

“Reason prevails in secession vote as 66% of voters reject secession”
Melville and Endicott vote to stay, but Buffalo and Syracuse members also make
strong stand for unity - By Carl Franklin

PEF Division 240 members in NYSIF’s Buffalo, Endicott, Melville, and Syracuse offices voted overwhelmingly to reject a proposal that asked them to split Division 240 in two. **Of the 325 valid votes cast, 216 were against secession, almost double the 109 votes cast in favor of secession.** The final vote tally on the proposal, which allegedly preserves NYSIF’s PEF members’ unity of purpose in their dealings with management, is concrete evidence that the much ballyhooed number and percentage of signatures obtained to force a vote on secession belied the true sentiments and desires of Division members. In fact, when Division leader’s contacted members after the petitions were filed, many members said that they were unaware they had signed petitions to secede. And an office-by-office comparison of the actual number of votes for secession with the number of petition signatures obtained clearly confirms the members’ claim.

The 109 votes for secession represent a mere 42% of the total number of members who signed the petitions to force a vote on secession. A breakdown of the number of votes compared to the number of members who had signed the secession petitions (SP) shows that **Buffalo** voted **39-31** in favor of secession but **59% of its 110 members had signed SP**; **Syracuse** voted **47-23** in favor of secession but **67% of its 125 members had signed SP**; **Melville** voted **140-7** against secession, but **33% of its 254 members had signed SP**; and **Endicott** voted **22-16** against secession but **65% of its 90 members had signed SP**. PEF’s executive board will now decide whether or not a new Division will be established, comprising Syracuse and Buffalo.

The vote on secession occurred because Daniel Warren (Buffalo member), Rocco Brindisi (Buffalo steward), Kathy Czachorowski (Buffalo steward), Kathleen DePasquale (Syracuse steward), Angela Sherlock (Syracuse steward), Dennis Baydar (Melville steward), and Catherine Kozlowski (Endicott steward) were able to obtain at least the minimum 30% of signatures required to force a vote on secession, after expressing, among other rejected claims, their alleged “...increased frustration over the current Division 240 to address the issues of the membership in the petitioning offices....”.

Responsible Division 240 leaders aggressively and condignly fought the secession efforts, which were discussed during visits to the petitioning offices and with mailings, which were derisively dismissed as “...**NEEDLESS LETTERS AND MAILINGS**”. However, it is now abundantly clear that the arguments for secession have been repudiated and that the arguments in favor of unity have won. However, all our members should be vigilant because pro-secessionists have made it clear that their ultimate aim is to split PEF’s NYSIF membership into two Divisions—one comprising New York City, and the other comprising the rest of the offices. This expressed desire of the secessionists is in stark contrast to their claim that “[t]hose advocating secession envision a smaller, but stronger division....”.

We have not struggled for 30 years to have our unity torn asunder by a few persons who have tried and failed to impose their needlessly confrontational style of leadership and agenda on Division 240, and in our dealings with management. So members are urged to be on the lookout for those who will come bearing secession or annexation petitions and absurd claims about Division 240’s incompetence or intransigence. Members should also never forget that the numbers above clearly show that the overwhelming majority of our petition-signing members abandoned the secession bandwagon as soon as they discovered the truth, and that they had too much to lose and “simply too little, too late” to gain.