

SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

December 2013 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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State Employee at Impasse Hearings

On November 13th the impasse panel heard testimony from both the State and the Coalition of State Employee Unions with regard to future wage increases and health care benefits for all exclusively represented state employees. The State began their 90 minutes of testimony by giving a presentation on Michigan's economy and the state budget. This was the same presentation they gave to the Coalition in August, with numbers based off May's Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference (CREC).

The Coalition began our 90 minutes of testimony with an economic presentation from **Mitch Bean**, a Principal with Great Lakes Economic Consulting and former head of the Michigan House Fiscal Agency. His presentation also focused on Michigan's economy, the state budget and tax collections. He used the same data from the May CREC, however he also incorporated economic data through October of this year. His numbers were more aligned with what we've seen in recent press releases from the State Treasury about actual tax collections and budget surpluses.

The coalition also had Dr. **Jeffrey H Keefe**, Professor of Labor and Employment Relations at Rutgers University give a presentation on wage/salary comparisons between state employees and the private sector. Dr. Keefe's analysis concluded that after controlling for multiple factors relevant to compensation, specifically education (which is the single biggest factor in compensation), experience, organizational size, gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship and disability, employees for the State of Michigan earn less in total annual compensation than they would earn in the private sector.

On November 15th the Scientific and Engineering and Technical bargaining units had unit specific issues presented to the Impasse Panel. These included special pay increases, overtime and health and safety issues.

The Impasse Panel recommendations were presented to the Civil Service Commission on November 27th. The Commission will meet on December 18th and make the final determination on our contract.

Click the link to view the recommendations: <http://www.seiu517m.org/2013/11/27/impasse-panel-recommendations/>

State Employees Rally Outside of the Impasse Hearings



[2013311130016](#)

On November 13th as the Impasse Panel conducted its first day of hearings on unresolved contract issues (See "[Unions Make Their Case](#)" article), 100 state workers representing the 5 coalition unions rallied outside to urge the panel to approve fair contracts.

News coverage and photos of the event can be found below: http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2013/11/state_employee_unions_protest.html

Video coverage can be found at: <http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2013311130016>

State Gives Big Raises to Politicos, Not to Front Line Workers

All through bargaining and the Impasse process the state has stated that there hasn't been a recruitment and retention issue to warrant any special wage increases for the membership. Then the state gives out raises to chief financial officers in excess of 80%! See the Detroit Free Press Article at: <http://www.freep.com/article/20131124/NEWS06/311240066/State-s-top-investment-officials-get-giant-pay-raises>

Seems highly suspicious that the state asked for concessions in healthcare and low wage increases in bargaining this year and then suddenly finds money to pay top political appointees obscene raises!

Report Shows Revenue Decline & Risky Wall Street Deals- Not Pensions- Led to Detroit Bankruptcy

A new in-depth report from Demos, a nonpartisan think tank, shows that the real causes of Detroit's financial problems and current bankruptcy filing were steep revenue declines exacerbated by risky Wall Street deals. The Michigan Legislature and Gov. **Rick Snyder** made Detroit's revenue crisis worse by slashing \$67 million in state revenue sharing.

The extreme right wing and its big money allies such as the Koch brothers have tried to blame city and state budget woes in Michigan and elsewhere on public services and public workers; while continuing to rob state and city coffers by pushing for more and more tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy.

Complicated swap deals have benefited banks and investors at the expense of cities across the country, including Detroit. The Demos report finds “the banks that sold these swaps may have breached their ethical, and possibly legal, obligations to the city in executing these deals.”

SEIU 517M leader and 17-year Detroit city worker **Yolanda Langston** spoke at a recent press conference about this report and was quoted in the news article below:

<http://michiganradio.org/post/report-questions-assumptions-behind-detroit-bankruptcy>

Other media coverage including a link to the full report:

<http://www.freep.com/article/20131120/NEWS01/311200115/detroit-bankruptcy-debt-revenue-sharing-cuts>

New Members Join SEIU Local 517M!

The SEIU Local 517M family has gotten a little larger, as the approximately 55 Cafeteria Attendants at Sodexo's Food Division of Saginaw Public Schools has ratified a contract. These members will be accreted into the existing Contract with Sodexo on a unanimous vote of those who participated in the election.

This has been a work in progress for approximately 12 months. A big thanks goes to **Sam McGee**, Chief Steward with Sodexo Maintenance Division as he went around to several of the schools to get a majority to show interest/wanting to join SEIU prior to talks with employer Sodexo, that took place over the winter and spring of 2012/2013. This makes about 120 members now covered under the Sodexo Food Division Contract at Saginaw Schools.

Technical Unit Update



By Michael P. Mandrick
Technical Unit Secretary/Treasurer

George Heath has been reelected president of the Technical Division SEIU Local 517M for the period of office from November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2016.

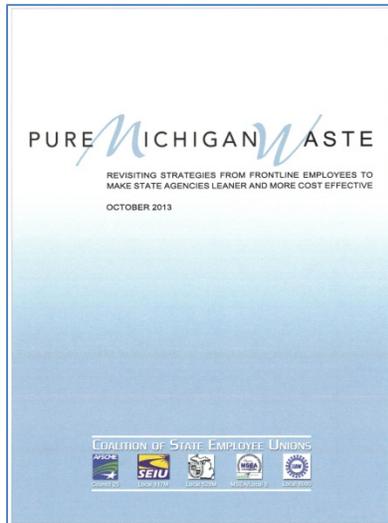
George ran unopposed and per our current organizational bylaws assumed the office without balloting. George has served as president since the spring of 2010, assuming the office upon the early retirement of the previous president and winning a reelection vote in the fall of 2010. George has presided during numerous changes to both the State of Michigan and SEIU Local 517M. And through the years has provided a steady hand and engaged leadership. Congratulations.

Unopposed offices in the United Technical Employees Association (the now Technical Division of SEIU Local 517M) result in the member assuming office without balloting. This procedure was adopted a number of years ago as a cost saving measure. At that time our election ballots were snail mailed resulting in nontrivial mailing and staff costs to the organization and we had seen many offices become uncontested. But the organization will not work without member interest and engagement. And the organization had its' formation heavily prompted by the Department of Transportation exercising a heavy hand on employee travel expense reimbursements. We are engaged in this fight again. President Heath had sent a plea for travel expense reimbursement information (whether for Travel Schedule I or Travel Schedule II) back on

November 12, 2013. We have received a gratifying number of replies but in an era of big data more information is better than less. So we are continuing to ask for examples of how travel expenses impact our members. Information can be passed along to George at heathg5459@yahoo.com, or to Dennis Streeter at dstreeter1@seiu517m.org.

*If unions are no longer needed why are so many spending so much to break them up?
Stronger United*

Pure Michigan Waste Report Unveiled



The Coalition of State Employee Unions has issued a new report titled [Pure Michigan Waste](#), detailing areas where the State has failed to collaborate with its workers on being more efficient and accountable to Michigan taxpayers. Highlights include:

- Management ratios are too high and getting worse
- Outsourcing to private contractors is rampant and often costs more
- State administration failing to truly partner with employees/unions on efficiencies

The new report builds off the Coalition Unions' 2011 New Solutions report, and tracks the State's progress over the past 2 years.

The Coalition has also launched a new website, WorkingforMichigan.org, which further discusses these concerns.

View the Pure Michigan Waste Report at:
<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2013/11/PureMichiganWaste2013.pdf>

Links to news coverage of Pure Michigan Waste:

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20131112/NEWS01/311120028/>

<http://wkar.org/post/pure-michigan-waste-campaign-aims-streamline-government-work-force>

<http://1320wils.com/assets/files/11-13-13%20Dan%20Matthies.mp3>

Members Only Benefit - 2014 SEIU Scholarships Now Available

Through five different scholarship programs, SEIU awards 53 scholarships that enable SEIU members and their children to pursue their educational goals at accredited colleges, universities, and technical schools. Scholarship applications are available starting December 2, 2013.

SEIU scholarships are open to SEIU members or their children. To be eligible to apply for any SEIU scholarship, membership must be for three continuous years as of September 1, 2014. All awards must be for the academic year(s) awarded. Scholarships will be awarded without regard to the sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability of any applicant. Scholarship awards are limited to one per household. Applications must be filed online by midnight March 3, 2014 or postmarked March 3, 2014.

Online Applications and information: <http://www.seiu.org/a/members/fulfill-your-college-goals-with-an-seiu-scholarship.php>

BlueGreen Alliance Report

On Wednesday, November 20th labor and environmental leaders held a press conference in Lansing to release a new report showing an estimated 119,300 jobs could be created across the state's economy by making much-needed investments in the basic systems we rely on everyday—roads and bridges, water, wastewater, transit, energy, and communication systems.

The report identifies needed investments—some of which are already in the planning stages—that would have both the greatest impact on job creation and protecting communities from the impacts of climate change. The full report is available online at <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/repairmi>.

"Despite improvements in recent years, the Michigan electric grid remains insufficient to meet projected demands for reliable, economical, and cleaner energy," said Jim Harrison. "Infrastructure has always been the backbone on which our economy runs. It's time we make the investments that we've been putting off for far too long."

The report—Repair Michigan: Creating Good Jobs While Preparing Our Systems for Climate Change—includes the number of direct jobs from impacted sectors—like construction laborers, equipment operators, and maintenance workers—as well as the number of indirect jobs from industries that service those sectors and the supply chain. In addition, the report estimated the number of induced jobs supported as the workers buy goods and services, including increased demand for retail, housing, and financial services.

"Climate disruption makes our lives worse every day, not only by making extreme weather more frequent and severe, but by damaging the systems we rely on for transportation, communication, energy, water and so much more," said **Anne Woiwode**, Michigan Chapter Director for the Sierra Club. "President Obama's comprehensive climate action plan is a good start, but we also need to repair Michigan's infrastructure to make our economy stronger, and more competitive, our communities safe and healthy, and to stop climate change from disrupting our lives."

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) publishes a Report Card for America's Infrastructure every four years, and in 2013, the nation earned a "D+" average. Michigan's grade was even lower, earning a "D" grade. The report card found that 38 percent of the state's roads are in poor or mediocre condition, half of the sanitary sewer mileage was built before 1970, and that though transit ridership has grown significantly in the last two decades, the rise is outstripping capacity.



"Our failure to repair our infrastructure is a vicious circle," said **Bryan Grochowski**, Scientists & Engineers Executive Board Member of Local 517M of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). "As more and more systems fail due to age and chronic underinvestment, the

inefficiency created increases the impact we have on climate change, making it worse. Climate change in turn brings severe weather—like floods, droughts, and super storms—which puts even more strain on communities and their vulnerable infrastructure systems.”

The release is part of the BlueGreen Alliance’s Repair America effort to fix the basic systems people rely on every day—for power, water, to communicate with each other, and to get people and goods from place to place—which will create family-sustaining jobs, help address climate change, and ensure our communities are safer and healthier.

“Investments in our infrastructure will create much-needed jobs in construction, manufacturing, maintenance, research and other industries and protect the health of our communities and environment,” said **Jim Shaw**, Business Representative, Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers Union (SMART) Local 7. “We must commit today to make our vision of the future a reality—a national and state infrastructure system that is the source of our prosperity. It’s time for leaders at every level of government to lead the way in repairing Michigan and the rest of the country.”

2014 SEIU Local 517M Calendars Now Available

Click on the link to download the state employee or school and local government 2014 calendars.

State Employee Calendar: <http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2013/11/2014calendarstate.pdf>

School and Local Government Calendar:
<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2013/11/2014calendarslg.pdf>



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