

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – June 2012

New Solutions for Michigan!



[Join Us on Facebook](#)



[Follow SEIU517M on Twitter](#)

2012 SEIU Local 517M Union Officer Election Results

- *Veteran Slate Returns to Lead Local*



President Bill Ruhf



Secretary/Treasurer Andy Johnson

The following candidates won their election to the following offices:

SEIU Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer – Andy Johnson

Region 3 Divisional Vice President – Yolanda Langston

HSS Unit President – Amy Davis-Comstock

HSS Unit Board - Unemployment Insurance Examiner position- Jeanette Brown, Joey Combs, Roderick Pritchett

Scientific and Engineering Unit Board – Department of Transportation – Dave Berridge, Jennifer Osborne, Art Slabosky

The following Candidates ran unopposed and were certified the winner of their respective races:

SEIU Local 517M President – Bill Ruhf

HSS Unit Board

Vice President – Denise Edwards

Employment Services Interviewer – Joe Gabelsberger

Disability Determination Assistant – Heidi Zens

Combined at-large – Kevin Benson

Scientific and Engineering Unit

Divisional Vice President – Amy Lipset

Secretary – Steve Weis

Environmental Quality – Mario Fusco, Daryl Gotham, Bryan Grochowski

Agriculture – Arina Ferdig

Natural Resources – Jeff Braunscheidel, Jim Malloy

Community Health – Steve Haskell

State Police – Shelia Meese

Region 1

Divisional Vice President – Betty Nash

Secretary – Leticia Trevino

Saginaw City Schools – Cheryl Merrill, Jeanette Barnett, Roberta Oldenburg

SCCMHA – Ernie Ahmad, Valerie Toney

Buena Vista Schools – Brenda Moore

Saginaw ISD – Lashonda McGill, Sharone Harris

New Passages – Cheri Whitson, Elizabeth Merz, Jason Little

Combined at large – Kimberly Dukarski, Michael Hensler

Region 2

Divisional Vice President – Ray Clover

Vice President / Secretary – Dave Levett

Recording Secretary – Jan Goodwin

Chapter 1 – Renee Wines

Chapter 2 – Eric Campbell

Chapter 3 – Lori Haan

Region 3 Secretary – Chuck Bonar

New Executive Director Chosen to Lead Local 517M



The selection process has been completed to fill the upcoming SEIU Local 517M Executive Director vacancy. **Phillip Patrick** was chosen to succeed long time Executive Vice President **Phil Thompson**. Phillip Patrick is currently the Divisional Vice President for the Human Services Support (HSS) unit and has served on the SEIU Local 517M Executive Board in this capacity since 2008. He is an Unemployment Claims Worker and Liability Examiner with 32 years of state service.

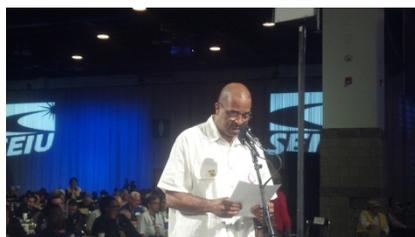
His vast experience and training extends from 1980 when he was voted by his peers as their Union Steward. Since that time, he has held several different positions within the SEIU Local 517M. These positions and committees include: HSS President, Vice President, Bargaining Team member, Arbitration Specialist, Chief Steward, Steward, SEIU International Convention Delegate, and various Labor/Management Committees.

Phillip was appointed to the SEIU International Convention Design Team in July, 2011, to help plan the 2012 SEIU International Convention. At that convention, Phillip was elected to the SEIU International Executive Board.

He has also been active in his community having served on the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO Executive Board and a leader in the SEIU Local 517M AFRAM Caucus. Phillip has also been active in SEIU "Lobby Days" in Washington D.C. and to our State Capital in Lansing.

"Phillip has solid experience and has shown great leadership potential," said SEIU Local 517M President **Bill Ruhf**. "I believe he will work well with the staff and blend our goals into one common cause that will take 517M boldly into the future."

SEIU International Convention Recap – Over 3,000 Delegates Participate!



The 2012 SEIU International Convention was held in Denver, Colorado from May 26 – 31, 2012. During the convention a

number of resolutions were approved by the voting body. (Pictured left: SEIU Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer Andy Johnson speaks on the convention floor discussing the Saginaw *New Solutions* program)

You can view the resolutions at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2012/05/2012seiuconresolutions.pdf>

At the convention incoming Executive Director Phillip Patrick was elected to the SEIU International Executive Board.

A summary and photos from the convention are available on the SEIU Local 517M website at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/2012/05/30/2012-seiu-convention-updates/>

Report on Unemployment Debit Card Fees

On Friday, May 25, 2012, 16 Michigan state legislators requested answers and action on a contract with the Wall Street bank which administers state unemployment benefits by providing debit cards to out-of-work citizens. According to lawmakers, the current contract allows the bank to charge users unnecessary fees and puts taxpayers on the hook for high costs that other states with similar programs do not pay.

“JPMorgan Chase is padding its profits by nickel-and-diming the state and the unemployed workers who utilize this essential program,” said Rep. Barnett. “Chase, like other Wall Street banks, accepted billions in bailout money and it’s just not acceptable that we’d allow them to funnel more Michigan taxpayer dollars into their coffers that were intended to assist citizens in a time of need.”

Members of Local 517M who work at the Unemployment Agency and the New Solutions campaign highlighted problems with the JPMorgan Chase contract last year and began working with interested lawmakers on a campaign to demand greater accountability. They recommended changes to the debit card contract as part of their savings and efficiency report, *Improving Michigan’s Unemployment Agency: A Proposal for Better Customer Services*.

Virtues of New Solutions Reaches Michigan’s West Side



On May 25, 2012, a press conference was held in downtown Grand Rapids to call for the need for transparency and accountability in state contracting. SEIU 517M member **John Eck**, a Transportation Technician, Melanie McElroy of Common Cause Michigan, and State Representative **Brandon Dillon** (D-Grand Rapids) called for a hard look at how the state handles private contracts after finding that such contracts cost taxpayers more than twice as much as state workers.

New Solutions and Dillon called upon our elected leaders to enact common sense reforms to increase transparency and accountability after a New Solutions study found that private state contracts make up 26 percent of state spending, compared with just 10 percent spent on state workers – often to do the exact same work. The state’s own internal analysis found that state

contractors in the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) cost an average of \$41,475 per year more than state staff.

SEIU Local 517M Golf Outing is August 2nd!



The annual SEIU Local 517M golf outing will be held on Thursday, August 2, 2012 at the Wheatfield Valley Golf Course in Williamston. The 4-person scramble will start with registration at 8:00 a.m. and shotgun start at 9:00 a.m. Cost is \$280 per foursome. More information and the registration form can be found at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/2012/05/29/sign-up-for-the-seiu-local-517m-golf-outing/>

HSS Unit Steward Elections

The Human Services Support unit will be holding elections for Stewards and Alternate Stewards in the month of June. On June 5th an email will be sent to members of the bargaining unit with instructions and a Nomination Petition. The ballots will be counted on June 29th and the results made public in the July E-Former.

Region 3 Bargaining Report

Members in the Airport Schools have reached a Tentative Agreement on a new three year contract. The unit represents food service employees. Key items include: a pay raise in each of the 3 years, gaining an additional paid holiday (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), a 50 cents per hour premium on extra help, overtime after 40 hours, a \$40 shoe allowance, and no changes in health care coverage.

Also, members working in the Maintenance and Grounds Unit of the East China School District just passed a new 3 year contract. There are stipends for people to pay their own insurance and no layoffs.

Local 517M Member Speaks at Hearing in Support of Greenhouse Gas Standards

Members of the BlueGreen Alliance — a national partnership of SEIU, 11 of the largest labor unions and environmental organizations in the U.S. dedicated to expanding the number and quality of jobs in the green economy — testified in favor of the limits to greenhouse gas emissions from new power plants proposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in March at hearings in Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Speakers focused on the positive impacts this proposed rule will have on the U.S. both economically and environmentally. Last year, the BlueGreen Alliance released a position statement, [*Protecting Our Health and Safety, Building a Stronger Economy*](#), addressing the need to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

“Building new power plants that are cleaner and more energy efficient will spur development and production of clean technologies in the United States — creating jobs and economic growth —and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which will address the worst impact of climate

change and protect the public health of our families and communities,” said SEIU Local 517M member **Bryan Grochowski** during his testimony in Chicago.

So far, there have been over a million comments submitted to the EPA on the proposed rule from all over the country. The BlueGreen Alliance has been working in several states to garner comments of support for the proposed standard, both online and on the ground, contributing to that tally.

“This is a reasonable first step towards addressing climate change,” said **Michael Williams**, Senior Policy and Legislative Advocate for the BlueGreen Alliance, who also testified. “The standard does not affect existing power generation, but it will ensure that long-term investments in energy infrastructure reflect the reality of climate change, driving investment in clean energy, which we believe will make America more competitive, more energy independent, and will create many good jobs.”

“To compete globally and to address the threat of climate change to our world, the U.S. must move forward to a cleaner, more efficient economy,” said **David Foster**, Executive Director of the BlueGreen Alliance. “Moving to a cleaner, more efficient economy is the opportunity for our generation to build a strong economic and environmental foundation for future generations. While a comprehensive approach to climate change will yield the most jobs and environmental benefits, actions like this are important as a bridge between that approach and where we are now.”

The full testimony of the speakers is available [here](#).

Sign the Clean Air Petition to the EPA here:

http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/6475/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=7514