

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – April 2015 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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Notice of Union Election and Calendar

SEIU Local 517M will be holding elections for officers and board members this year. If you are interested in running for a union office, the [Candidate Petition Form](#) for all offices up for election is available on the website and by clicking links in this story. Candidate Petition Forms will be accepted between April 1, 2015 and **Noon** on May 1, 2015. The election calendar is stated below:

- April 1, 2015 - Notice of Election in April E-Former and website, with Link to [Candidate Petition Form](#)
- May 1, 2015 (at **Noon**) Deadline for Return of Candidate Petition Forms & Photos
- May 15-29, 2015 Electronic Voting Available. Ballot links will be sent via postcard or emailed to members.
- May 19, 2015 Deadline for requesting a paper ballot.
June 1, 2015 Ballots Counted and Election of Officers Certified by Election/Tally Committee
- July 1, 2015 Newly Elected Leadership takes office

[Candidate Petition Form](#)

Importance of Participation in Your Union



By Bill Ruhf, SEIU Local 517M President

Leaders: are they born or made? That was the question posed in a recent training I attended. So, fellow Union member, how would you answer that question? I know we've all been around great leaders, but how did they become a great leader? Do you see yourself as a leader? I would encourage you to spend a little time reflecting on that... If the answer is yes, I have a great

opportunity and a great challenge for you to prove yourself fit. This month is our open door for you to become involved in a leadership role with 517M.

There are simple leadership opportunities such as being a worksite leader or even a steward. More complex challenges are offered at the Divisional Board and Executive Board levels – by being a Board Member or even a Divisional VP.

This year, two Union-wide vacancies exist, for President and Secretary-Treasurer. I encourage each of you to give it some thought and look beyond yourself, accept the challenge and seal the deal. Get involved and make a difference in your life and that of your fellow workers. Be a part of the “New Solution that makes Michigan work”.

Save the Date: Lobby Day is May 6th



By Amy Davis-Comstock

SAVE THE DATE: May 6th! Lobby Day is an opportunity for us to meet our Senators and our Representatives in Lansing to discuss the issues that affect us. The day starts with a continental breakfast and discussion of the issues we will talk to our legislators about. Members will have scheduled appointments to meet with one of your legislators in the morning and the other legislator in the afternoon.

Lunch with legislators will be served in Room 402 in the Capitol Building. Since it is conveniently located within the Capitol, many Senators and Representatives and their staff will drop by. This provides a more casual environment to discuss issues and become familiar with those who represent you.

Outsourcing of union jobs, revenue sharing, and attacks on our pensions will be some of the issues we will discuss with lawmakers. Since this is the day after the vote on Proposal 1 to fix our roads, we will be discussing the impact that the outcome of the vote will have on the state budget as well.

If you have attended a Lobby Day in the past take the time to attend again and spread the word to our fellow union members about this great opportunity. If you have not attended one of these events, be sure to seize the opportunity this year!

SEIU Ignite Conference



More than 1,000 SEIU members, staff, officers and activists gathered in St. Louis, Missouri from March 7-10 to attend the SEIU Ignite Sparking Leadership Conference to “ignite” our labor movement and the fight for economic justice. The SEIU 517M delegation consisted of (from Left to Right in Photo) Region 2 Senior Labor Relations Specialist **Christine Stressman**, HSS Board Member **Joey Combs**, HSS Divisional Vice President **Amy Davis-Comstock**, and Local 517M

Retiree Liaison **Mary Charley**.

During the conference participants committed to rallying their family, friends and co-workers to support the National Day of Action on April 15, 2015. Participants spent constructive hours in workshops learning how to build labor movement leadership for the 21st century. Members

discussed and explored the connections between economic and racial justice, the struggle for racial equality, the fight for a fair immigration policy and the fight for a \$15 minimum wage.

Mary Kay Henry, President of SEIU, was present and called on members to take action, "Members are making the connection between political, economic, and labor justice to build the strength, the determination, and the vision to create a more just society," said Henry. "We know connecting economic justice with racial justice strengthens our power to fight for of ALL working families and win a more just society."

Steward Training in Region 2



SEIU Local 517M has begun the process of conducting smaller, decentralized trainings for stewards. In March, members from across Region 2 took part in a new training class on March 14, 2015, which took place at the Wayland Union Schools Transportation facility.

The class, which was taught by Divisional Vice President **Ray Clover** (pictured left), covered items such as your responsibilities and expectations as a steward and how to file a grievance and successfully present it to the employer.

SEIU Local 517M COPE Committee Chair **Amy Davis-Comstock** also attended and discussed the importance and benefits of COPE and what it means to a successful labor movement.

It was a very educational day and a great start to building strong leaders!

State Employee New Steward Training



On March 18th, the Scientific and Engineering unit and the Technical unit held a joint new steward training in Lansing. Approximately 40 stewards and prospective stewards were in attendance to share information and experiences and learn the duties and responsibilities of being a union steward. Information was both general to state employment and specific to each bargaining

unit. Skills were taught by staff members and current member leaders and stewards.

Saginaw Grievance Win

Four members of our Saginaw City Municipal Chapter are sharing a \$742.86 win after filing a class action grievance because the city refused to pay them for their hours plus overtime traveling to a mandatory training located out of the city. The City claimed this has been a long standing practice to not include hours worked for time traveled to and from any meeting or training. The Union claimed "wage theft" and cited the Fair Labor Standards Act and also the violation of the current contract for hours worked over 8 in a regular work day as overtime hours.

After several meetings and debate the grievance was won and the members received their rightful wages for traveling to and from the training. A lot of great work and research was done by the new chapter Grievance Committee chair, **Ken Bush**, Chapter President **Leticia Trevino**

and Chief Steward, **Brian Whalen**. Be sure to congratulate our members in Saginaw for this important victory.

Planning to Retire This Year? Keep Up Your Union Membership!

SEIU Local 517M has established a new retiree program, which will include political, social, and community involvement activities. Since our retiree benefits are impacted by what the union negotiates with the State, it is important that our members stay involved. Union strength comes from its membership, so let's join together to protect our quality of life.

Interested individuals can review the Retiree Membership Application and Mailer at: www.seiu517m.org/retirees

You can also email **Mary Charley**, SEIU Local 517M Retiree Liaison at mcharley@seiu517m.org with questions regarding the retiree program.

March Text Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the March e-former text contest. The five winners chosen at random were: **Grace Bommarito, Tammy Cruickshank, Stacie Percell, Sonya Robinson, and Jennifer Saldivar.**

April Text Contest

Our monthly text contest allows five winners to receive \$20 gift cards. **To enter, text "517M" to 30644 to take a quiz about the E-Former.**

This month's question:

What was the name of the conference that our members attended that focused on the need for racial and economic justice?

- A) SEIU Justice Now!
- B) Ignite
- C) EXCITE!
- D) COPE

Text the correct answer to enter the contest. The contest is an opt-in contest, meaning that we will only text you if you like to participate.

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for April, 2015

April 1: Executive Officers Meeting

April 13: Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting

April 14: Pay Equity Day at the Capitol Building (Tuesday is the day of the week on which women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week.)

April 14: Coalition for a Secure Retirement Lobby Day at the Capitol Building. SEIU 517M is a Member of this group that works on all public employee retirement issues. (state workers, school, local government entities)

April 15: HSS Unit Board Conference Call

April 15: National Day of Action – “Fight for 15” rally at Wayne State University
April 17 – 19: AFRAM National Leadership Meeting in Detroit
April 24: SEIU 517M Executive Board Meeting
April 28: HSS Kalamazoo Member Meeting
April 28: 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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