

# SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

February 2013 Edition

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

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## **Union Members Are Mobilizing in the Wake of Right to Work**



A two-day "Train the Trainer" Session was held for staff and member leaders on January 31 and February 1<sup>st</sup> in Lansing. SEIU Local 517M, SEIU Healthcare Michigan, Local 1, Workers United and the Michigan Corrections Organization participated along with SEIU International staff. The purpose of the training was to learn about the Right to Work bills that the Governor signed in December and to develop strategies for member and public education on the subject.

## **Update on the State Employee Pension Contribution Lawsuit**

The Coalition of State Employee Unions and the State of Michigan filed a joint Motion to Expedite the State of Michigan's appeal of the ruling made by Judge Draganchuk back in November regarding changes to the pension system. The Judge ruled that the 4% employee contribution to the pension system was unconstitutional and that the change to the overtime calculation at retirement was unconstitutional. This motion was granted on January 16, 2013. The case will be set for oral argument soon after the briefs are filed. The State's brief is due February 13, 2013 and the Union's brief is due March 6, 2013.

## **Information Available on Right to Work**

Below are some sources of information concerning Right to Work.

Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #300 (Feb. 28, 2011): [\*Does 'right-to-work' create jobs? Answers from Oklahoma\*](#)

Economic Policy Institute Economic Snapshots:

[\*'Right-to-work' hurts private-sector pension coverage\*](#) (Jan. 9, 2012)

*Right-to-work law did not help Oklahoma's labor market* (March 3, 2011)

## New Executive Board Member Sworn In



At the January 18, 2013 SEIU Local 517M Executive Board meeting in Lansing, **Leticia Trevino** was sworn in as a new board member from the School and Local Government Region 1. Leticia was filling the vacancy left by **Betty Nash** who ascended to the Division Vice President position after **Andy Johnson** assumed the Local's Secretary/Treasurer position. Leticia comes from the Salaried Unit working for the City of Saginaw.

*(L-R: Leticia Trevino is sworn in by SEIU Local 517M President Bill Ruhf)*

## Legislative Welcome Day Planned For February

A Legislative Lobby Day is being held on February 20<sup>th</sup> to welcome the new legislators and educate them on issues of importance to our membership. The event will be from 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. We will meet at the Central United Methodist Church (215 N Capitol Ave., in downtown Lansing) and lunch will be provided. The “Chuck Bonar Legislative Welcome Day” is being done in honor of **Chuck Bonar** who recently passed away. Chuck was an SEIU 517M member from the City of Royal Oak. Chuck always was a stand for common sense, and was one of our active republican members.

Along with sharing our story, we are continuing last year's nearly successful effort to pass a Budget Transparency Amendment which will help ensure that tax dollars spent on private contracts will receive, at a minimum, the same scrutiny that School, Local Government, and State Agencies receive. The Budget Transparency Amendment was crafted by our members, and it is an issue that Republicans, Independents, and Democrats can agree is good for taxpayers, and will help protect against private profiteering that has occurred over the years. Please come support this non-partisan issue, and celebrate Chuck Bonar's memory.

If you are interested in participating in this totally member created event, please contact Amy Davis-Comstock at [adavis-comstock@seiu517m.org](mailto:adavis-comstock@seiu517m.org) or at 1.866.755.2080.

## The Union Advantage

### Worker's Pay is Higher When They're in A Union

- \$917 = Median weekly earnings in 2010 of union members
- \$717 = Median weekly earnings in 2010 of non-union workers  
(That is a yearly difference in salary of \$10,400 for union members vs. non-union members.)
- Union members earn an average of \$4.95 more per hour.
- Public sector differences are roughly \$165 more a week or approximately \$650 more a month for union members.

### Greater Access to Healthcare Coverage and Lower Cost

- In 2009, 92 percent of union employees in the US had access to health care benefits, compared to only 68 percent of non-union workers.
- The union advantage is even greater when you compare the percentages of union vs. non-union workers receiving specific benefits:

- Dental Care: Union 70% vs. Non-union 44%
- Vision Care: Union 53% vs. Non-union 24%
- Prescription Drug Benefits: Union 90% vs. Non-union 68%

#### Paid Leave

- Union workers get 28% more days of paid vacation, on average, than non-union workers.
- 82% of union workers have paid sick leave, compared to 63% of non-union workers.
- 46% of unionized workers receive full pay while on sick leave, versus only 29% of non-union workers.

#### A More Secure Retirement

Nationally, 77% of union employees in 2009 were covered by pension plans that provide a guaranteed monthly retirement income. Only 20% of non-union workers are covered by guaranteed (defined-benefit) pensions.

### **Detroit AFRAM 2012 Hat and Glove Drive**

The Detroit Chapter of SEIU AFRAM would like to thank the SEIU Local 517M members in Detroit and Saginaw for the huge success of our 2012 Hat and Glove Drive. Members donated hat and gloves for the men, women, and children of the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries. We also would like to thank **Amy Lipset**, **Shirley Sutton**, and **Linda Karos** for their cash donations.

### **Members Only Benefit - 2013 SEIU Scholarships Now Available**

Through five different scholarship programs, SEIU awards 53 scholarships that enable SEIU members and their children to pursue their educational goals at accredited colleges, universities, and technical schools.

SEIU scholarships are open to SEIU members or their children. To be eligible to apply for any SEIU scholarship, membership must be for three continuous years as of September 1, 2013. All awards must be for the academic year(s) awarded. Scholarships will be awarded without regard to the sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability of any applicant. Scholarship awards are limited to one per household. Applications must be filed online by midnight March 1, 2013 or postmarked March 1, 2013.

Online Applications and information: <http://www.seiu.org/a/members/fulfill-your-college-goals-with-an-seiu-scholarship.php>



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