

# SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

March 2013 Edition

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

## **In this Issue:**

Legal Actions Against Right to Work (for less) Continue  
Region 1 “Stronger Together” Workshop  
Labor in Action  
She Will Be Missed  
Just the Facts!  
2013 Growth Through Leadership Conference  
Union Advantage  
Chuck Bonar Legislative Day

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## **Legal Actions Against Right to Work (for less) Continue**

*From our International Legal Department:* While our primary goal in Michigan is engaging our members to change anti-worker politics in the state, we continue to take legal steps that expose the flaws in the RTW laws and the process by which they were passed. On February 14, 2013 our Michigan unions who represent state employees – Local 526M (Michigan Corrections Organization/MCO) and Local 517M – joined with state employees in other state employee unions to challenge the application of the public-sector RTW law to the state civil service. The complaint and brief ask the Michigan Court of Appeals to declare that the RTW law cannot possibly apply to the civil service, given the fact that the Civil Service Commission has authority under the Michigan Constitution to regulate civil service matters, including collective bargaining. That holding would be consistent with decades of precedent restricting the power of the legislature to entrench on the CSC’s constitutional authority. WATCH THE WEBSITE FOR FURTHER UPDATES...

## **Region 1 “Stronger Together” Workshop**

A “Stronger Together” Training for Union Activists was held at the Saginaw Union Hall. The workshop was held on Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, from 10-2. Twenty-seven members from various units of 517M including Saginaw Schools, Buena Vista Schools, Human Services Support State Employees, Community Mental Health attended this great half-day event. The training focused on Right to Work (for less) and what it means to members to stick together. For pictures of the event go to the website at [www.seiu517m.org](http://www.seiu517m.org) or visit our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SEIU-Local-517M/123464811761?ref=ts&fref=ts>.



Each of these members has pledged to stick with our union and to talk to other union members about sticking with the union – because we are all **Stronger Together!**

## Labor in Action



This year will indeed bring about fresh challenges for all working families to overcome. It will also bring about opportunities for expansion and growth within the labor movement. As we begin to look deeper into how the cause of labor is defined, all working families must determine what their most significant positions will be as it relates to the goals that will be developed for each of us this year.

**Unity** is defined as the combination or arrangement of parts into a whole; unification. What makes a Union strong is its commitment to unity. The concept by its very nature does not mean that there is an expectation that all of the parts of a Union will constantly move in lock-step in all situations. But rather, it conveys, at its core, an organizationally structured process that promotes collaboration between its members and leadership to protect the interests of working families within our state.

We must unite in order to find solutions that strengthen our state so all working families can have an opportunity for the American Dream. Union members, in this union, as well as others, teach our children, protect our streets, keep us healthy, and build our roads and bridges work in some of the remaining jobs in Michigan during this tough economic period. Right to Work (for less) is not about union workers or non-union workers; it is about Michigan's future so that every citizen can have an equal shot at a better life. Good paying jobs and appropriate access to vital services like education and healthcare has to be the focus for every single family across Michigan.

It is clear that the Right to Work (for less) law's real impact is detrimental to our communities and families. The common thread is that all working families want to be able to support their families and thrive. These are shared values that unite us as Americans. These are values worth standing up for and uniting together to maintain. The labor movement and its allies must help to create a continuation of working people that will keep fighting for Michigan's middle class in order to raise the minimum wage for all Michiganders, demand that corporations and the rich pay their fair share, and elect leaders who will stand with working families and unite us.

Unity of Purpose for all citizens is not only needed, it is required if Michigan is going to thrive as a great place to work and raise our families.

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. "

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950); Playwright, Nobel Prize Winner

## She Will Be Missed!

The end of this month, we will say goodbye to a favorite Local 517M staffer. **Cheryl Bollinger** will be retiring effective March 31, 2013 and will take close to 30 years of labor experience with her. Cheryl began working for the "United Technical Employees Association" (UTEA) in the early 1980's (UTEA merged with 517M in 2000) and has since become one of the pillars in the union's fight for solidarity. Cheryl has served on the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging, Officer of Pride at Work, 517M Delegate to the Lansing Labor Council, a member of the Michigan Employees Coordinated Campaign Steering Committee and she has served as an officer in SEIU's Lavender Caucus, just to name a few. She is a well respected part of the 517M team and will be greatly missed. We are happy for her and wish her a wonderful retirement -- Good Luck Cheryl, and thanks for all your years of faithful service.



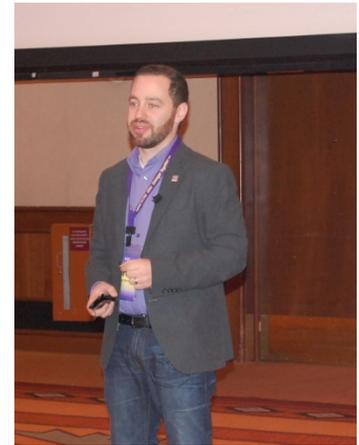
## Just the FACTS!

**Why do potential businesses/employers pick a location?** A 20 year survey found that reasons include – highway accessibility; available land; construction costs; technological innovation, integration into global trade. In the 20 years that this survey has been conducted – "Right to Work" has NEVER even been one of the top 10 reasons not to come to "Michigan" or any other location. (Source: MSU School of Human Resources and Labor Studies)

## 2013 Growth Through Leadership Conference



Close to 75 member leaders were invited to attend the 2013 Training Conference in Mt. Pleasant. Special Guests included **Tom DeBruin** from SEIU International's Public Division, and **David Broder**, President of SEIU Virginia



Local 512 – a Right to Work State without Collective Bargaining. Congressman **Dan Kildee**. Members were asked to explain what they learned at the training, and what was most valuable to them; along with what they felt was missing or what they would have changed. Comments



included . . . *I learned that 517M will be there for me, and that we have a strong union behind us – fighting for all of us; I learned that we need to get involved, and communicate with each other as Right to Work (for less) affects everyone – not just union members – but our families and future generations. I learned the history of unions and what they went through to get unions started; and the benefits of belonging to a union today.* Members asked for materials and handouts to share with their co-workers; and for samples of union benefits. Watch for the "Right to Work" (for

less) page [coming soon] to the Local 517M website for flyers and links to information on RTW and what it means to you. All in all, the training was very successful in that member leaders left excited to talk with their co-workers about what "Right to Work" (for less) really means, realizing they were not alone in this fight, and were encouraged to get others involved with their union. (View more photos at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54989632@N05/sets/72157632854178215/>).

## Union Advantage

- To continually strive for compensation that is fair and equitable
- To assure the individual dignity of each worker
- To provide an atmosphere of free expression within the union and out
- To guarantee "fair play" to all
- To spare no effort to provide safe working conditions
- To help make your job the best place in the world to work.

## "Chuck Bonar Legislative Day"

The Legislative Lobby Day that was planned for February 20<sup>th</sup> has been rescheduled to Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. The focus will be to welcome the new legislators and educate them on issues of importance to our membership. The event will be from 8:00am-3pm. The "Chuck Bonar Legislative 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 stood up 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 **Bryan Grochowski** at (517) 230-9018, **George Heath** at [heathg5459@yahoo.com](mailto:heathg5459@yahoo.com), or **Amy Davis-Comstock** at [adavis-comstock@seiu517m.org](mailto:adavis-comstock@seiu517m.org) or toll-free at 1.866.755.2080.



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