

## SEIU Local 517M E-Former - November 2014 Edition

*Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!*

### **In this Issue:**

Remember to Vote November 4<sup>th</sup>!

Lawsuit Activity – Oral Arguments Completed in School Pension Case

A Message From the President

Technical Unit Mediation on Travel Expenses

State Employee Flexible Spending Account Enrollment in November

Region 1 Report

---

### **Remember to Vote on November 4<sup>th</sup>!**



Election Day is Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Please take time to get to the polls and vote! State employees have that day off to encourage them to vote. You have the time, so make sure you take advantage of it. Find a listing of candidates with the ability to compare them against each other at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/political-action/>

### **Lawsuit Activity – Oral Arguments Completed in School Pension Case**



Oral Arguments in the case of AFT Michigan v State of Michigan (148748) took place on Thursday, October 9, 2014. This case deals with the 3 percent pension contribution that was forced upon school employees. Click here to listen to the oral argument proceedings:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/MichiganSupremeCourt/Clerks/Documents/briefs-archive/2014-2015/148748/148748.mp3>

There still is no date for the start of oral arguments at the Supreme Court in the State Employee Pension lawsuit (4%) or the Right to Work Applicability cases. Activity continues on these cases as briefs continue to be filed by parties both for and against in each case.

### **A Message From the President**



By Bill Ruhf, SEIU Local 517M President

**VOTE**

## Technical Unit Mediation on Travel Expenses

The Technical Unit has been in secondary negotiations since Mid-march of this year regarding Travel Expenses. This is a carryover issue from last year's contract negotiations. In the best interests of the members we could not accept the conditions that were proposed to us then, and we cannot accept them now. We have been treated like second class workers, and have been living under an expense reimbursement system that is far below what is provided to consultants working side by side with us on MDOT jobs.

The employer requested that a mediator be present for a meeting to give us one last attempt at a reasonable settlement. Your team wanted to be fair, and open in our dealings, so we as a committee agreed to attend one last meeting on October 29th. This meeting, as with other meetings, was entered into with high hopes from your SEIU team of me, along with Vice President **John Eck**, Secretary Treasurer **Mike Mandrick**, Negotiating Chairman **Arnold Beller** and Chapter Vice President **Paul Cristini**, our labor relations coordinator **Dennis Streeter**, and our lawyer **Brandon Zuk**. It took only minutes to understand that like every other meeting regarding this issue, management was only interested in further concessions. During the meeting it was stated by management that it has been their goal to eliminate all MDOT travel regulations for over 10 years. The goal is to switch all travel to State of Michigan Standardized Travel Regulations. Although these regulations may be workable for a manager on an overnight trip, they do very little to address the extended assignments we face in the execution of our jobs.

We will now press on to hearings with a Civil Service appointed impasse panel. These hearings will take place next week starting on November 6th. After the hearings, our final meeting will be during the regularly scheduled Civil Service Commission meeting in December. At that time the Commission will hear arguments from the Union, management, and recommendations from the impasse panel. The Commissioners will then make a final determination in regard to this issue.

I would like to thank not only the panel members mentioned but alternate panel member **Bob Smrek**, and all of our members who have supplied us with examples and ideas regarding this issue. The total disregard for our needs shows once again the need for a favorable administration. We as State employees will have Election Day off, so please everyone use your right to vote for the candidate that will provide you with a work environment that is beneficial to you and your family.

In unity,

Technical Unit President

George Heath

## State Employee Flexible Spending Account Enrollment in November

The Employee Benefits Division (EBD) encourages you to log into your MI HR Self-Service account between November 3rd and December 1st to enroll in a Health Care and/or Dependent Care FSA. Eligible employees\* who wish to participate in the 2015 plan year beginning January 1, 2015 must enroll, even if you are currently enrolled in the 2014 plan year.

An FSA permits you to deduct up to \$2,500 per plan year (calendar year) for eligible health care expenses and \$5,000 for eligible dependent care expenses from your paycheck before

taxes. There are two types of FSAs; a health care FSA allows you to pay for eligible out-of-pocket medical, dental, prescription, vision expenses, and more. A dependent care FSA allows you to pay for eligible expenses, such as day care, day camp, nursery school, elder care, and more.

The deadline for you to submit documentation (e.g., receipts, Explanation of Benefits (EOB), etc.) to WageWorks® for your eligible FSA expenses has been extended from April 30th to May 31st of the following year. This revised deadline will take effect beginning with this (2014) plan year and will be May 31, 2015.

FSA Open Enrollment materials will be sent to you via email or mail (if you do not have an email address currently listed in your Self-Service account). If you'd like to add or revise your email address, simply login to MI HR Self-Service, select "Employment" and then "Work Phone & E-mail" from the left menu; or contact MI HR Service Center at 877-766-6447 or 711 (for individuals with hearing loss) for assistance.

The 2015 FSA Open Enrollment period is your annual opportunity to enroll in a Health Care and/or Dependent Care FSA, for further details, visit [www.mi.gov/fsa](http://www.mi.gov/fsa).

\* Non-career and Special Personal Services (SPS) employees are not eligible for this benefit.

## Region 1 Report

On September 23, 2014, Region 1 Labor Representatives and Member Organizers in the Saginaw area held meetings in five (5) Saginaw ISD Head Start School locations. The meetings were attended by a total of 58 bargaining unit members and focused on their concerns and ideas to obtain a successful contract and improve their working environment. Several members signed up for electronic dues deduction as well as monthly contributions to COPE.

On October 1, 2014, SEIU Local 517M members working for Chartwell's in the Clio School District ratified a new three year contract, with 71% of the unit voting to ratify a new three-year contract. Bargaining unit members will receive lump sum payments for the first year of the contract based on their work schedule. They will receive \$200 if they are regularly scheduled to work more than twenty (20) hours per week, and \$75 if they are scheduled to work twenty (20) hours or less each week. They will also receive an additional five paid sick days and the Compass Group Employees Insurance Health benefit plan which includes vision, dental, short and long term disability. The parties agreed to wage reopeners in the second and third years for the sole and exclusive purpose of negotiating wage increases.

Paraprofessionals working in the Mt. Morris School District ratified a new two year contract agreement on October 7, 2014. Due to School District budget cuts, this bargaining unit received no wage increases but were able to keep their longevity, holidays and 6.5 hour work days.

*The monthly subscription for the E-Former is included in your membership dues payment and is intended for members in good standing of SEIU Local 517M.*

 [Join Us on Facebook](#)