

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – May 2015 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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Notice of Union Election Calendar

The SEIU Local 517M election for officers and board members calendar of upcoming dates is below. Members will be notified of their unit election process via email or, in the case we don't have an email for you, postcard. The information will include the process for electronic voting, including password, and the process to request an alternate paper ballot.

The election calendar is stated below:

- May 1, 2015 (at **Noon**) Deadline for Return of [Candidate Petition Forms](#) & Photos.
- May 8, 2015 Election Tally Committee meets to finalize the Ballot.
- 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

Lobby Day is May 6th



By Amy Davis-Comstock
COPE Committee Chair

Our union's annual Lobby Day is fast approaching. If you plan to attend but just didn't get around to registering, do it today! The best part of the day is meeting with your representative and your senator in their offices. If they are not available, you can meet with their staff-people. Those meetings need to be scheduled in advance so we need registrations as soon as possible.

The day will start out in the Capitol building, Room 405, at 8:30. We want everyone to feel comfortable about talking with their legislators so for the first hour we will spend time breaking down the issues. Then there will be time to exercise how to approach your legislators about your issues.

In the morning, appointments are being scheduled with your representatives and in the afternoon the appointments are scheduled with your senators. Lunch will be provided and we have invited the legislators and their staff to attend the lunch. Since we are in the Capitol Building for lunch, you can expect to see many legislators and their staff attending the lunch.

Be sure to seize this opportunity to meet your representative and senator and talk about the issues that affect you and your community!

[Register Now!](#)

Lansing Update: Bill Would Track State Workers

Senate Bill 8, a bill that would give the state the authority to track state worker vehicles, recently passed the Senate Elections & Government Reform Committee. The bill would require the DTMB to track workers vehicles using GPS.

The bill is said to have been inspired by an incident where a state elevator operator was fired after it was discovered that he was playing golf instead of performing his job. This bill fails to recognize the fact that the worker in question was caught without this type of monitoring. It also fails to increase the safety of workers.

The bill only gives the state the right to track vehicles owned or leased by the state. The bill is currently on the Senate floor awaiting passage.

Proposal 1: Info for Voters

On Tuesday, voters will be asked to vote on Proposal 1, a proposal that would raise the state sales tax from 6% to 7% as part of a broad road funding package. SEIU 517M is neutral on the proposal. The following information is from the non-partisan Citizens Research Council:

“On May 5, 2015, Michigan voters will be asked to vote on a single statewide ballot measure to amend the state Constitution: Proposal 15-1. Approval of Proposal 15-1 will result in increases in various state taxes, expansion of state tax credits, additional state funds for road repair and maintenance, and additional state funds for public schools and local governments. Of some confusion, perhaps, is that voters are only being asked to directly approve some of these changes; those amending the Constitution. The bulk of the other state tax changes are contained in laws passed last legislative session that would only take effect if Proposal 15-1 is approved. At the end of the 2013-2014 legislative session, the governor and legislative leaders agreed to a complex plan to address the dual objective of increasing state funding for road repair and maintenance and modifying the taxation of motor fuels to guarantee that all taxes paid at the pump were directed to transportation purposes. Additionally, the plan seeks to ensure that other recipients of state funds are not financially harmed in the pursuit of these two primary goals. By necessity, the plan consists of both constitutional and statutory components. While the statutory law changes require only legislative and gubernatorial approval, the constitutional changes require approval by the Michigan electorate. However, because the law changes are “tie-barred” to passage of Proposal 15-1, the public vote effectively serves as a referendum on the entire transportation funding package, both the constitutional and statutory changes. Voters are being asked to directly approve changes to the Constitution and indirectly

approve changes in various state laws to implement the complex transportation funding plan. If voters approve Proposal 15-1, the state Constitution will be amended and various state laws will take effect to increase state tax revenue by nearly \$2.1 billion next fiscal year and by \$1.8 billion annually in the following two fiscal years. If voters reject Proposal 15-1, there will be no changes to the Constitution and none of the proposed tax changes contained in the state laws linked to the proposal will take effect.”

For more information from the Citizens Research Council, click [here](#).

Member Profile: Mike Hensler, Saginaw Township Schools

Mike Hensler is a custodian with the Saginaw Township Schools. Mike has been a member of 517M since 1999.

What positions do you hold in the Union?

Chapter President for Saginaw Township Community Schools, Region 1 Board Member, Steward, Member of the Coalition Committee for School employees.

What does a normal day look like for you?

Normal workday varies. We work from 8 to 12 hours each day. In a High School, it depends on the type of activities that take place in the school. I'm responsible for cleaning the school, changing light bulbs and all of the other things you would think a custodian would do.

Tell me about a time that you went above and beyond your normal work assignment.

The cold weather and extreme winter weather have led custodians like me to do more salting to keep pedestrians safe and to work with the athletic staff to maintain the sporting facilities in the school.

In addition, the cold weather puts additional strains on the building and we go above and beyond to keep the students, teachers and other staff safe and warm in a clean learning environment.

Why is the Union important to you?

The union is an advocate for workers. Without the union, it would be harder to do my job and the union has protected workers with injuries so that we can maintain our employment.

Why do workers need unions?

Unions ensure that our rights aren't violated. The union is a voice for workers so that workers can do their job without fear of unfair management. I think unions are a plus for all workers because they help hardworking people get what they earn.

Unemployment Insurance Agency Customer Service Annual Leave Percentage Increased



Amy Davis-Comstock
HSS Unit President

The HSS members who work in the Unemployment Insurance Agency have worked very hard to decrease the backlog of work that the agency has carried for several years. While working diligently to reduce the backlog, their use of their own annual leave has been restricted to only 8% of the membership being off at any given time.

Based on getting the "old" work completed, management increased to 15% the percentage of members who could use annual leave on any given day. At our April meeting between management and the union, management shared this increase was also due to the union for continuing to elevate the problems this restriction caused for the membership. This issue was discussed every month at our Labor/ Management meetings because we recognized how much this hurt the people we represent. So great work to the members for getting the work done - this is a win for everyone!

SEIU Conducts Polling of Members

We would like to thank the members who took the time to respond to the member survey that SEIU International conducted a few weeks ago. The results will be useful to Local 517M in helping the membership through better service.

SEIU Local 517M Golf Outing Save The Date!



The annual SEIU Local 517M golf outing will be held on Friday, August 14, 2015 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. More information and the registration form will be forthcoming.

SEIU 517M Co-Sponsors Pay Equity Day at Capitol



Hundreds of women turned out for this year's annual Pay Equity Day at the State Capitol. SEIU 517M was again proud to co-sponsor an event that highlights ongoing wage disparity for women across Michigan and the Nation.

Every year, April 14th is used to symbolize how far into the calendar year women must work to earn what men earned the year before. And Tuesday is the day of the week on which women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week. Is that what we want for our daughters and grand-daughters that

after 52 years of a federal law banning sex-based wage discrimination, we still don't value their worth like we do our sons and grand-sons in 2015?

In Michigan women continue to earn 77 cents for each dollar a man earns-ranking Michigan in the bottom quarter of states for parity in employment and earnings. On average women lose \$530,000 over their lifetime due to this pay gap. **At the current rate women will not achieve pay equity until 2086.** That is a stunning statistic! It took less time to go to the moon, invent the atom bomb, computers, cell phones and the Angry Bird app so why can't the women who work on the next generation of inventions expect pay parity before what they invented is outdated?

Women don't pay less for their college education, and they don't pay less for medical care, groceries or taxes so they shouldn't be paid less for doing the same work with the same level of education and experience as the men they work next to.

Support the Paycheck Fairness Act in Congress and the legislation that has been introduced in the Michigan Legislature because it tells the women in our life that they are valued as much as the men in our life.

Workers Rally for \$15 and a Union

On April 15th, workers around the country rallied to increase the minimum wage and raise standards for all workers. In Detroit, workers rallied in front of a McDonald's to demand better pay for all. The brave workers were joined by 517M members and other SEIU Locals who support the call for \$15 an hour and the ability to form a union.

Over 200 cities and college campuses the world over participated in the rally with 60,000 workers and their allies attending. The size and scope of the movement has grown to include adjunct faculty, healthcare workers, airport workers, and employees at large retailers. This growing participation not only made this the largest Fight for 15 rally yet, but also the largest low-wage protest in history! If YOU want to participate in what is quickly becoming one of the leading social justice movement's in the nation, please sign their online petition at: http://fightfor15.org/s-petition/april15petition/?utm_campaign=LowPay&utm_medium=social&utm_source=apr15-0415-april15site.

For more about the rallies that were held across the state, click [here](#).

MSU Teaching Assistants Ask For Your Support

The Graduate Employees Union AFT local 6196, which represents teaching assistants at Michigan State University, have been in a heated contract campaign with the university's administration and they are looking for 517M's support. Many of the teaching assistants are living below the poverty line despite providing the high quality instruction that makes Michigan State one of the strongest schools in the state of Michigan. To add insult to injury, the administration has been attempting to roll back healthcare benefits and tuition waivers after giving University President Lou Anna K. Simon a 44% raise in December (nearly a quarter of a million dollars)!

If YOU think that MSU Teaching Assistants should work in an inclusive environment where they are paid fairly and have access to quality, affordable healthcare for themselves and their families then please sign their online petition at: https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/stand-with-msu-graduate-employees?source=direct_link&referrer=graduate-employees-union

They are also having a march that will be held Friday, May 1, 12:30 @ the rock (on Farm Ln between Auditorium Rd and N Shaw Ln), and will be followed by a press conference at the Hannah Administration Building. More information on the march can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1567776063487926/>

April Text Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the April e-former text contest. The five winners chosen at random were: **Steve Blayer, John Eck, Sarah Ehinger, Sarah Rambadt, and Judith Smith**

May 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: At the current rate, what year will women achieve pay equity?

- A) 2020
- B) 2076
- C) 2086
- D) 2084

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 May, 2015

May 1: Deadline for Nominations for Union Leadership Positions
May 6: SEIU Local 517M Lobby Day at the State Capitol Building
May 7: State Employee Bargaining Team Meeting
May 8: Election/Tally Committee Meeting to Formalize Ballot
May 15-29: Electronic Voting Period
May 19: Last Day To Request Paper Ballot
May 21: HSS Unit 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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