

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – November 2016 Edition



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Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th. Remember: You Are Electing Your Bosses for the Next Two Years!



Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th. Please take time to get to the polls and vote! State employees have that day off to encourage them to vote. Make sure you exercise your constitutional right. You have the opportunity to elect the officials (State Legislature, Municipal Government, School Boards and Judges) that define your jobs at every level of government.

To see what your actual ballot will look like and also find a listing of recommended candidates that have been screened by your fellow SEIU members at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/political-action/>

SEIU Kalamazoo Schools Members Participate in National Reclaim Our Schools Event

The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS) is a national alliance of parents, youth, community organizations and labor unions fighting for educational justice and equity in access to school resources and opportunities. AROS members are united around a shared vision for supporting and improving our public schools. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) participates as a coalition member of AROS.

On Thursday October 6th AROS had its second annual national "WALKING IN DAY." This is an event where AROS members link together with parents, educators, students, school staff and community members to walk in support of quality education for all students. There has been



attack after attack on funding of public education throughout the United States. Students who live in areas of low income, working class communities and neighborhoods of color seem to be affected the most by the lack of funding and budget cuts. AROS members want to send a resounding national message that cutting school budgets and reducing funding is not the answer. *Pictured L-R: Andy Johnson (SEIU Staff), Amanda Miller (KEA), Chalene Watson (SEIU Member), David Meisling (SEIU Member), John Fisher (61st District candidate)*

SEIU 517M Kalamazoo Schools Chapter members joined forces with the Kalamazoo Education Association (KEA) members for the national "WALKING IN DAY" at Milwood Elementary school in Kalamazoo. There were events in over 200 cities and towns across America on this day. The organizer for the Kalamazoo event was KEA President and Kalamazoo Public Schools Teacher **Amanda Miller**. "I want the kids to know we love them. We don't do this job for the money or fame, our job is to make sure every student receives a quality education regardless of which neighborhood they live in," said Mrs. Miller.

SEIU 517M and the KEA have committed to working together on having conversations with elected leaders on increasing school funding. We will also work together in holding our elected leaders accountable for providing quality educational opportunities for all of our students. SEIU and the KEA will work on getting more Union members involved in next year's "WALKING IN DAY" event, because we believe our student deserve the best.

Hope Network New Passages Update

After a year of fighting and the filing of numerous unfair labor practice charges our members, who work as adult foster care workers, at Hope Network New Passages scored a major victory.

On September 29, 2016, an administrative law judge ruled that Hope Network New Passages broke the law by withholding bonuses scheduled to be paid to their employees on July 1, 2015. The ruling stated that their failure to pay the third and final installment bonus on July 1, 2015 constitutes an unfair labor practice, as well as bargaining in bad faith. The Employer was ordered by the administrative law judge to pay back the stolen bonuses with interest compounded daily. The Union filed a formal request for the repayment of those bonuses on October 7, 2016, giving the company 14 days to pay. However, the employer has refused to comply with the administrative law judge's order and has instead filed exceptions to the ruling with the National Labor Relations Board.

Our members aren't giving up the fight and plan to rally at a \$250/plate fundraiser that Hope Network is throwing for its biggest donors. The event is called "Hope's Heroes" and **Dan DeVos**, one of Hope Network's biggest funders will be in attendance. We will be delivering letters to Mr. Devos written by our members, asking why the company refuses to pay back the stolen bonuses and pay decent wages. All members of SEIU Local 517M are invited to join us at Rosa Parks Circle in Grand Rapids (across from the fundraiser at 146 Monroe Center St NW). We hope to show them that it's our members who are the heroes. They care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society and in many cases are paid less than \$9.00 an hour for their services.

Please join us on November 17th and demand that our members be paid back their stolen bonuses! If you interested in attending contact Danny Ritter at dritter@seiu517m.org or at (517) 267-2080.

AFRAM Members Meet to Discuss Flint With State Senator



SEIU Local 517M Labor Relations Specialists **Andy Johnson** and **Clint Bryant** and 517M Executive Board Member **Bryan Grochowski** of the AFRAM Caucus met with State Senator **Jim Ananich** (D-27) representing Genesee County and Reverend **Al Harris** at the Saints of God Church in Central Flint to discuss comprehensive solutions and continue developing resource materials for the people of Flint, Michigan. *Pictured L-R: 517M Staff Andy Johnson, 517M Executive Board Member Bryan*

Grochowski, Yvonne Lewis Healthy Flint Coordinator, Senator Jim Ananich

SEIU International President Henry Visits Detroit

SEIU 517M was well represented at the GOTV Labor Rally held at the headquarters of SEIU Healthcare Michigan in Detroit. The event was held on Saturday, October 22, 2016, and was attended by SEIU Local 517M Labor Relations Specialist **Clint Bryant** and Saginaw Schools Sodexo Foodservice Workers **Joy McWright** and **Linda Pought**. SEIU International President **Mary Kay Henry** was joined by U.S. Senator **Gary Peters**, Congresswoman **Debbie Dingell** (MI-12) Congressman **John Conyers** (MI-13) and Candidate for Michigan Supreme Court the Honorable Judge **Deborah Thomas** to Get Out the Vote.



"It's great being back in Detroit, and together with Clint, Joy, Linda & other members", said President Henry. "We're getting the word out that **Hillary Clinton** will stand with the Fight For \$15, invest in our service and care economy, introduce a commonsense immigration plan and addressing racial injustice and criminal justice reform in America."

Pictured L-R: SEIU 517M Staff Clint Bryant, SEIU President Mary Kay Henry, Saginaw School 517M Members Joy McWright, and Linda Pought.

SEIU HSS AFRAM Active in the Detroit Community

Members of SEIU AFRAM Detroit HSS Division volunteered for the Gleaners Community Food Bank's Double Your Donation Day which was held on Tuesday, October 11, 2016. The event was held at their distribution headquarters in downtown Detroit. This event was a phone marathon where volunteers receive inbound telephone calls from donors who wish to make a one-time pledge or a monthly donation and AFRAM volunteers participated from 6-8pm. **Antonia Brown, Stephanie Teamer** (L-R in photo) and **Raceine McDonald** were the members who were able to attend. The marathon was held from 6am - 11pm and included food and treats (some healthy, some not so healthy) throughout the day. The donations for the day were matched by Weingartz, which is an outdoor power equipment sales company. Gleaners raised \$95,206 on Tuesday through the telephone marathon and the campaign raised \$392,888, which will be matched by Weingartz! It is always a pleasurable experience when we volunteer our time in order to help others. We look forward to the next Gleaners event!



We are also continuing our men's toiletry drive through the month of November. 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. Items will be donated to the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries. Donation boxes are placed throughout Cadillac Place so make sure you donate during this holiday season to those who are in need.

2017 Calendars Available!

Click on the link to download the state employee or school and local government 2017 calendars.

State Employee Calendar: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2016/10/2017calendarstate.pdf>

School and Local Government Calendar: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2016/10/2017calendarslg.pdf>

No Dues Money Goes to COPE!

The most common misconception we hear about our political activity is that members believe their dues money goes to politics. This is FALSE! This has been illegal for many years.

SEIU maintains a Political Action Committee (PAC) entitled the Committee on Political Education (COPE) that collects **voluntary** contributions from members that are used to support candidates at the federal level and makes contributions to Michigan candidates upon the recommendations of the SEIU Michigan State Council.

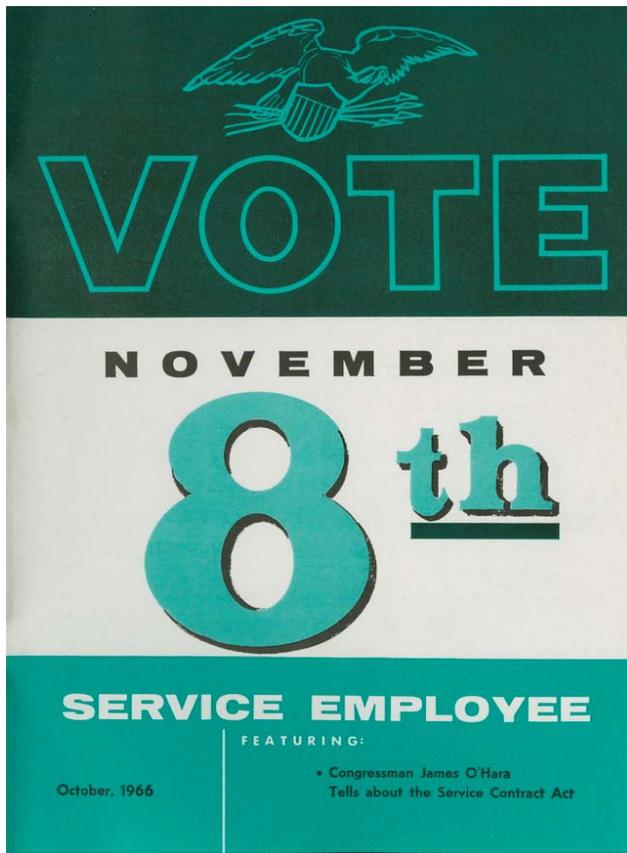
Our local maintains our own PAC, again funded through **voluntary** contributions from our members. These funds are mostly used to support local candidates that impact school districts or city councils. Many times these funds are used to support our own members' campaigns as they run for office.

Only voluntary PAC/COPE money can be given in support of candidates. Money collected for the purpose of political action must be kept by our union in a separate account and cannot be collected with or as part of member dues.

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

SEIU and Presidential Politics

By Gavin Strassel, SEIU Archivist



Every four years, SEIU ramps up efforts to get out the vote for the presidential election. Their support for candidates like **Hillary Clinton** and **Barack Obama** is well known, but SEIU did not always enter presidential politics. From its founding, SEIU (then BSEIU) mostly advocated on local elections, not playing an active role in national politics. Even after WWII, the union stuck to more regional matters. During this era, anti-labor forces started to exert themselves through Congress, passing the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 which joined a series of statewide "right-to-work" laws being passed at that time. It became clear to labor that it could no longer stand on the sidelines, and newfound clout from a surge in membership allowed BSEIU to become an influential player in presidential politics.

The union first took large-scale action on behalf of Jack Kennedy in 1960. The presidential candidate spoke at BSEIU events and talked to matters important to



the union (notably unemployment, automation, and civil rights). This change in advocacy could be seen in the SEIU publication *Service Employee*, which printed few political articles during previous presidential election seasons but suddenly featured the story "Register Now – so you can be sure to cast your vote" on its October 8, 1966 issue cover. In following presidential cycles, endorsements for presidential candidates and advertisements for the Committee on Political Education became the norm in the pre-election editions of *Service Employee*.

Since 1960, SEIU has increasingly become a vocal force in the presidential election, making them an essential ally to any presidential candidate looking to rally working people.



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.

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

NPR Poll: Cost of Child Care Causes Financial Stress For Many Families

October 26, 2016 - National Public Radio
Patricia Neighmond

Most parents have experienced sticker shock when they find out just how much it will cost to care for their infant or toddler full- or even part-time. For parents who have little choice, this can be a big financial strain.

In fact, the most common challenge parents face when looking for child care is the high cost. That's the finding of a recent poll from NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The poll surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,120 parents or guardians of children 5 years old or younger and not yet in kindergarten, who receive regularly scheduled care at least once a week from someone other than a parent.

"Cost continues to be an issue once parents find care, with many saying the cost is a problem for their families," says **Gillian SteelFisher**, research scientist and deputy director of the Harvard Opinion Research Program and the poll's academic leader. "This is especially true for those who feel their financial situation is not strong."

Patricia Bauer, who lives in San Diego with her husband and two little boys, says cost is a constant challenge. Darcy, 3, and Merrick, 15 months, are in day care. Merrick is in a home care setting and Darcy in a more structured preschool. Bauer works in educational training, and her husband is a journalist. They've always considered themselves middle class, but today, barely.

"We are struggling," says Bauer, whose entire take-home pay goes just to cover the costs of day care and preschool — a whopping \$2,400 each month.

After paying for groceries, gas, utilities and other expenses, Bauer says, calling the family budget stretched is a big understatement.

"We feel like we're working so hard, but any minute we could lose everything — you know, if we had some major emergency, we don't have savings," she says.

And planning for the future? Bauer would love to. But right now there's just no way.

Before children, both she and her husband contributed to their retirement funds at work. Today, that's just not possible.

Nor is it possible to contribute to college funds for the children, which is something Bauer and her husband really feel guilty about, she says.

And while she loves being Mom to two little ones, she says she and her husband are pretty much counting down the days till the boys are in public school.

"We joke that as soon as our boys are in public school, we'll be rich!"

In our poll, the vast majority of parents say there is a fee for their child care. Nearly one-third of those parents, like Bauer, say that cost creates a financial problem. And for 71 percent of them, it's a very or somewhat serious problem.

Bauer actually considered quitting her job in order to save on day care costs. But, after crunching the numbers, she decided she just couldn't afford it because, without employer-provided health insurance, she would have to pay for health insurance herself. "That's another huge bill we couldn't afford," she says.

Many families can't even consider a high-quality preschool. The poll found that 79 percent who said their household finances are not strong said they had "just a few" or "only one" option for child care. And parents with limited options were less likely than their counterparts with more options to say the quality of their child's care is "excellent" (56 percent vs. 66 percent).

The median income for families in this country is just over \$55,000 a year, and the average cost of infant child care is all but out of reach for them at \$10,000 a year, says **Rachel Schumacher**, who directs the Office of Child Care for the federal Department of Health and Human Services. "That's a sizable chunk," she says. It rivals — and even tops — the cost of one year's college tuition at many state schools.

One thing driving the high cost of child care is that it's so labor intensive, says Schumacher. While all states differ, most require a certain number of teachers or caregivers to ensure the health and safety of children.

And even though child care teachers and caregivers are paid very low wages, often at the poverty level or below, the cost still adds up.

Now, you might think if the demand for child care is high, theories of competition would prevail and the supply would grow, resulting in greater competition. That, in turn, should result in lower prices.

But this classic marketplace scenario just doesn't work when it comes to child care, Schumacher says.

When parents don't have the money in hand to pay for high-quality care, they seek out lower quality, less expensive care options, she says, which may be unlicensed or "under the table." Therefore, she says, "it's just not going to work as your typical marketplace."

The discussion about cost and quality of child care is critical these days, says Schumacher, especially since brain research shows how important the early years are.

Because the research has shown that 700 to 1,000 new neurological connections are forming every second in those first few years of life, she says, "the architecture built in the first few years is really rapid and very critical to everything that comes after."

It's a strong argument for greater government investment in child care and early education, she says — especially when you consider that in today's world, so many parents, and even grandparents, work.

SEIU Blog: Saving for retirement Isn't Simple When You're Earning Poverty Wages

During National Save for Retirement Week (October 17-21) financial services industry experts offer Americans conventional advice on how to prepare for their golden years. Sadly, for millions of Americans making poverty wages, saving for retirement isn't as simple as opening an IRA at your local bank or diversifying your portfolio.

In a new entry on the SEIU blog, **Sharyn Layfield** of Vermont explains the challenges adjunct instructors face when saving for retirement.

"There's no such thing as a retirement for me," writes 67-year-old Layfield who will earn only \$10,000 this year. "As an adjunct professor, my wages are so low that I haven't been saving for retirement. I'll be working until they carry me out of my job. That's what makes retirement terrifying for me."

The old adage of spend less and save more isn't applicable to many working Americans in today's economy. Wealthy corporations have pushed down employee wages and benefits, making it harder for the average person to save for retirement. They have also eliminated the pension plans our parents and grandparents fought for and won decades ago.

Layfield points out that adjuncts and other working people are no longer accepting the status quo. "Times are changing and so is my profession. Adjuncts around the country are standing together and forming unions to get better pay and benefits," she writes. "We're even winning retirement benefits for adjuncts, including those at my job, who didn't have access to our employer's plan. I'm also hopeful that our approach to retirement planning will change too."

Read the entire blog [here](#). Also check out Washington, D.C., airport skycap John Bragg's [story](#) about the challenges of saving for retirement.

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for November, 2016

November 2: Chapter 2 Meeting in Newberry

November 3: Chapter 1 Meeting in Marquette

November 8: ELECTION DAY!!! VOTE!!!!

November 16: HSS Lansing RICC Membership Meeting

November 17: HSS Cadillac Place Membership Meeting

November 21: HSS Lansing DHHS Membership Meeting

For more information on the above events, consult our on-line calendar at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/events/month/>

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