

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – March 2012

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SEIU Local 517M Notice of Constitution Vote

Please be advised that SEIU Local 517M will be holding a vote to approve changes to the SEIU Local 517M Constitution as recommended by the 517M Board of Directors. The voting period will be from March 30, 2012 until Noon of April 20, 2012. The results will be certified by the SEIU Local 517M Executive Board at their May 18, 2012 meeting. The vote will take place as a mailed ballot only. Ballots will be mailed to all SEIU Local 517M voting members by March 30, 2012.

Lawsuit and ULP Filed Over 4% State Retirement Contribution

A lawsuit was filed on Monday, February 13, 2012, by SEIU Local 517M and the other four state employee unions. The lawsuit is over the State's requirement of a 4% contribution to the defined benefit retirement system if a state employee chooses to remain in that system and not convert to a defined contribution retirement. This requirement was enacted by the legislature without the approval of the Civil Service Commission. View the lawsuit at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2012/02/complaintwithattachments021312.pdf>

Also, on February 10th, SEIU Local 517M as well as the other four union-members of the Coalition of State Employee Unions, filed a formal Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) against the Office of the State Employer for: *"...unilaterally implementing without bargaining with the SEIU and in derogation of the SEIU's collective bargaining agreement, changes....in the defined benefit pension plan"* by requiring employees to either contribute 4% of their compensation to remain in the plan or freeze their current DB benefit.

We will update our SEIU members as these actions unfold.

SEIU Local 517M AFRAM Caucus



Phil Patrick,
AFRAM Vice President

The SEIU Local 517M AFRAM Caucus is off to a great start for 2012! From January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012 our caucus has a recruitment drive to bring in new members for the 2012 calendar year. One of our primary goals is to increase our membership within the first quarter of each year. New members will gain opportunities to become more engaged with school and local community organizations as well as participate in other events that will result in the development of their leadership skills. Membership in AFRAM is open to all SEIU members within Local 517M.

The AFRAM Caucus members in Saginaw have been very active. On February 11th, AFRAM members participated in an Anti-Bullying rally/breakfast. This event was a collaborative effort with Project Futures. Project Futures is a community group that provides mentoring to youth in the Saginaw area. Over 200 children were in attendance at this event.

AFRAM members have developed a reading program at Herig Elementary School. This program allows AFRAM members to read to students, in all grade levels, once a month for one hour each month. There are additional plans for our members to develop an additional reading program at Claytor School in Buena Vista as well.

Our Annual Can Goods Drive is currently in full swing. Last year we collected can goods for the Rescue Mission of Saginaw. This year's donations will go to the Eastside Soup Kitchen. The Can Goods Drive will be ongoing through April 30th 2012.

On March 30th we will be having our annual free Taco Lunch for anyone who renews their AFRAM membership. This will be at the SEIU Hall located at 1420 S. Michigan and will take place at 12:00 pm -1:30 pm.

The Detroit AFRAM Chapter is gearing up for another year of service to the community and our members as well. We have donated school supplies to two Detroit area schools, Henry Ford Academy and J. F. Nichols Elementary-Middle School. We will be collaborating again this year with additional schools to develop more opportunities to assist area students in meaningful ways.

We are actively seeking new members by providing an AFRAM Information Booth in our Cadillac Place work location giving free popcorn to members who may be interested in joining the Detroit AFRAM Chapter. This process will continue through March 30, 2012, so come out and join in the fun!

If you are interested in receiving additional information regarding the SEIU Local 517M AFRAM Caucus, please contact the Saginaw Office, (866) 755-2080 or the Detroit Office, (313) 456-2911.

SEIU Retiree Group Meeting



By Mary Charley,
SEIU 517M Retiree Liason

The second meeting of Lansing area SEIU 517M retirees is scheduled for March 22, 2012. The agenda includes discussing the changes to Michigan pension tax law and financial planning with the pension tax changes. We will also continue to gather input regarding the future direction of the Retiree Group. Invitations will be mailed to the Lansing area retirees with details, however, all 517M retirees are welcome to attend. Details for the meeting will also be provided on the website. School and Local Government meetings will be planned in the future. Contact **Mary Charley**, Retiree Liaison, at mcharley@seiu517m.org if you have any questions, comments, or to RSVP.

Region 3 Update

Two members won their arbitrations at the St. Clair County RESA. The first was a termination which was deemed by the arbitrator to be without cause and the second was a two week suspension. In Hillsdale County, bargaining has achieved a new two-year contract with little changes to health care and a wage increase as well as a \$500 health care signing bonus. A membership drive in Airport Schools was a success with 21 new members signing up to join the union. Negotiations are starting in East China Schools and also for the food service members at Airport Schools.

What They Said

In the February 6, 2012 edition of Inside Michigan Politics, **Bob Kleine**, state treasurer from 2006-2011 and the former director of the House Fiscal Agency **Mitch Bean**, were interviewed. Here is an excerpt from that conversation:

Bean said: *"The Treasury Department, the House Fiscal Agency and the Senate Fiscal Agency agreed that general and school aid fund revenue estimates are coming in some \$416 million higher for FY 2012, and will come in about \$216 million higher for FY 2013 than agreed to at the May 2011 Revenue Estimating Conference."*

Inside Michigan Politics: *"Who deserves credit for the good economic and budget news?"*

Bean: *"I am sure Governor Snyder and the current Legislature would like to take credit – and maybe they'll receive credit in the public's mind – but they really had nothing to do with the economic recovery. Manufacturing and the domestic auto industry led the way into the 10-year recession, and manufacturing in general and the domestic auto sector in particular led us out as well – with a major assist from the federal government."*

Kleine: *"The Granholm administration should receive some credit for leaving budget with a surplus of about \$1.3 billion (Senate Fiscal Agency estimate), the first administratino to leave a surplus to the next governor since George Romney was governor back in 1969."*

Fellow Technicians



By George Heath, President
SEIU Local 517M Technical Unit

Let me take this opportunity to thank those of you that have been putting in time and effort calling, and writing your friends, relatives, neighbors and elected officials. You are all aware of the continued attack on worker rights that is coming from both Lansing, and Nationally. It seems almost daily there is a new story in the press about taking a bigger piece of our rights, wages and benefits. We, as public employees, have become the poster children for the economic conditions across the country. Each of you has a story about how the working conditions, stress level and expectations on you have increased. Despite the

contract agreement on The New Solutions report, we see management strengthening the upper tiers of employees while trying to consult out our jobs, usually at a higher cost.

This is a call to action! We need your help to curb the continued attacks on us as Public Employees. We need all of you to become more engaged in our fight to keep our jobs. It's understood that all of us are under financial and time constraints. **People, we are talking about our jobs!** I can't speak for all of you but this is my lively hood! It's time we stood strong together and protected what we have bargained, and worked for. Our continued effort as a coalition of unions in Michigan has given us a stronger position. Now we need you to be part of this fight. We have several positions open in the Technical Unit for Steward, Chapter President, Chapter Vice President and Grievance Committee members. We are asking for volunteers to fill these positions.

Never feel that you don't have the knowledge, or training to fill one of these or other duties. Each of you is an expert in your own field, and you are all highly capable. We have the highest quality Technical workforce in the country. Each of you has talents that we can use, and all of us can spare a couple of hours to protect our jobs. If we don't take the time now to protect our family's incomes, it won't be long and we will have everyday free as we watch a private company do our work.

Your help is greatly appreciated because many hands make the work less and the burden lighter. You can no longer rely on only your elected officials, and a few paid staff people to carry the entire load this issue is to important.

We're waiting for your call! Contact the SEIU Lansing office at: seiu517m@hotmail.com; call (517) 482-1737, or you can contact me directly at heathg5459@yahoo.com or (231)-519-2971.