

SEIU Local 517M E-Former - January 2015 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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Lawsuit Activity – Oral Arguments Scheduled in State Employee Cases

We have been informed by the Michigan Supreme Court Clerk's Office that Oral Arguments in the Right To Work case (**#147700 – International Union v Green**) and the 4% Pension case (**#147758 – MI Coalition of State Employee Unions v Michigan**) is set for the morning session of January 13, 2015. At issue is the authority of the Civil Service Commission over state employees and whether the Legislature can override the constitutional authority vested with the Commission. Presentations will begin at 9:30 a.m. with the Right To Work case being heard first and the 4% Pension case being heard next. In past cases, a video feed has been available on the Supreme Court website. If this option is available, we will notify the membership of the link.

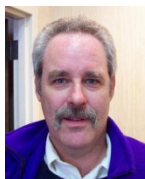
View the Briefs for the Right To Work case:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/MichiganSupremeCourt/oral-arguments/2014-2015/Pages/147700.aspx>

View the Briefs for the 4% Pension case:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Courts/MichiganSupremeCourt/oral-arguments/2014-2015/Pages/147758.aspx>

Staff Changes in Region 2



There are staff changes to the School and Local Government Region 2. First, we would like to thank **Jim Kehoe** for his 25 years of service to SEIU. Jim was on staff with SEIU Local 586 when they merged with Local 517M in 2000. He retired as of January 2, 2015. We wish him a wonderful retirement to enjoy the "fruits of his labor."



His replacement is **Andy Johnson**. Andy is recently retired from the City of Saginaw and was the SEIU Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer. Andy has experience in labor relations matters with the City of Saginaw. He has joined the staff and

relocated to the Kalamazoo area to begin servicing units. We welcome Andy in his new role as a staff person in Region 2.

Food Donation Drive in Saginaw

SEIU Local 517M members in Saginaw partnered with the Saginaw East Side Soup Kitchen and Good Neighbor Mission for a food donation drive. The food drive lasted until December 19th and those items were delivered by SEIU members and Saginaw City Councilwoman **Brenda Moore** to the Good Neighbor Mission and also East Side Soup Kitchen.

Saginaw Township Schools Bus Drivers vote to join SEIU Local 517M

As our Saginaw Township Schools custodial, maintenance and security staff were concluding



their contract bargaining, several school bus drivers with the district approached us about the possibility of joining our union. These bus drivers were currently unrepresented and wanted to be “Stronger Together” with their SEIU co-workers with the school district.

We filed a petition for election with the state and the bus drivers voted unanimously to join us in November.

New members **Shelly Schultz**, **Robin Abbot** and **Brad Yuill** indicated that “they wanted a Union that had a reputation of good representation and SEIU certainly demonstrated that with the custodians and security staff at Saginaw Township schools.” **Bill Long**, a long time bus driver for the district joined SEIU for “fair representation and to fight and retain what benefits I still have.” Since the election, **Jill Shelden** and Ms. Abbot, who are still on probation status as bus drivers, already experienced the empowerment of their SEIU union. They were denied holiday pay, and because they chose SEIU representation, they had protection and power to fight and win Thanksgiving holiday pay.

A special hats-off goes to **Lauri Hafner** who demonstrated her leadership skills and solidarity by signing up 14 of the new members for dues check off including herself.

The members have selected Ms. Hafner, **Jodi Palmer**, and Mr. Long as their bargaining team. They will work with staff and have already requested dates from the employer to commence contract talks for their first contract.

Welcome to the SEIU family!

Human Services Support Unit Update



Amy Davis-Comstock, President
Human Services Support Unit

[Unemployment Insurance Agency](#)

Denise Edwards and **Amy Davis-Comstock** have had ongoing discussions with UIA Customer Service Management including a meeting at the end of November that specifically discussed changes to the Annual Leave policy based on concerns brought by the membership. The Union provided a series of proposals to address those concerns, after more than an hour of discussion we were told about the "one-window period option" for all of 2015. At that point we requested the annual leave policy in place prior to 2014 be reinstated. Further discussion was agreed to by both parties.

On Monday, December 30th, the Union was notified of the "new" process. Again we informed Management this is the wrong approach which continues the unfairness and lack of respect for members' use of their own annual leave time when opportunities arise that are unanticipated. These include our children's activities, weddings, births, and opportunities not envisioned in the cold, bleak days of winter. On Tuesday, December 31st at 4:15pm, Customer Service Management "rolled out" the new process knowing the Union and the members continue to oppose this "only" option.

We will continue to pursue member-friendly policies that offer flexibility and respect that members deserve through ongoing Labor/Management meetings and through collective bargaining as we gear up for negotiations this summer.

Workforce Development Agency

In December, Denise and I also met with WDA Management for our bi-monthly Labor/Management meeting. We discussed the new department under which WDA will be moved into during 2015. Management assured the Union that the change will not impact the membership since the WDA management structure will remain the same. A question regarding the Agriculture Employment Specialists' (AES) new duties was also an agenda item. The Employer expects that the AES members will function as a member of the team at their Michigan Works! offices.

Let's make 2015 the year we remember we are better together!

SEIU Local 517M AFRAM Caucus



By Yolanda Johnson, AFRAM Chapter President

There is much to look forward to in 2015 on many different fronts. As AFRAM members from SEIU Local 517M participate at the local, state and national level in various community and union-oriented events.

The Saginaw AFRAM chapter will hold a steward training in January for members who participate in a leadership role. All are welcome and the dates will be announced when finalized. Also, Leaders **Betty Nash**, **Jeanette Barnett**, and **Linda Troutman** will continue to conduct a mentoring program with young girls every third Saturday in Saginaw.

The Michigan AFRAM State Caucus (MASC) which involves all locals in Michigan will be assisting with signing up those in the community who are without health insurance through the National

Affordable Health Care Act. This campaign will be supported in part by the International Union. Those dates will be announced in the future. MASC will also be hosting a family fun night bowling fundraiser in Detroit. This fundraiser will help raise funds for training and other community outreach initiatives. We will keep you informed as this family night of fun will take place in February.

The National AFRAM Caucus will host their 2015 National Conference at the Westin Hotel Metro Detroit-Airport April 17-19th.

Members Only Benefit - 2015 SEIU Scholarships Now Available

Through five different scholarship programs, SEIU awards 51 scholarships nationally that enable SEIU members and their children to pursue their educational goals at accredited colleges, universities, and technical schools. Scholarship applications are available starting December 1, 2014 (<http://www.seiu.org/a/members/fulfill-your-college-goals-with-an-seiu-scholarship.php>)

SEIU scholarships are open to SEIU members or their children. To be eligible to apply for any SEIU scholarship, membership must be maintained for three continuous years as of September 1, 2014. 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 2, 2015 or postmarked March 2, 2015.**

Last year, SEIU Local 517M had three winners of scholarships through this program.

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for January, 2015

January 7 – Executive Officers Meeting

January 23 – SEIU Local 517M Executive Board Meeting

January 27 – School and Local Government Region 1 Board Meeting

For more information on the above events, consult our on-line calendar at:
<http://www.seiu517m.org/events/month/>

The monthly subscription for the E-Former is included in your membership dues payment and is intended for members in good standing of SEIU Local 517M.



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