

SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

April 2013 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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Legislative Day Held on March 20th



A legislative day was held in March in memory of Chuck Bonar, a member from the City of Royal Oak. Since part of his job consisted of public works that began in early spring he wasn't able to attend the annual May Lobby Day. This additional early spring event was scheduled for members, like Chuck, who couldn't attend the annual May Lobby Day due to work schedules. One of the primary issues discussed with the legislators was transparency in state

contracts. This was an issue that was important to Chuck. (Pictured L-R: State Senator Morris Hood III, Joey Combs' daughter Taylor, Staffer Sam Reck)

We had representation from School and Local Government members and from the state units. Lots of discussions and conversations occurred throughout the day, including during our lunchtime. The legislators came to lunch with SEIU members and to talk more casually about our issues.

Many of the new legislators were present for appointments in their offices or for the lunch. These introductions to the newest representatives and senators are important. We

need to establish a relationship with the policymakers, since many of the policies they make affect our jobs.

It was a great day, especially with the promise that we will continue our relationship-building at our Annual Lobby Day on **May 8th**.

State Employee Layoff Notices Received

The Union received general 30 day layoff notices for all three State Employee Units on March 8, 2013. The State anticipated a reduction in federal funding due to the Federal Sequestration. No specifics have been brought forward since March 8th. The State is required to give at least a fourteen calendar day notice to the Union and to any affected member and there have been no fourteen day notices received. The Office of the State Employer has been unable to give any details of any potential future layoffs. The Union will assure that contractual requirements regarding a reduction in force are followed should the cut in federal funding actually occur. View a copy of the notice at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/files/2013/03/sequesterltr.pdf>

Annual SEIU Local 517M Lobby Day Set

The Annual Lobby Day will be held on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, in Lansing. Be sure to schedule your leave time now for this all-day event. If you can only attend for half of the day, let us know and we will make sure you can meet with your senator or representative during your time.

Not sure what to say to your legislators? There will be a mini-training in the morning before you start your legislative visits. This will include talking points regarding issues that affect your specific unit, as well as, the greater SEIU 517M membership. Please plan to attend.

If you have attended a Lobby Day before, you remember how great it was to see members that you only see a couple times a year and to talk about the issues that affect our various state-wide units.

If you have not had the opportunity to attend, this is the year to make sure that your voice is heard!

Proposed SEIU Local 517M Bylaw Change

The SEIU Local 517M Executive Board at its March 15th meeting has approved the placement of the following proposed Bylaw change before the membership in accordance with the SEIU Local 517M Constitution Article XII: Bylaws; Section 3: below:

Section 3: New Bylaws or amendments to the Bylaws proposed by the Executive Board shall be distributed to all Members at least thirty (30) days prior to the vote for adoption by the Executive Board. Any Member has the right to be heard by the Executive Board prior to the vote for adoption of new Bylaws or amendments to the Bylaws.

Proposed Amendment (in **Bold** CAPPED text):

Article II: Dues and Service Fees

Section 2: Dues and Service Fees shall be collected via payroll deductions, **OR THROUGH AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OFFERED BY THE UNION SHOULD EMPLOYER DUES DEDUCTION BECOME UNAVAILABLE**, or may be prepaid annually.

This change will be officially voted on at the May 18, 2013 SEIU Local 517M Executive Board meeting.

SEIU Local 517M Contract Agreements

SEIU Local 517M members and staff in our School and Local Government Regions have been busy securing contracts for the membership to protect their voice on the job.

Region 1

On March 21, 2013, Buena Vista Charter Township unit ratified a three (3) year contract extension effective March 25, 2013 thru July 1, 2016. The membership was happy to know they still had union security and their longevity pay. The Saginaw Housing Commission ratified a two year contract agreement on January 29, 2013. Saginaw Community Action Center members ratified contract extension for one year on February 20, 2013. Saginaw ISD Head Start members ratified contract extension for one year on March 8, 2013. Buena Vista Township school members are now under a new contract that protects them until 2015.

Region 2

Brandywine Public School members ratified their new Two-year Tentative Agreement on March 19th and final school board approval came on March 25th. Covert School members were able to negotiate a new three-year contract. West Michigan Mental Health unit members ratified their tentative agreement on March 13th for a one-year contract. It was later ratified by the membership and employer.

Region 3

City of Royal Oak Public Works members have a new two-year agreement which expires in 2015.

Right to Work Resources

A page has been developed on the SEIU Local 517M website to provide information concerning Right to Work. It contains news articles, published reports and surveys. You can visit it at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/right-to-work/>

Union Advantage

No fair individual can ignore the fact that history proves that unions have accomplished miracles to improve the lot, not only of the worker, but company and country as well. Unions have: promoted security, have given all a chance to advance, has assured more humane treatment and dignity, and have amicably settled thousands of disputes. The records show that unions are making, and will continue to make, valuable contributions to higher standards of life. The workers who make up a union are typical citizens who are united not only for their own individual welfare, but for the well-being of all. Be proud to be a union member.

An Update from the Blue Green Alliance

The Governor is taking input statewide on Michigan's "energy future." Information can be found at: <http://www.michigan.gov/energy>. The Blue Green Alliance (BGA) and its partners are planning press events around public hearings and asking people to give comments at the hearings. Comments can also be made directly on the website.

There is a Good Jobs/Green Jobs conference in Washington D.C. in April where all partners nationwide attend and discuss how to build a cleaner, more efficient American economy. Local 517M has participated in the past. **Bryan Grochowski** from the Scientific and Engineering unit and **Cindy Mason** from the SEIU staff has attended these events in the past. It is an eye opening experience to learn what is occurring nation-wide with renewable energy sources. It is open for anyone to attend. www.greenjobsconference.org.

BGA is looking for workers to be media spokespersons when an issue arises that should be addressed in the press. They would like a working person's perspective on environmental issues that affect them. BGA would help to put comments together and prepare members for a press release or interview. Two Scientific and Engineering members have agreed to

do this so far. It's not just people working in the environmental field, it's anyone who cares about the environment. If you are interested, contact Cindy Mason at cmason@seiu517m.org.

SEIU is part of the Blue Green Alliance which is a partnership of labor and environmental groups with the purpose of promoting clean and renewable energy jobs and a better environment.

Health Care Reform Answers

Many people have questions about health care reform. Questions like, why do we need health care reform? How will the Health Insurance Marketplace work? Does reform impact me?

The Blue Cross Blue Shield has a new website, HealthCareReformBasics.com to answer these and other basic questions in a clear and simple way.



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