

J. Matthew Catron
Melissa Jones

04/05/2023

To Darlene Booker-Jones, Chair of the AFSCME Local 696 Election Committee,

My name is J. Matthew Catron. I am writing today to protest the intimidation techniques employed by the SBU. Co-signing this protest with me today is AFSCME Member Melissa Jones.

On 03/14/2023, as a part of the Rabble Rousers election campaign, I visited Wynnefield Library, the primary work location of Steward/Delegate and Executive Board member Mary Kachline. I entered the branch, and was welcomed by the security guard, a library assistant, and the branch head. Work was slow at that particular moment, and as a result of that, the branch head kindly and graciously invited me to speak with all of Wynnefield Library's Local 696 staff in their meeting room. Upon returning to the entrance of the building, I was greeted by Ms. Kachline.

Ms. Kachline demanded that I leave the premises immediately. She insisted that it was "against the rules" for me to be visiting the various work locations of Local 696, as I was not a presently elected representative. She stated the only reason I had not encountered any resistance prior to Wynnefield was that other locations did not understand the rules of the election.

This is, of course, utter nonsense. At her request, I left the building without hesitation or argument, but there is no rule stating that a candidate for Local 696 office cannot enter other Local 696 work locations- least of all a public library, where any member of the public is welcome. I was on my own paid leave and violated no protocol of AFSCME International, District Council 33, or Local 696.

The next day, 03/15/2023, I was visiting Northeast Regional Library, where I was told by several Library Assistants that they had been informed by "a representative of Local 696" that I was unwelcome in the building. Fortunately, the staff of Northeast Regional ignored this advice, and I was kindly welcomed into the building.

I cannot speculate as to Ms. Kachline's, or indeed anyone else's motivations or their understanding of AFSCME election protocol. I can, however, confidently assert that the actions of Ms. Kachline and "a representative of Local 696" are conduct unbecoming an officer, deliberately silencing opposing voices. I do not know how many 696 work locations were contacted by "a representative of Local 696", or how it influenced the workers I was speaking to.

There is no excuse for this sort of aggressive bullying. An officer who silences their opposition in order to gain victory has no business being an officer at all. We are all members of AFSCME Local 696. The divisiveness displayed here is completely unacceptable.

Thank you for your haste in resolving this matter. A copy of this letter has also been sent to the AFSCME Judicial Panel.

In solidarity,

J. Matthew Catron

Melissa Jones