

San Diego Union-Tribune Letter to the Editor

By Michael Zucchet

Regarding your Sunday editorial, "City Council: loyal to whom?"...

Your statement that the San Diego Municipal Employees Association (MEA), the City's largest labor union, is "stalling" the implementation of managed competition "by any means necessary" is simply not true. Your editorial does not cite a single example of such behavior, but there are numerous examples of actions by City negotiators that have caused substantial delays in the implementation of the 2006 managed competition ballot initiative.

It was the City, not MEA, that was found by the State's Public Employees Relations Board to be in violation of the good faith tenants that guide these types of negotiations under State law, causing the City to have to essentially start negotiations over again in 2008.

It was the City, not MEA, that followed the misguided advice of the previous City Attorney, causing more delays in the process.

And it was the City, not MEA, that ironically outsourced its managed

competition negotiating duties to an outside law firm. The City recently fired that firm and acknowledged the "substantial damage," delay and considerable expense that resulted from that misguided foray into outsourcing.

The fact is that for the last three years MEA has negotiated in good faith to implement what the voters approved in 2006. In fact we have tentatively agreed with the City on the vast majority of issues related to a fair managed competition process, resulting in a tentative agreement on a 50+ page implementation guide last fall. However, we have been waiting for more than four months for the City to provide a formal response to the negotiating impasse hearing held in October on the few remaining issues of disagreement.

If implementing managed competition is the real goal, then the City should return to the bargaining table and negotiate with MEA in good faith.

Michael Zucchet

General Manager

San Diego Municipal Employees Association