

CIVIL SERVICE

By VINCENT LEE

PEF supports strikers

New York State's public employe union has thrown its support behind the Communications Workers of America strikers in the state; the union says the picketers should be allowed to demonstrate en masse outside their work place.

Rand Condell, the president of the NYS Public Employes Federation, said. "We stand with our 60,000 CWA union brothers and sisters who are holding the line against New York Telephone's proposed cuts in health benefits." The unity of the striking CWA workers "in the face of this corporate attack is an inspiration to the entire labor movement as we approach Labor Day," Condell added.

The PEF also objected to the temporary restraining order issued Monday by a state Supreme Court Justice, which bars the striking workers from having more than 10 picketers at any telephone company entrance.

"There should be no limit to the number of workers who can picket any work location," Condell said.

"If it's good enough for Ma Bell for these workers to show up every day to work," the PEF leader said, "then it should be good enough for them to show up every day at their work place for picketing."

Condell added, "This is 1989 in America. Striking workers should be allowed to picket and exercise their Constitutional rights without harassment."

The PEF represents 59,000 state employes working in professional, scientific, and technical jobs. It is the largest union of white-collar professionals in the United States and the second-largest public employe union in New York State.

State plans Sept. layoffs

New York State's plan to layoff more than 320 employes who work with the developmentally disabled and mentally retarded is "unjustifiable" and is another example of the state's callous plan to cut services for the disadvantaged, Condell charged.

Condell, who represents professionals working in the state Office of Mental Retardation and Devel-

opmental Disabilities, said the September layoffs will hurt the high-quality care OMRDD clients have been receiving.

Understaffing could also jeopardize the disbursement of millions of dollars in federal Medicaid funds to OMRDD facilities, he said.

To make up the difference, OMRDD must transfer money from its Community Services budget. As a result, staff must be cut and the plan to add 1,500 community residence beds might be scrapped.

"The state is taking the senseless, bureaucratic way out and cutting services and staff," Condell said. "New York is again incompetently managing its work force and as a result providing less quality care for those who have no voice or lobby in Albany."