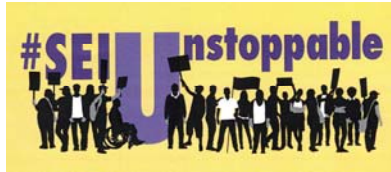


## SEIU Local 517M E-Former – October 2016 Edition



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### **State Bargaining Units Reach Tentative Agreement**

The SEIU state employee bargaining teams for the Human Services Support, Scientific and Engineering, and Technical bargaining units are pleased to announce that they have reached a tentative agreement with the State of Michigan for wages and healthcare benefits for the remaining two years of the current contract. The agreement includes wage increases of 3% starting October 1, 2017 and 2% on October 1, 2018. No changes were negotiated to the healthcare plan design. We also negotiated a Letter of Understanding to look at recruitment and retention issues. Information on the specifics of the tentative agreement, as well as an election and membership meeting schedule will be sent in the coming weeks.

### **Beller to Lead Technicians as Unit President**



Nominations were accepted for the position of Technical Bargaining Unit President starting August 15, 2016 and ending on September 14, 2016. The only candidate to submit a nomination for this position was current Technical Unit President **Arnie Beller**. Since he is the only candidate who submitted a nomination for this office, he was declared the winner by acclamation without the need to hold an election. His new three-year term of office will begin on November 1, 2016. Congratulations Arnie!

## **Detroit AFRAM Skating Party and Personal Needs Drive**

The SEIU Local 517M AFRAM HSS Unit will have a Halloween Skating Party on Sunday, October 30, 2016 from 4:30pm – 6:30pm at Northland Roller Rink, 22311 W 8 Mile Rd, Detroit, MI 48219. The cost of admission is \$5 and skate rental is \$3. Please contact any of the members of AFRAM for tickets: **Maria Gilson, Raceine McDonald, Ellina Simmons, Juanita Mayes, Janice Cosey, Joey Combs, Meagan Miner, or Stephanie Teamer** in the Union Office. Thanks for your support!

We are also having a men's toiletry drive for the month of October. We are looking for donations of the following items: deodorant, razors, shaving cream, lotion, socks, underwear, undershirts, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc. This is not an all-inclusive list so if you have any questions about what else may be needed, contact one of the AFRAM members above. Items will be donated to the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries.

## **Volunteers Needed for New Scholarship and Golf Outing Committee**

SEIU Local 517M is establishing an internal scholarship program based on information we received through our "Talk Back to Your Union" conversations. The parameters for the new scholarship haven't been decided and this is a terrific opportunity to become involved in your union. Volunteers are being requested to serve on a new committee to setup the structure, criteria and awarding of this new scholarship program.

We are also changing the format of our annual golf outing to become a fundraiser for this new scholarship fund. The committee members would also assist in the planning, fundraising and running of the golf outing which is scheduled for August 11, 2017.

If you are interested in serving on this new committee, please contact **Dave Corrie** at [corried@seiu517m.org](mailto:corried@seiu517m.org). The committee will begin meeting sometime in November, 2016.

## **Voter Registration Deadline is October 11th**

The deadline to register to vote in the November 8<sup>th</sup> General Election is October 11, 2016. SEIU Local 517M has 85% of its membership registered to vote. In the 2016 primary election, 42% of that membership participated.

If you want to check to see if you are registered, visit [www.Michigan.gov/vote](http://www.Michigan.gov/vote).

If you need to register, you can use this application and instructions: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MIVoterRegistration\\_97046\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MIVoterRegistration_97046_7.pdf)

## **New Staff Person Hired in Region 1**

SEIU Local 517M is happy announce the hiring of **Clint Bryant** as a Labor Relations Representative in our Saginaw Office. Some of the units that Clint will be responsible for



include Saginaw Township Schools, Beacon Harbor Homes, Lapeer Schools, and the Flint Schools Sodexo unit. Clint is a lifelong resident of the City of Saginaw. After attending college in Pensacola, Florida he came back to Saginaw and is currently pursuing a degree in marketing from Delta College. In addition to his formal education, Mr. Bryant was a Fellow of the Lynn Williams Institute for Labor Studies and Activism in Pittsburgh, PA and proud alumni of the Henry Marsh Institute for Public Policy. Clint has been an advocate for students and working families in the Great Lakes Bay Region for over a decade. Working both in the public and private sector, his affection for policy and advocacy grew after attacks on Public Sector employees and on collective bargaining rights.

As a public sector employee, Clint lost his longtime job in the transportation department of Saginaw Schools when they outsourced services to *First Student*.

Using his skills as an activist, Clint re-organized the unit and took the lead negotiating a "first contract" with the new private sector employer and it was unanimously ratified.

As a public employee Clint has seen firsthand how public policy impacts the day-to-day lives of working people. Clint has campaigned in 15 states to help other elect labor endorsed candidates.

Clint has an extensive community service background with several organizations, including being a mentor for special education students. Clint served for two terms as President of the United Steelworkers of America Local 8410-1 and 9036-3 and has completed three years at the Leadership Scholar Program for the United Steelworkers in Dawson, PA. In addition to completing several leadership and development programs across the nation, Clint was appointed earlier this year to serve on the Saginaw City Council and is currently running for a four-year term.

We welcome Clint into the 517M family!

## State Employees Give Back with Habitat for Humanity Build

The Grand Rapids District Office of the Department of Environmental Quality held our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual



Habitat for Humanity workday on September 21<sup>st</sup> in downtown Grand Rapids. SEIU Members that participated included **Darlene Pearson, Dave Wierzbicki, Dave Bandler, Dean Hazle, Kaitlyn DeVries, Chris Christensen** and retired member **Bill Bolio**. Our union negotiated 8 hours of School/Community Service leave which was used to participate in this event. Again this year it was a great time to get to know our co-workers outside of the office, learn a new skill, laugh, and do something positive for someone else. It renews your faith in the good of all humanity to help one another. Our future homeowner, a refugee from Somalia, is raising 3 sons and 2 daughters as a single dad.

## More Environmental Problems at Dearborn Heights Schools

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, herbicides hazardous to human health were sprayed along the perimeters of schools within Dearborn Heights School District No.7 while staff and students were still working inside the school buildings. The herbicide application was performed by the company, Greenblade One, and the date of the application deviated from past practices where herbicides and pesticides were applied on the weekends when the buildings were empty. SEIU Local 517M members recorded the application and inquired of the Greenblade One employees whether it was safe to apply the herbicides while people were still in the buildings. After researching and finding that improper notice was given by the school and that the exposure was potentially harmful, SEIU stewards called a pre-grievance hearing and contacted the State of Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality. The school district agreed to return to the past practice of applying pesticides and herbicides on the weekends when district buildings are empty. A DEQ investigation is ongoing as to whether the actions of the company and the district violated state environmental laws and regulations. WYXZ of Detroit also ran a story on the exposure interviewing concerned parents and SEIU Local 517M members. A link to the story can be found below: <http://www.wxyz.com/news/region/wayne-county/michigan-dept-of-agriculture-investigating-chemical-use-at-local-elementary-school>

## Faculty Fight for \$15

The Faculty Forward movement continues to be a force for change in higher education, engaging faculty, graduate students and others in campaigns to unite more people in unions, to hold bad actors in for-profit schools accountable and to lift up the crisis in higher education in the upcoming elections.

Since we began the higher education campaign, more than 13,000 faculty members have voted to join SEIU. In 2016 alone, professors at 16 universities have joined SEIU, including full-time contingent instructors at Boston University, Loyola University Chicago, Duke University, Seattle University and tenured faculty at Notre Dame de Namur in California. Faculty at Northwestern University have voted in their union election and are awaiting the final vote count. After the Northwestern faculty victory, more than 1,000 Chicago university faculty will have joined SEIU in the last year in a shared effort to improve their profession and the overall quality of higher education through unionization.

After a sustained campaign to call out predatory practices in for-profit higher education, our coalition of union members, community, and policy partners scored a huge win when the Department of Education announced that the for-profit school ITT Tech could no longer enroll any students receiving Title IV financial aid. Last summer, SEIU/Faculty Forward activists rang the bell on ITT Tech's predatory behavior at ITT Tech's annual shareholder meeting and members of Local 284, Local 73, and Local 721 led actions around the country, keeping the pressure on the Department of Education to hold ITT Tech accountable. When ITT Tech closes, we will fight to ensure that executives, not students and taxpayers, are forced to pay the bill.

SEIU also signed onto U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren's Graduate Student Savings Act and our efforts to hold the for-profit sector accountable helped shut down for-profit college accreditor, ACICS, which will help turn off the financial spigot for predatory for-profit colleges. The Faculty Forward Network in North Carolina has continued to push back against the called "bathroom bill", HB2 with more than 150 faculty and students at UNC showing their opposition to HB2 by displaying anti-HB2 placards in their classrooms.

## Child Care Fight for \$15

Watch Childcare Fight for \$15 leaders **Chanee Wilson** and **Cheryl Murray** on PBS News Hour: [Why Are Early Childhood Educators Struggling to Make Ends Meet?](#)

As we approach the Presidential election, both candidates are proposing solutions to the child care crisis. Increasingly, the narrative includes our demands for quality, affordable child care for parents and better wages for providers:

- The New York Times – Affordable Child Care: The Secret to a Better Economy
- Bloomberg – How to Make Child Care Affordable
- New Haven Register – Editorial: How government should make child care affordable

The Child Care Fight for \$15 is building on that momentum. We are showing that the voters are going broke over child care – including those who do the work – are hitting the streets and mobilizing to elect candidates who will invest in child care.

## SEIU Retiree Appointed to The MML Executive Board



SEIU Local 517M Buena Vista Schools Retiree and Saginaw City Councilwoman **Brenda Fay Moore** has been appointed to the Michigan Municipal League (MML) Executive Board. The Michigan Municipal League serves the interest of municipalities through various services, programs and initiatives.

Brenda first became involved with the Michigan Municipal League by attending conferences and training to understand her role as a new official after she was elected to City Council in 2013. Since then she has been elected to serve as the 2nd Vice President for the Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials. She has been elected to the Board for the Elected Official Academy (EOA). The Elected Official Academy is a four level program that recognizes educational and leadership accomplishments. Brenda has graduated from Levels One and Two of the EOA.

Her term of appointment to the Michigan Municipal League Executive Board is through 2019.

## From The Archives: A Lesson in Labor History from the Reuther Library

### National Custodial Workers Appreciation Day

By Gavin Strassel, SEIU Archivist

October 2nd is National Custodial Workers Appreciation Day, and it's a good time to look back at the profession that served as the foundation for the Service Employees International Union. Originally named the Building Service Employees International Union, the organization received its charter as the first union for flat janitors in America. Though SEIU has dramatically evolved over the past century, custodial workers continue to serve as one of the largest units within the union. Below are photos from [Foundation of the Union: Janitors and Custodians in SEIU](#), a curated collection of images from the SEIU photograph collections.



Chicago and New York served as the two hubs of organizing in the early decades of the BSEIU. SEIU Historical



Records and SEIU Local 1 Records chronicle these initial decades when the two locales anchored the union.

As SEIU expanded so did the influence of the custodial profession. By the sixties, SEIU had transformed janitors into a significant force within American



politics, to the point that the top presidential candidates made it a priority to appeal to SEIU members. The story found within the records of [SEIU Local 32 BJ](#), the largest American union of property service workers, illustrates this rise in prominence. (Picture below: Presidential candidate Jesse Jackson runs floor grooming equipment that an SEIU janitor uses as part of their job. SEIU President John Sweeney and others watch.)

The story of janitors in SEIU would be incomplete without an exploration of the national Justice for Janitors (J4J) campaign that



began in 1985. The campaign fought against low wages and workplace abuses affecting custodial workers in urban centers. By equating immigrant rights with workplace protections, J4J overcame immense obstacles to win new gains for janitors in many



cities and breathed new life into the labor movement. **John Sweeney** presided over SEIU during these years, and [his records at the Reuther Library](#) the story of Justice for Janitors from a national perspective.



*Gavin Strassel is the SEIU Archivist at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, the official repository for SEIU and the largest labor archives in North America. If you are interested in performing research with the SEIU collections, please contact Gavin at [strassel@wayne.edu](mailto:strassel@wayne.edu).*

To learn more about SEIU and Michigan labor history click here: <http://reuther.wayne.edu/index.php>

## Who Controls My Body at Death?

By: Marlane C. Teahan, Fraser Trebilcock Lawyers

(Reprinted with Permission)

Who controls the disposition of a person's body or the final resting place of an individual, or decedent, after his or her death?

### **Old Law**

Generally speaking, Michigan law has provided that the next of kin, in a certain order of priority, had authority to make decisions regarding a decedent's funeral arrangements and the handling, disposition, cremation, right to possess the cremains, and disinterment of a decedent's body. The presumption that the next of kin had this decision-making authority often created disputes between those closest to the decedent and the next of kin (who may have been estranged from the decedent or were very distantly related).

Until now in Michigan, without creative will or trust provisions that would disinherit uncooperative next of kin, not following a decedent's wishes on burial or cremation, an individual could not direct how their body would be disposed of after death. This was true even though a person could designate another to make medical decisions for him or her during life. This dichotomy between a person's ability to make decisions for themselves during life but not after death has frustrated many individuals and many estate planners. Similarly, the struggle at death over the control of a person's body between close friends and relatives often involved funeral homes in heated disputes and difficult situations with bodies that could not be buried in a timely fashion.

### **New Law**

Effective June 27th, 2016, an individual's designation of a funeral representative will control who has the right and power to make decisions about funeral arrangements and the handling, disposition, or disinterment of a decedent's body. This power includes the right to decide about cremation, and the right to retrieve from the funeral establishment and possess cremated remains of the deceased immediately after cremation.

### **How to Designate**

A funeral representative designation may be included in an individual's will, patient advocate designation, or other writing. Given conflicting signing formalities and the conflicting effective dates of various powers granted in these documents, our plan is to have our clients execute a separate, standalone funeral representative designation.

Other features in the new law

The law contains many other important provisions such as:

- Powers of a funeral representative can only be exercised after the death of the declarant;
- One or more successor funeral representatives may be designated;
- A funeral representative may not delegate his or her power to another individual, unless the written designation so authorizes;
- Certain individuals may not act as funeral representatives, such as one who feloniously and intentionally kills, or is convicted of committing abuse, neglect or exploitation of the decedent;
- How a funeral representative designation can be revoked; and
- Who has priority to exercise the powers of a funeral representative in the absence of a designation.

This law will streamline the burial vs. cremation and funeral issues that face surviving family members. Instead of all of your children needing to sign off on cremation, you can designate

one child to make such decisions, thus eliminating much unwanted paperwork for the whole family. This new law will also be helpful for those who want someone other than family members to make decisions on burial, cremation, and a final resting place. Often, individuals are closer to friends than to family, or certain family members are better decision-makers in times of crisis than other family members, making them a better funeral representative choice. This law finally allows an individual the right to choose who will make decisions about his or her funeral, cremation and burial. Please contact us for help in designating your funeral representative.

### **Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for October, 2016**

October 7: SEIU Local 517M Executive Board Meeting

October 10: Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting

October 11: School and Local Government Region 1 Board Meeting

October 12: Saginaw County Community Mental Health Member Meeting

October 13: Technical Unit Board Meeting

October 30: Detroit HSS AFRAM Skating Party

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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