

# SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

May 2013 Edition

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

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## **The Annual SEIU Local 517M Lobby Day is Almost Here!**



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. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. in Room 426 of the Capitol Building and will end around 3:00 p.m.

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!

Register for Lobby Day at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013lobbydayreg>

## **Unemployment Fraud Hearing Procedures Come Under Fire**

On April 19, 2013 SEIU Local 517M Executive Director **Phil Patrick** was interviewed on the Tony Trupiano Radio Show concerning the problems the Unemployment Agency has had with prosecuting unemployment insurance fraud cases. Due to department policies and staff

reductions, unemployment fraud cases are not being represented by department staff if they are under \$15,000. Listen to the interview here: <https://soundcloud.com/first-shift/phil-patrick-4-19-13>

In a May 11, 2013 article in the Detroit Free Press, **Steve Arwood**, director of the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs responded to the criticism on unemployment fraud hearings. This article and related video can be viewed at: <http://www.freep.com/article/20130411/BUSINESS06/130411010/Unemployment-insurance-fraud-process-reviewed>

## Labor In Action



There has been an eerily significant amount of silence in Michigan and across our country over the mistreatment of American taxpayers. Consider for a moment how dismal the Michigan economy was in 2008. Some might state that 2008 is ancient history. Why rehash that so-called 2008 Great Recession now? I submit to you that our state has still not fully recovered from the Great Recession of 2008, even though economists would have one believe that the recession ended around mid-year 2009. For most, if not all middle class working families, the corporate bail out was just another undeserved abuse of their tax dollars at the hands of politicians. The financial destruction that was surely felt by working men and women was to their declining home values, retirement funds, via 401k's and other such instruments. There is a fundamental problem when it becomes the norm to not allow corporations to fail because American taxpayers will be forced through political means to cover those costs.

**David Cay Johnston**, clearly states in his book, "The Fine Print" (2012); "Capitalism without the failures of bankrupt enterprises is not capitalism at all. It is not market economics. It is rather the proof that Congress has turned the United States into a land of corporate socialism in which gains are privatized and losses are socialized. [T]he ideological marketing by the Heritage Foundation and others; and decades of campaign contributions and favors for politicians taken together have enabled a system by which the few steal from the many with no risk of prosecution and virtual guarantee of lavish riches. By wrapping the whole in complicated terms few understand, and by making piecemeal changes, the plunderers have made themselves appear to be beneficiaries of circumstance, not thieves."

For the reasons pointed out in Mr. Johnston's book, the vast community of working men and women must find a viable way to stand up and fight back against these political attacks on the American dream. Today's working men and women just want a chance to develop a realistic way to provide decent lives for their families. All working families deserve a living wage and reasonable health benefits. These items must not only be made available to the wealthy, but also to individuals who work hard every day and are doing it the right way. Local 517M leadership and member leaders are committed to finding solutions to these political attacks and other concerted efforts to financially overburden working families. We must hold our elected officials accountable by being proactive in our approach and let them know who we are and what we stand for. We invite you to engage with us in this effort because we have everything to gain by standing strong together.

The SEIU Local 517M Annual Lobby Day is scheduled for Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at the Lansing Capitol. This event offers members an opportunity to participate in a face-to-face conversation with their respective representatives about issues that are important to their families and communities. In May of last year, our union had a very successful Lobby Day. The collaborative work is particularly impressive because our local union members have

garnered the respect of many of the legislators on both sides of the isle. The engaged members speak with representatives in order to promote dialogue. If your representative is not voting in your best interests, it is your responsibility to inform them of that fact. Sign up online through the Local 517M website to participate today. The deadline for sign up is Friday, May 3, 2013. Register at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013lobbydayreg>

Come out next week and let your voice be heard! You may contact our office at (517) 482-1737 for additional information. The silence we are experiencing now from the Michigan Legislature creates additional opportunities for us to take action. The only way for us to speak with one voice is for us to first acknowledge that we are all in this together. There is real value to engaging in a process to hold members of the legislature accountable for their decisions about the financial future of Michigan and its residents.

In Unity,

Phil Patrick  
Executive Director

### Member Wins Departmental Award



Scientific and Engineering unit member **Robin Barfoot** was recently recognized with the Outstanding Service Award in the Michigan Public Service Commission. She received this honor for raising co-worker's morale. Robin is very active in her union serving as a former chapter officer and currently as a steward and the chair of the Scientific and Engineering unit grievance committee. Way to go Robin!

### Saginaw Public Library Members Ratify New Contract

On April 25, 2013 members at the Saginaw Public Library unanimously ratified a new two year contract. The new contract term is effective June 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015. Members were able to retain their longevity payments and Health insurance. Congratulations to the bargaining unit members on preserving their voice on the job through a new contract!

### State Employee 4% Lawsuit Update

There have been numerous inquiries into the status of the pension 4% lawsuit. The State's brief was due on February 13, 2013 and the Union's brief was due on March 6, 2013. There has been no activity from the Court since briefs were filed in March. The Court has no time limits that dictate their schedule. We are awaiting the announcement of when oral arguments will start. This information will be sent to the membership when available.

### Did You Know?

You may have received partisan political information in the mail from your union during election season. What you may not know is - your union dues don't pay for partisan political information. There is a separate fund called COPE (Committee on Political Education) that pays for this. You can make a separate donation to this fund through our website at [www.seiu517m.org](http://www.seiu517m.org).

As public employees we are in a unique situation to elect our bosses. One of the important events funded through COPE allows the union to sponsor lobby days. The Annual Lobby Day is an all-day event for our members to meet their representatives and their senators. As a member, you can travel to Lansing and have scheduled visits with your legislators in order to make them accountable for their actions as your representative in office.

## Republican? SEIU Offers Something for Everyone!

There are eight different caucuses within SEIU including a **Republican Caucus**. For those members who feel they aren't represented within the political realm of our union, there is a place for everyone! If it seems to you that the union's political action doesn't always reflect your personal views, contact the Michigan Republican Caucus Chair **Andy Potter**. Andy is the Vice President of the Michigan Corrections Organization (SEIU Local 526M) and can be reached at 517-485-3310 or [andy@mco-seiu.org](mailto:andy@mco-seiu.org). You can also follow the link below to sign up for updates from SEIU's National Republican Caucus: <http://action.seiu.org/page/s/republicanmembers>

Other caucuses within SEIU include: African American Caucus (AFRAM), Native American Caucus, Latino Caucus, Lavender Caucus, Women's Caucus, People Working with Disabilities Caucus, and Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA).

## Proposed SEIU Local 517M Bylaw Change

The SEIU Local 517M Executive Board at its March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting approved the placement of the following proposed Bylaw change before the membership. The 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.

The announcement to the membership was done in accordance with the SEIU Local 517M Constitution Article XII: Bylaws; Section 3: which reads:

*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.*

Due to a scheduling change for the Executive Board meeting, this change will be officially voted on at the May 30, 2013 SEIU Local 517M Executive Board meeting.

## SEIU Local 517M Golf Outing is August 1st!



The annual SEIU Local 517M golf outing will be held on Thursday, August 1, 2013 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/2013/04/26/local-517m-golf-outing/>

## Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference

**Cindy Mason** from the Scientific and Engineering Unit attended the Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference in Washington D.C. last month. The Blue Green Alliance (BGA) put this conference on for unions, environmentalists, businesses, non-profit, civil leaders and elected officials. The goal is to find common ground and common sense solutions for the economic and environmental challenges our nation faces. "Manufacturing safer chemicals and products. Producing clean, renewable energy. Moving people and goods more efficiently. Making our buildings, cars and factories run more efficiently. Rebuilding the crumbling infrastructure systems we rely on. We have the solutions that will reduce carbon pollution, prepare our nation for the impacts of climate change, and create good, family-supporting jobs." (BGA)

Approximately 1,500 people from around the country attended and it was broken into plenary sessions where **Nancy Pelosi**, House Democratic Leader spoke, along with **Ray LaHood**, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, **Dr. David Danielson**, Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and several U.S. Congressmen/women, business leaders, environmental leaders, and Union leaders.

Throughout the day there were breakout sessions, sometimes 20 to choose from where specific examples of change has occurred through new energy resources which in turn created good green jobs. The Chevy Cruze made in Lordstown, Ohio was an example of how the federal fuel standards passed over the last several years have been successful in not only cleaning the air but in increasing employment in the auto industry and beyond. The employer and union work together as never before to create a more fuel efficient car and the manufacturing plant that they work in. It is spurring economic growth in Ohio through the auto industry, suppliers, dealerships, etc. At a time when gas prices are at a premium, these are the cars Americans want to buy. There was an example of a solar grid built in a southern county in California where the land was not viable. It brought employment to a town that was becoming desolate. According to the information presented, the cost of solar energy is coming way down from when it was first developed and it only gets cheaper because the major cost is the structure. The panel operates off a software chip and technology keeps improving in that area.

Retro-fitting old buildings is an area being targeted for creating jobs and improving energy efficiency in a variety of ways. Over 50% of public schools across the country are over 60 years old. Most public buildings in general are over 50 years old. The long run costs outweigh the initial costs to update these buildings but it's an uphill battle with where the funding should go. If you'd like more information about the conference, please contact Cindy Mason at: [cmason@seiu517m.org](mailto:cmason@seiu517m.org).

### BlueGreen Alliance Climate/Jobs Townhall

Please join us for a townhall discussion around the impact of climate change and the good, family-supporting jobs that will be created by updating our infrastructure — from roads, bridges and transit to our electrical grid to the systems that protect our water — to deal with the consequences of changing climate here in the Great Lakes Region and across the United States. It will be held on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30pm at the IBEW-NECA Detroit Electrical Industry Training Center (2277 E 11 Mile Road, Suite 1, Warren, MI 48092-5217). Speakers to date include Utility Union Workers of America President **Michael Langford**, BlueGreen Alliance Executive Director **David Foster** and Union of Concerned Scientists Midwest Director **Steve Frenkel**.

Please RSVP to **Cindy Mason** at [cmason@seiu517m.org](mailto:cmason@seiu517m.org). We hope you can join us for this robust discussion. Light Refreshments will be served.



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