



DEFEND CONTROL JOBS
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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TO: ALL MEMBERS
ALL MEMBERS (HOME ADDRESSES)

JUNE ELECTIONS 2009 - PROTECT OUR SERVICES - HOPE NOT HATE

On June 4th the UK votes in the elections for the European Parliament. There are also council elections throughout England.

FBU members, like most people, will have been angered and shocked at the scale of abuse of the expenses system in Parliament. There is no doubt that these local and European elections will reflect some of that anger.

Following the decision of our Conference in 2004, the FBU is no longer affiliated to the Labour Party. That does not mean, however, that we are not involved in politics. The Union has a very effective group of MPs in Westminster who work on our behalf on a wide range of Fire Service issues. Politics affects everything we are involved in, from the taxes we pay to the type of public services we provide. Elections such as these, therefore, offer us the opportunity to demand a better deal from politicians.

We would therefore urge members to consider the following issues when considering the various candidates:

- What is their stance on public sector pay?
- What is their stance on investment in public services? Do they or their party support significant cuts in the Fire and Rescue Service and other services?
- What is their stance on the future of public sector pensions?
- What is their stance on the privatisation of our public services such as Royal Mail?
- Do they support the repeal of the various anti-trade union laws?

We believe these and other such questions can enable working people to start to set the agenda for these elections.

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We are also aware that in these elections there is likely to be an increased challenge from the far right, in particular the BNP. The BNP and other fascist organisations stand in opposition to every principle of trade unionism. Indeed, the record shows very clearly that whenever such movements have achieved power, trade unions have been among the first to suffer violence and repression. In turn the rights and living standards of working people have suffered as a consequence.

The BNP and others on the far right stand for hatred and division in our society. In our profession we strive to equally protect all parts of our community. It is this approach - offering fair treatment for all - which ensures that the public hold Firefighters and other public servants in such high regard. This support in turn has been reflected in many local campaigns to defend our Service from cuts. In this light there can be no doubt that the views of the BNP and other fascists are totally alien to the values of the Fire Brigades Union and of the profession we represent. Indeed such divisive and hateful views represent a threat to our unity and our strength as a Union as well as threatening to increase hatred and division within our communities.

In any election a low turnout will favour organisations such as the BNP. We therefore urge FBU members to vote in the forthcoming elections. The issues outlined above should provide some assistance in identifying candidates worthy of your support. In the face of rising unemployment, attacks on our services and the threat of significant increases in tax on working people we need unity more than ever before. Please use your vote.

Unity not division.


Hope not hate.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally



MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY



MICK SHAW
PRESIDENT

MW/sll