

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – October 2011

New Solutions for Michigan!



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State Coalition Continues Bargaining With Snyder Administration



The five state employee unions which collectively represent over 32,000 state employees continue the long and painfully slow process of bargaining over a new contract. The most difficult issues continue to be centered on wages, health plans, and what the State Employer refers to as “transformational changes”.

The **Coalition of State Employee Unions** (SEIU Local 517M; MCO/SEIU; UAW; MSEA; and AFSCME Council 25) continue to build its bargaining positions around the [New Solutions Report](#) which lays out a clear track for an estimated \$175 million in savings by reducing the top heavy layers of management, reducing outside vendor contracts and working together to identify workplace efficiencies. In an earlier Lansing-based radio program, SEIU Local 517M **President Bill Ruhf** told the listening audience “...these are not just new solutions, but rather a whole new way to engage thousands of state workers in the process of developing efficiencies and getting the much needed resources back to the front line services” The [New Solutions Report](#) calculates the current management to staffing ratio at one supervisor/manager for every 5.8 workers which is way out of line when compared to other states which have seriously addressed this issue as well as well as top heavy when compared to most private sector management practices.

Although full table bargaining continues, Civil Service has advised the State and the Unions that formal Impasse Positions must be presented to the Civil Service Commission no later than October 14th. Please watch for further updates on our web site at www.seiu517m.org.

Work That Needs Doing is All Around Us

With millions of Americans unemployed and even more projects left undone in our country, we need your help to show Washington that we can fix our crumbling middle class by fixing our crumbling infrastructure. All it takes is posting a picture of deteriorating public works in your community at WorkthatNeedsDoing.org. While on the site you can email your Congressional Representative and tell them how bad things are.

Across the country, bridges, homes, schools and roads are falling into disrepair. This will not only hurt future generations, but is costing American taxpayers billions of dollars annually, as increased maintenance, energy, and transportation costs for businesses are passed on to consumers in retail prices and governmental subsidies. The nation’s deteriorating surface transportation infrastructure alone will cost our economy more than 870,000 jobs and suppress the growth of the country’s GDP by \$3.1 trillion over the next ten years if serious improvements aren’t made.

No group would know better than our own members working in MDOT, road commissions, municipal DPW's, and school districts to identify and snap pictures of not only bridges in disrepair, but also roads, public playgrounds, parks, school buildings, etc.

If you post a picture on the site please let us know at seiu517m@hotmail.com and send us the picture as well. We will be compiling our own list of Michigan specific projects that need to be undertaken.

Keeping Taylor School District Children Warm

SEIU Local 517M Taylor School District Support Staff and Sax Pharmacy are hosting a "SPOOKTACULAR" Coat Drive on October 22, 2011 from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. in the parking lot of Sax Pharmacy & Gift Shop (22525 Wick Rd., Taylor). The goal is to fill a bus with gently used or new coats, hats, mittens, snow suits, boots, and socks. Any other "outer wear" that will keep kids warm will also be accepted. NO TRICKS just TREATS! Monetary gifts are welcome. Contact the Taylor Office at 734-946-5727 for more information.

New Solutions Candidate Forum Held in Saginaw

Member Political Leaders in Region 1 hosted a Candidate Forum on September 15th with 11 of the 12 candidates for Saginaw City Council and Saginaw Public School Board participating. All candidates were required to submit a completed SEIU Candidate Questionnaire before the event and schedule a designated time slot to meet with the leaders and members to further explain their position on issues that are important to all of us. Included in the roster of candidates was our own **Ernie Ahmad** (pictured left), Chapter President of Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority, who is running for a Saginaw City Council seat.



With the theme of New Solutions for all of us, candidates were asked to review our "New Solutions for Michigan" and apply the same principles of the report to find new solutions for Saginaw City and Saginaw Schools. Member Political Leaders will convene on Wednesday September 21 to evaluate responses from the candidates and come to consensus on who will be endorsed for these local elections.

Member Leaders will be spending the month of October putting their "teams" together to walk for our endorsed candidates. A special recognition goes out to our Member Political Leaders who asked some hard questions and participated in a very long night on Sept 15: **Andy Johnson, Jan Hoffman, Rick Massey, Leticia Trevino, Rachel Charboneau, Cheryl Merrill, Jeannette Barnett, Roberta Oldenburg, Sam McGee, Betty Nash, Valerie Toney, Beccy Bank** and **Amy Davis Comstock**.

Region 1 Endorses Candidates

The SEIU Local 517M Region 1 membership has endorsed candidates **Ernie Ahmad, Annie Boensch, Norman Braddock, Cirven Merrill** and **Amos O'Neal** for the upcoming Saginaw City Council seats. **Ruth Ann Knapp** and **Rudy Patterson** secured endorsements on their bids for Saginaw City Schools Board of Education seats from the SEIU membership as well.

"All eleven candidates who filled out our questionnaires and participated in our candidate forum last week needed to be familiar with our New Solutions for Michigan Campaign, and apply the same revenue savings principles to come up with ideas on how we could create New Solutions for the City of Saginaw and Saginaw Public Schools" said **Marianne Woods**, Member Leadership and Action Director for SEIU 517M.

"The endorsed candidates demonstrated the highest level of commitment to our New Solutions campaign. With our city and school district's economic challenges, these candidates truly have the best interest of all who live, work and go to school in our community" Woods further stated. The New Solutions for Michigan report can be viewed in its entirety here: <http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2011/05/Fair-Economy-New-Solutions-for-Michigan-FINAL.pdf>

Do You Tweet?

Do you use Twitter? We do! SEIU Local 517M has a Twitter account to get information out to the membership. It is another way that we can notify you about event details (or last minute changes to those details), bargaining updates, and stories from the International. If you have a "smart-phone" you can download the Twitter app for free. If you have a "not-so-smart" phone you can still receive tweets. You just create your account on-line at twitter.com and you can receive tweets via text message (text messaging rates may apply.) Go to twitter.com and follow "SEIU517M" to start getting information today!

City of Detroit Report

On September 13, 2011, the City of Detroit group passed a resolution to support SEIU International's endorsement of the 2012 re-election of President Barack Obama.

517M's Supervisory group (Senior Service Guards) in the City of Detroit were slated to be laid-off on September 9, 2011. This decision to layoff our members was rescinded. The layoffs were proposed due to the Detroit City Council eliminating appropriation funding for all Security Guard groups within the City, while maintaining private services. Vice-President **Cephus Porchia**, and Steward **Nathan Richardson**, working together with President **Yolanda Langston** met with the Director of the Health Department and Management of General Services and came up a solution to combine resources with the Department of Human Services, which now occupies space at the Detroit Herman Kiefer Complex. This along with the Privatization Ordinance section 6-307 worked in our favor. President Langston stated "Thanks to the diligent work of our Steward and Vice-President, our members got engaged in their workplace; took ownership in this process, and because of their efforts our guys never hit the street." This is the second time this group's classification was slated to be eliminated.

Member Only Vision Benefit Update from Thompson Eyecare

Now the most convenient way for you to schedule and confirm your yearly eye exam! Thompson Eyecare now is offering online appointments at ThompsonEC- available 24/7! We know your eyes are important to you and we are committed to providing the highest quality care and service for you. Our online appointment calendar is LIVE and provides you an easy way to make your appointment with Dr. Thompson. No Login or Passwords to remember. Just *easy in - easy out* appointment times and contact reminders. Please remember to

schedule an eye exam for your family as well, and share this message with others - it's one of the most important health exams they can have.