pension or healthcare benefits.

It is for these reasons that I ask you to vote for Mike Butkus for Director of Contract Enforcement. Mike has worked with me and inquired about the health of the pension fund. Mike has always shared my frustration that the pension fund's health and fiscal integrity has been neglected. Local 2 members that know Mike know him to be honest, fearless and tenacious. When I think of Mike Butkus I think of the men my father worked with at Engine 61; dedicated and committed to their Union brothers. Mike Butkus is true to his word and understands the meaning of Brotherhood. I think Mike Butkus' election to the position of Chief Steward speaks to the confidence the stewards place in him. I have confidence Mike Butkus will live up to the standards that the men before him have set for this job. I appreciate your time and commitment to Local 2 and believe a vote for Mike Butkus is a vote for all the members of the Union. Fraternally,



Tim McPhillips  
E47 - Pension Fund Secretary