

SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

November 2012 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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A Voting Guide for the November 6th Election

There is a description of the November 6th ballot proposals and candidates is available on our website at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2012/10/Ballot-voting-guide.pdf>

Legal Updates

Here is an update of the status of court actions against current anti-worker legislation.

PA 300 - The law changes, among other things, the pension plan healthcare provisions for school employees. Judge **Rosemarie Acquilina** granted a temporary restraining order removing the October 26 deadline for employees to make decisions, stating that it was unreasonable. The Court of Appeals has upheld this ruling and the Attorney General has filed for an emergency appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court. The Court has not ruled on granting this appeal.

Original 3% bill – This law deducted 3% out of school employee paychecks to fund retiree health care. An injunction to this law was granted by the Michigan Court of Appeals and briefs on appeal were due in this case on October 23rd.

PA 53 – This law limits the ability of school members to pay their union dues by outlawing the use of payroll dues deduction as a means to collect them. There is currently an injunction against the implementation of this bill. This case is currently in the Federal 6th Circuit Court of Appeals where the State has requested that the injunction be lifted. No decision has been received yet.

PA 264 – The state employee 4% pension contribution. Court of Claims Judge **Joyce Draganchuk** ruled that the 4% pension contribution imposed by the Michigan Legislature on state employees is unconstitutional. This case is currently at the Court of Appeals. There will be a hearing on November 28th before Judge Draganchuk dealing with the issues of overtime calculation for retirement and retiree health benefits for new hires.

Labor in Action



By Phillip Patrick, Executive Director

To all SEIU members:

The rights of unions and its members have been under a continuous legislative attack. The difference that organized labor is making now through SEIU member engagement amounts to a collective decision for all of us to go on offense. This strategy is not a new strategy. It is a strategy of which its time has come. Collective bargaining is the life blood of any labor organization. Collective bargaining principles drive what has made our country strong by protecting working families from companies placing profits above people. Our union believes that working together; we can rebuild the American middle class. SEIU is working to advance an agenda for the 99% based on six fundamental priorities:

- 1) **We will strengthen unions as part of the pathway to the middle class;**
 - Income inequality divides us as Americans, SEIU is committed to protecting workers' right to form unions and bargain collectively, which remains one of the few proven paths to economic security for millions of Americans.
- 2) **Winning good jobs now;**
 - SEIU supports investing in good jobs that can support a family and raising and indexing the minimum wage because full time workers should be able to support their families.
- 3) **Making the rich and large corporations pay their fair share;**
 - SEIU supports ending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy, closing corporate loopholes and ending corporate tax breaks that allow the rich and the corporations to avoid paying their fair share.
- 4) **Providing the high quality healthcare and vital services our communities need;**
 - SEIU stands against budget cuts to public services and opposes attempts to repeal or scale back the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security.
- 5) **Fixing our broken immigration system;**
 - In addition to the Dream Act, SEIU supports the comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for all workers and protects workers from exploitation at the hands of unscrupulous employers.
- 6) **Safeguarding our democracy;**
 - SEIU supports efforts to overturn *Citizens United* and stands with Americans as they fight back against attacks on their voting rights in states across the country.

There are extremely important issues that must be dealt with through the actions we take leading up to and beyond the November 6th election. The next president we elect will not be able to cure all that afflicts America. The responsibility to maintain our dignity as working families and our rights as citizens within our communities is up to each and every one of us. Remember the awesome power you have as a citizen and cast your vote on November 6th!

Working together requires your willingness to step up and participate in this process. At the 2012 National Democratic Convention, President Obama stated, "As citizens, we understand that America is not about what can be done for us; it's about what can be done by us together through the hard and frustrating but necessary work of self-government."

I am proud of the work that has already been accomplished by you, our members, but more work is needed. Our leadership will call upon you in the next few days leading up to the election to talk with your co-workers, neighbors, families, friends, and people you do not know about the importance of voting in this election. Not only is it important to pass the word about voting, it is just as important to get involved in get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts by calling, canvassing, and

offering rides to voters to the polling places. Contact SEIU Local 517M directly at (517) 482-1737 or volunteer through the "Labor 2012" offices in your respective areas. The Labor 2012 website address is www.protectworkingfamilies.com SEIU Local 517M will continue to keep you informed and engaged as we finish out 2012 and move our agenda forward in 2013.

Be strong now because things will get better. It might be stormy now but it can't rain forever.
- Hailee

What Does Collective Bargaining Mean?



By Amy Davis-Comstock, HSS Unit President

As President of our HSS Division, I want to take a moment to reflect on what collective bargaining means. Even though I hear the employer refer to our Collective Bargaining Agreement as 'your contract,' it is actually a contract between both parties. This means that both parties come to the table with their ideas and both parties compromise. Proposal 2 protects that process. Both parties will still come to the table with their ideas and compromise. As we have seen over the past two years our rights as workers have been eroded due to more than 80 anti-union bills that passed in Michigan.

Beyond Proposal 2, this election is about our rights to plan a family on a timeline that makes sense for us. In the next term our president will appoint up to four new judges to the Supreme Court which recently decided that large corporations should have the same rights as U.S. citizens. Other issues that will be affected by this election are equal pay for equal work for all, and laws that protect rights for the LGBTQ community.

There are three ways you can be a part of this life-changing election:

- 1) VOTE!
- 2) Talk to your family members and friends so they understand the importance of voting on November 6th!
- 3) Volunteer to Get Out the Vote for the final weekend before the election.

Anyone interested in GOTV activities, follow the link below to the Labor 2012 volunteer sign up sheet: <http://miaflcio.org/component/content/article/62-labor-2012/368-volunteer-with-labor-2012-and-protect-working-families.html>

Update on Retention of HSS Members



By Amy Davis-Comstock, HSS Unit President

It has been almost a month since many of our fellow HSS members were laid off, and two months since the limited term members' contracts expired. I want to take this opportunity to inform you of what has been happening on that front. Our 517M Executive Director **Phillip Patrick** along with **Fred Miller** from the Michigan State Council, several union members and I had telephone conferences with some legislators. The conference calls were with Representative LeBlanc, Senators Johnson and Whitmer. The goals for the conference calls were: 1) to inform the legislators about the layoffs within the Unemployment Insurance Agency and Michigan Rehabilitation Services; 2) educate the legislators about the impact of the layoffs on the citizens of Michigan; 3) to gain the legislators as allies; and 4) to gain insight from the legislators on how to resolve the budget issues.

Representative LeBlanc wrote a letter to the Director of DHS regarding the layoffs of the Employment Service Interviewers that were on loan from the UIA to MRS. Phillip Patrick, Fred

Miller, two Employment Service Interviewers that were laid off, and I attended a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on October 23, 2012 regarding the MRS budget. There may be some resolution for the budget problems experienced by MRS. (View the letter at:



<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2012/10/LeBlancItr.pdf>). I will keep you informed as I know more. (Pictured L-R: HSS Unit President Amy Davis-Comstock, laid-off MRS employees Ralph Ambriz and Nick Murphy, Local 517M Executive Director Phil Patrick)

The union continues to inform the public about the layoffs and their impact on all Michigan citizens. Keep communicating with our union office about issues and we will continue to work toward resolving the problems and creating better conditions for all our members. On a good note, due to high work volumes some members have been recalled to UIA on a one-year limited term basis.

Keep up the great work that all of you do each and every day!

Retiree Meeting



The SEIU 517M Retiree Group met on Wednesday, October 24th at the Local 517M Lansing office. Guest speakers included **Raymond Kamalay** (pictured left) from Lansing Community College (LCC) who discussed the community education courses/excursions for retirees and friends and played his guitar during lunch. Also in attendance was **Bill Lewis** from the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging to discuss programs available to seniors. More information on the LCC education and excursion programs is available at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/2012/09/19/retiree-excursions-and-education-courses/>

2013 SEIU Local 517M Calendars Now Available

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

State Employee Calendar: <http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2012/10/2013calendarstate.pdf>

School and Local Government Calendar:
<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2012/10/2013calendarslg.pdf>



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