

# SEIU 721

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

OCTOBER 2014



SEIU 721 member Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer huddles with fellow 721 members and staff during one of more than a dozen Sacramento lobby visits held this session.

## BIG SACRAMENTO WINS FOR SEIU 721 ELIGIBILITY AND SOCIAL WORKERS

**7**21 members who've participated in Sacramento lobby days know that it's hot, stressful and often tedious work. But it's all worth it if, after all the running between offices in the sweltering Sacramento sun, the marathon committee hearings, the rushed meetings with harried legislators and the line-by-line review of bills, you score victories like 721 members just achieved for county eligibility workers and children's social workers.

### **SB 1341 is a Huge Win for Eligibility Workers**

SEIU 721 pulled out all the stops to advocate for two bills this session. The first: SB 1341, co-sponsored by SEIU and the California Welfare Directors Association and authored by Senator Holly Mitchell, codifies in state law the use of the State Automated Welfare System for informing beneficiaries and applicants about their eligibility, enrollment or disenrollment in health coverage. In practical terms, it protects consumers

and county workers from additional state attempts to privatize eligibility work, cut safety net services for the poor, and reduce county work forces.

### **AB 1978 Protects County Social Workers**

Authored by Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer, a member of SEIU 721, AB 1978 gives children's social workers a venue to report and expose problems and abuses in the child welfare system without risking retaliation. It establishes a hotline and a process for involving frontline social workers in reforming a slow-moving bureaucracy that has buried children's social workers under huge caseloads and mountains of paperwork at the expense of protecting vulnerable children.

**Bob Schoonover, President**

*Bob Schoonover*





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## LATINO CAUCUS ROCKS AT 721 OUR COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOR 15 IN LOS ANGELES



The SEIU Latino Caucus took over SEIU 721's parking lot and turned Wilshire Blvd. into a community block party with food, drink and dancing. SEIU recognized the Fight for 15 campaign and honored the minimum wage workers arrested in last month's strikes and actions in Central and Downtown L.A. The event drew numerous big-name L.A. elected officials, candidates and community leaders, including Supervisor-elect Hilda Solis, Assemblyman Sebastian Ridley-Thomas, L.A. City Councilman Paul Koretz, Compton Mayor Aja Brown, and Los Angeles Labor Federation President María Elana Durazo.



Los Angeles Supervisor-elect Hilda Solis and her husband, Sam Sayyad.



City Councilman Paul Koretz addresses a pumped up crowd of 721 members and Fight for 15 activists.



Assemblyman Anthony Rendon, SEIU International Executive Vice President Rocío Sáenz, and Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez.



Bob Schoonover and Michael Green pose for a photo with some of the powerful women of SEIU 721 before the Latino Caucus event.



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### Per Diem Employees at Riverside County Regional Medical Center Vote to Join 721

*After several years of stop and start negotiations with Riverside County, Per Diem workers at Riverside County Regional Medical Center (RCRMC) and Inpatient Treatment Facilities (ITF) finally won the right to organize. Workers voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday, Sept. 23 to join SEIU Local 721.*

## SEIU 721 AFRICAN AMERICAN CAUCUS AND MAYOR AJA BROWN SPONSOR COMPTON JOB FAIR



*As part of Get Compton Working Week, SEIU 721's African American Caucus and Compton Mayor Aja Brown co-sponsored a job fair at the Compton Community Center that drew 400 job seekers and more than 50 employers — some looking to hire as many as 50 employees. Earlier in the week, job seekers participated in workshops on resumé preparation, interview skills, expungement and other important skills. Private employers from transportation, healthcare, security, professional services, hospitality, high tech and other industries attended, as well as federal, state, county and municipal agencies.*



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721 President Bob Schoonover and Vice President Linda Dent marching with fast food and other minimum wage workers as part of the Fight For 15 campaign. Winning the Fight for 15 will create 64,000 new jobs, improve health and quality of life for Angelenos and build important alliances for public employees.

## 5 Ways the Fight for 15 Helps All of Los Angeles

**I**f you are trying to live and raise a family in Los Angeles on the minimum wage, it's obvious how increasing it to \$15 will make a difference in your life. But here are five reasons 721 members and everyone in L.A. should support the "Fight for 15," even if they make substantially more.

### **The Gap Between the Richest and Poorest Angelenos is Huge**

The richest Angelenos bring in an average of \$218,000 a year, earning 12 times more than the bottom 20 percent of households, according to a new study by the Brookings Institution. Three-quarters of L.A.'s workforce earns less in today's dollars than workers 30 years ago.

### **The Fight For 15 Improves L.A. Community Health**

Because so many 721 members deliver safety net services, we see firsthand how the gap between rich and poor is literally making Angelenos sick. In the early 1980s, wealthy Americans in the top 10 percent lived 2.8 years longer than poor ones in the bottom 10 percent, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. By the 90s, the rich were living 4.5 years longer and the gap is still widening. Increasing the pay of the poorest Angelenos gives immediate access to better food, health care, and educational opportunities.

### **The Fight for 15 Increases the Power of Working People**

As the superrich in our society buy up newspapers and television stations, make massive contributions to political campaigns, and fund efforts to dismantle unions, they gain more control over our lives. The Fight for 15 puts power back in the hands of working people.

### **The Fight for 15 Kickstarts the Local Economy**

A \$15 L.A. minimum wage would create more than 64,000 new jobs, according to a new Economic Roundtable study. Right now, nearly 46 percent of L.A.'s workforce — nearly 810,000 workers — earns less than \$15 an hour. \$15 an hour means \$7.6 billion in additional purchasing power right here, right now.

### **The Fight For 15 Protects Fair Pay and Retirement Security**

Last month, thousands of L.A. public employees marched with minimum wage workers and community groups to demand \$15 an hour. Now, many of these groups are supporting our fight for fair contracts in L.A. City and, soon, L.A. County.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

