



**SEIU 517M**  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The **E-Former**

The Official Electronic Newsletter of  
SEIU Local 517M

**November 2019**

## **Ratification of State Contracts Continues**

By Dave Corrie,  
SEIU Staff

On October 14, 2019, the **Human Services Support, Scientific & Engineering, and Technical** bargaining units covering almost 3,600 state employees, represented by SEIU Local 517M, reached a tentative agreement today. The agreement was for provisions covering wages and healthcare for the final two years of the current three-year contract.

“Over the last several months, our unit leaders have worked extremely hard on behalf of the SEIU 517M membership. Due to that commitment, we have reached a tentative agreement with the State of Michigan and it is now in the hands of our membership for ratification” said Jeremy Tripp, Executive Director of SEIU Local 517M.

“Our members work hard every day on behalf of Michigan citizens and our bargaining team members worked hard obtaining this contract for our members. We thank them for their efforts” stated SEIU Local 517M President Joey Combs.

Specific provisions of the agreements include a 6% wage increase over the remaining two years of the current agreement. Improvements to health care include the addition of LASIK and enhanced dental coverage.

The ratification vote will conclude on November 4th when the votes will be tallied.

## **All Dues Paying Members To Receive \$2,500 of Complimentary Insurance**

By Dave Corrie,  
SEIU Staff



**AMERICAN INCOME LIFE**  
insurance company

SEIU Local 517M is pleased to announce a new partnership with the American Income Life Insurance company to offer \$2,500 of Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage to SEIU Local 517M members **free of charge!** There are also opportunities to increase this coverage and purchase life insurance. There is no obligation to increase or buy additional coverage. The \$2,500 policy is a direct benefit offered to you because of your SEIU dues paying membership.

A mailing will be going to SEIU Local 517M members soon detailing this coverage and to announce additional benefits that you receive with this member only benefit. These benefits are provided by American Income Partners and include a discount plan for eye care, hearing, prescription drugs and chiropractic services. These additional benefits are not insurance but are a discount plan that may be used to lower health care expenses. There are also Child Safe Kits available for your children and grand children free with your plan.

Additional discount services that are available for a yearly fee that include discounts for dental, vitamin and nutritional supplements, travel assistance and a 24-hour nurse line.

American Income Life is a 100% union company that is active in the community giving out yearly scholarships and contributions to food banks and shelters throughout the country.

## Operation Polar Drop - Region 1 Leaders in Action

By Clint Bryant,  
SEIU Staff



School and Local Government Region 1 leaders: (pictured L-R) Caroline McBride (Buena Vista Charter Township), Walt Cureton (Saginaw Schools Custodial ABM) and Jeanette Barnett (Saginaw Schools) recently worked with Operation Polar Drop to help those in need from the Saginaw community. Operation Polar Drop is an annual event that provides Winter essentials such as socks, hats, and gloves as well as groceries to families in need.

An estimated 3,500 people were assisted because of this year's Operation Polar Drop. "It feels good to give back to our community, you never know when something will come up and you have trouble feeding your family or providing what they need. This is what we do as union members, said Walt Cureton, Chief Steward of the ABM unit.



Pictured above: SEIU Labor Relations Specialist Clint Bryant (Left) with Walt Cureton.

## Mt. Pleasant School Members Ratify New Contract

By Clint Bryant,  
SEIU Staff

Members in Mt. Pleasant Public Schools ratified a new agreement with the contract successor, Southwest Foodservice Excellence of Arizona on September 5, 2019. The ratified agreement reflects a 7% wage increase over a 2 year agreement with a \$200 signing bonus. Members of the Bargaining Committee and Chapter President Tracy MacGregor worked diligently to ensure all members were informed and that their unit remains at 100% membership.

"We are thankful for the union and all of the work they put in for our contract so we can have better terms and conditions of employment, including a raise! If it was up to the new company, they wouldn't give us anything."



Pictured L-R: Tracy MacGregor, Kevin Kihn and Tilithia Smith-Haines

## Drone Technicians Featured in News Media

By Dave Corrie,  
SEIU Staff



The October 9, 2019 edition of MLive ran a story about a drone taking video on the Mackinac Bridge. The operator of the drone is a Department of Transportation technician, Tim Burke.

Tim and other MDOT photographers are the only people allowed to operate drones at the Mackinac Bridge. The link to the article allows you to see some of the stunning footage he shot.

<https://www.mlive.com/news/2019/10/drone-fly-by-of-mackinac-bridge-offers-stunning-views.html>

## Active Members Needed for Committees!

By Joey Combs,  
SEIU 517M President



Member engagement is the engine of our UNION. The more members that are engaged, the more powerful and visible we are. Did you know your Union has several standing committees you can join? We are currently recruiting new members to come and join us as we get ready for a new year. The committees that are currently available are:

**New Member Orientation and Sign Up.** Membership is the fuel that runs our UNION. The new member orientation and sign-up committee helps units with member to member outreach in new hire orientations.

**The Member Engagement Committee** promotes membership in the Union. Member engagement is the engine of the UNION. Member engagement has been done via member events and activities such as general membership/chapter meetings, conferences, bargaining surveys, brown bag lunch activities, ice cream socials, bingo, bowling outings, community garden events, hustle/salsa lessons during lunch breaks, picnics, and our Annual golf outing.



**Leadership Development.** Leaders are the drivers of our UNION. The Leadership Development Committee currently holds a yearly Leadership Academy. The members of the committee facilitate the various modules of the 4-hour sessions, which are spread over 4 Saturdays. The participants are fellow members who apply for the Leadership Academy cohort and are selected based on certain criteria.

**Political/Legislative Committee** shall oversee and promote the Union's political and legislative programs, as well as promote member involvement in the Committee on Political Education (COPE).



**The African American Caucus (AFRAM)** is committed to enhancing opportunities for education, training, mentorship, leadership development and networking for SEIU members and staff of African descent. This committee is open to all races.

**The Election/Tally Committee** oversees the general elections of the Local and shall be responsible for nominations and the preparation, tallying and certification of general election ballots.

**The Community Partnership Committee** focuses on opportunities for members to partner with community allies and others with a common goal. The committee works to build solidarity with other unions, organizations and neighbors to unite and advance our vision. As we continually find ways to increase our public visibility as advocates for quality public services, we will need community partners!

According to Article VII, Section 3 of the SEIU Local 517M By-Laws:

*Section 3: Standing Committee Members shall serve until discharged by the President, or until the conclusion of the President's term. Special Committee Members shall serve for the term of the committee as established upon committee assignment. Any Committee Member may resign upon written notice to the President.*

To be appointed to one of the above committees, you need to contact President Joey Combs at [jcombs@seiu517m.org](mailto:jcombs@seiu517m.org) and let her know who you are, which unit you are in, and which committees you are interested in serving on.

## New Executive Board Members Sworn In

By Dave Corrie,  
SEIU Staff

Two new SEIU Local 517M Executive Board members were sworn into office at the October 26, 2019 Executive Board meeting. Jan Martin (Left) representing School and Local Government Region 3 from Flint Schools and Michael Duell (Center) representing the Scientific and Engineering unit from the Department of Transportation, were sworn in by SEIU Local 517M President Joey Combs (Right).



Congratulations!

## SEIU Unions for All Summit Recap

By Joey Combs,  
SEIU 517M President

More than 1,000 SEIU members and workers fighting for a union joined together in Los Angeles from October 3 - 6 at the SEIU Unions for All Summit. Participants engaged directly with eight top candidates for president on our Unions for All agenda to build power and win justice in our workplaces, our communities, and our democracy.

SEIU 517M President Joey Combs and School and Local Government Region 3 Divisional Vice President Carmella Johnson attended on behalf SEIU Local 517M. Carmella led a break out session entitled “Unions for All is the Solution” at the conference.

Highlights video: <https://youtu.be/XcwbDqsTpAQ>



L-R: Carmella Johnson, Joey Combs

## Calendar of Upcoming Events - November, 2019

**November 4:** State Contract Ratification Election Ends

**November 11:** State Offices Closed for Veterans Day

**November 13:** Saginaw City Unit Member Meeting, Saginaw Office

**November 18:** Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting, Lansing Office

**November 28 - 29:** SEIU and State offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

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