

Change in State Employee Union Election Procedure

By now you should have received a postcard detailing the process for electronic voting in the SEIU Local 517M election. **Please note that you may vote electronically at work only before or after work. Breaks and lunch periods are NOT AN APPROVED TIME TO VOTE. This is a change from the language on the postcard that you received.** The election period for both paper and electronic voting starts September 12, 2009 and ends when ballots are tallied on October 5, 2009 at noon. If you prefer a paper ballot, please call 517-267-2086, leave your information and a ballot will be mailed to you by September 11, 2009.

State Employees Being Overpaid is an Urban Legend

On August 17, 2009 a press conference was held at the Capitol. Michigan State University Economics Professor Charles Ballard presented a White Paper entitled "The Retrenchment of the State Employee Workforce in Michigan." The paper was commissioned by the Coalition of State Employee Unions. Several state employees spoke on what sacrifices they have made over the years and how the cost cutting to balance budgets has hurt the citizens of Michigan. Some of his findings include:

- From 2001 – 08 state employment has shrunk by 11,000 employees or 18.1%.
- Real wage growth has been close to zero. Employees have taken furloughs and other banked leave time programs. And state employees pay more for retirement and health care benefits. From 2001-08 these changes saved the State approximately \$3.7 billion.
- Salaries for college degree classifications falls behind those in the private sector. Ballard stated that "There's a lot of myth, urban legend and folklore about what state employees get, if you correct for education level, their pay is actually less." For a bachelors degree, state employees make 72 cents for every dollar private sector employees make.

To review the report, view the pictures from the press conference or send a letter to your legislator informing them of the report, click:

http://www.seiu517m.org/State_Employees_Being_Overpaid_is_an_Urban_Legend.aspx

Public Employees Speak Out Against Dillon Health Care Proposal

A rally was held at the Capitol on Tuesday, August 11, 2009 to voice concern over the public employee health care proposal of House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.). His proposal would take away collective bargaining over health care and pool all public employees into one health plan. SEIU Local 517M had two members tell their personal stories concerning healthcare. Shirley Key, a Food Service worker from the Flint Schools told her story of being laid off as a custodian with health benefits and bumping into a part-time food service position with no health benefits. Ernie Ahmad, a part-time bus driver from Saginaw County Community Mental Health who has seen his hours cut to 20 hours per week. He now can't afford health insurance for his family. View pictures at:

http://www.seiu517m.org/Members_Speak_Against_Dillon_Health_Care_Proposal.aspx

SEIU's New Consumer-Friendly Credit Card Paves Way for Credit Industry's Future

The SEIU Rewards Visa Card has once again been lauded in *Business Week* as a "model of no fees, steady rates, and reduced risk may point toward the [credit] industry's future." Before passage of the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility & Disclosure Act this Spring, SEIU worked with PartnersFirst—cited in the article as a "different kind of credit card company"—to launch a member friendly card that eliminates late, penalty and annual fees. To view information on the SEIU Rewards Visa, click here:

<http://www.seiu.org/a/about/financial-service-program-for-seiu-members.php>

Dearborn Heights Members Settle Contract

Custodian and Maintenance members working for the Dearborn Heights School District have reached a tentative agreement on a new three year contract. Highlights include no loss or change in their healthcare benefit and for the 2009-10 school year there is a no layoff clause to protect the full-time membership from layoff.

Members Walk For A Cure



The SEIU Scientific and Engineering Unit donated \$650 to the Susan G. Komen For the Cure Fund. Cyndi Mollenhour and her team participated in the three day walk with SEIU as one of their sponsors. Congratulations Cyndi! Find out more about this organization by clicking here: www.komen.org. Additionally, SEIU donated \$200 to EVE – Ending Violence Against Woman by sponsoring a hole at their golf outing held in Lansing. www.eveinc.org.

Taylor School Members Help Crash Victim Families

SEIU 517M Taylor School Unit members recently helped the families of 5 victims of a car-train crash that occurred in Canton Township. The ages ranged from 14 to 21 and were current or former students of Harry S. Thurman High School in Taylor. Through work with other school district unions and local businesses the group has been able to raise over \$800. Lynda Roberts, Taylor School Unit President stated "Taylor Schools has a fantastic group of people when something like this happens, the whole district comes together when something has to get done, and we get it done."

Member Strength Program

At the 2008 SEIU International convention a new set of goals and standards were overwhelmingly adopted by the delegates. These goals create a groundwork to build true strength amongst our leadership and the membership as well.

The Member Strength plan is built around four levels of increasing engagement. Levels 1 & 2 would identify our "majority involved". Our goal is to identify over 50% of our total membership at this level by 2012. These two levels include members connecting with the union through chapter meetings, attending union actions and activities up to deepening involvement such as volunteering for phone banking efforts or making a presentation to a community group regarding issues important to our union. Levels 3 & 4 identify our leaders into a "3" or developing leader, someone becoming a leader and connecting others to the union. Active Leaders or a "4" are member leaders who are actually developing leadership and leading others to support and commit our core goals. Our goal for "leaders" is 10% of the membership by 2012.

Demonstration Planned at Saginaw County Community Mental Health

Our protest will take place on Friday, September 4th. The facility is located in Saginaw at 500 Hancock (corner of N. Michigan & Hancock). This is the first day of the four mandatory "no service to the community" days. SEIU members and other community activists are signing up to participate between the hours of 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. We ask that people sign up for at least two-hour blocks of time.

Staff at SCCMHA are being forced to stop their services to the community on four separate days with a compulsory unpaid lay-off, which is estimated to save the agency a mere \$45,000 for each day for all 235 staff service providers. Outside contractors are over budget by over 2.6 MILLION DOLLARS and the CEO refuses to even review the greater cost of outside contracted work or require these outsiders to take any kind of cut. The CEO's actions not only are unfair, but also a true example of mismanaging our tax dollars. Call the Union office at 989-797-4243 or by email to drenner@seiu517m.org to sign up. You can also sign up on-site the day of the action.

State Budget and Layoff Update

We received a courtesy call from the Office of the State Employer (OSE) yesterday advising that general notification letters of INDEFINATE LAYOFFS as well as general notice of TEMPORARY LAYOFFS were being mailed to state employee unions. These general notices to the exclusive representatives are required under existing collective bargaining agreements. No specific positions and or proposed dates have been identified at this time. These notices are a direct reaction to the continuing state revenue deficits currently projected in the state general fund, as well as the school aid fund. For more information click on: http://www.seiu517m.org/State_Budget_and_Layoff_Update.aspx