

SEIU 721

# PRESIDENT'S

# REPORT

March 2015



## 721 SCORES VICTORIES IN SEVERAL KEY RACES

### WINNING FOR WORKERS BY ELECTING THE BOSS



LA Councilman José Huizar speaks at Fix LA rally. 721 helped Huizar win re-election in a landslide.

**E**arlier this month, SEIU 721 members racked up some key wins in a host of Southern California races, winning in 15 of the 19 contests where we made endorsements.

So why does this matter to our members? Just like with external organizing, activism in politics can have a direct impact on workers' jobs, wages, benefits and working conditions. This is doubly true with public employees. It's not an exaggeration to say that public employees elect their boss when they win campaigns. Turning your back on politics as a public worker is giving up a key source of leverage with elected officials who directly determine how much money is spent to deliver public services and compensate the workers who provide them.

It's tempting to throw up your hands and say "all politicians are the same," but it's simply not true. That's why it's so important to endorse and support — with contributions, phone banks, precinct walking and other actions — the candidates committed to investing in education and quality public services

and willing to take on the richest corporations and individuals and get them to pay their fair share.

LA City Councilman José Huizar's recent landslide victory is great example. After the revelation that big Wall Street banks gouged the City of LA, leading the city to cut basic services, Huizar took them on publicly. He supports raising LA's minimum wage to \$15 for all workers and he wants to restore service cuts. Our union endorsed him, contributed to him, and put in more than 1,800 volunteer hours of phone banking and precinct walking, ensuring his victory.

The same type of story played out in wins for 721-endorsed candidates and measures in other races, thanks to the time spent by leaders, members and staff on town halls, candidate interviews and on the campaign trail.

**Bob Schoonover, President**



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## LA COUNTY BARGAINING KICK-OFF SEIU 721 MEMBERS MEET TO PLAN STRATEGY



SEIU 721 Vice President Linda Dent leads a strategy discussion with 721 members at the kick-off for the 2015 LA County contract campaign.



## EXPOSING HOW CUTS HURT LA CITY



Donning giant band-aids to symbolize where the city hurts most, the Fix LA coalition on February 10th mobilized thousands of workers, clergy and community residents from the San Fernando Valley to the San Pedro Bay to expose how city management's decision to short staff departments, turn over public services to private, for-profit corporations and slash budgets have resulted in trash pileups, broken sidewalks, neglected parks, untrimmed trees, unguarded school intersections, and the threat of pollution in city waterways.

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### INLAND AREA MEMBERS GET INVOLVED SAN JACINTO MEMBERS VOTE TO SAVE CITY SERVICES CITY OF INDIO MEMBERS CHOOSE THEIR BARGAINING TEAM



*San Jacinto 721 members (left) voted to support Measure A, a new utility tax on the May 2015 city ballot. Budget cuts have forced the city to close parks and community centers, stop serving meals to seniors and lay off seven 721 members. Members are taking a proactive approach and hope the new 5 percent tax, which is earmarked for public services, will help stave off further cuts. City of Indio members (right) don 721 hats after voting to select bargaining team alternates. Indio members begin bargaining later this month.*

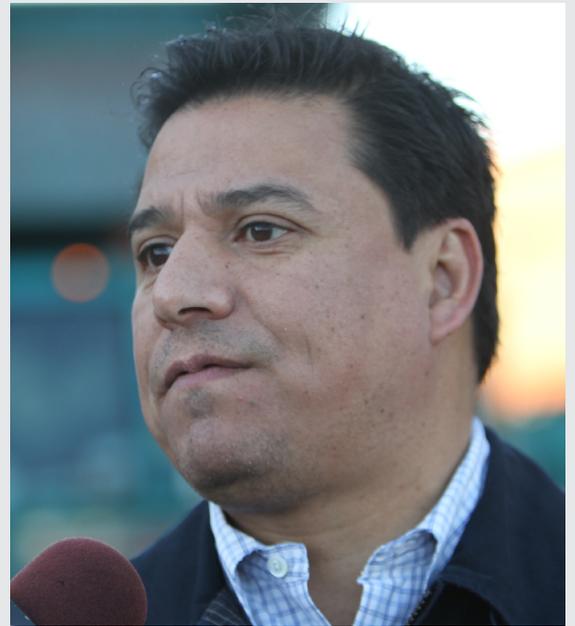
### 721 TRI-COUNTIES CHAPTER CUTS RIBBON ON SANTA MARIA OFFICE, TRI-COUNTIES REGIONAL CENTER MEMBERS RATIFY NEW CONTRACT



*SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover cuts the ribbon on the new SEIU 721 Santa Maria office with Santa Barbara Chapter President Eddie Ozeta (left); SEIU 721 members at the Tri-Counties Regional Center office in Oxnard (right) vote last month on a new contract. Members voted by 95 percent to approve the new contract, which provides raises, improvements in bi-lingual pay and cell phone reimbursements, and Cesar Chavez Day off.*

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# BUILDING POWER FOR WORKERS ON THE JOB, IN THE STREETS AND AT THE BALLOT



Building power for workers today means taking action on the job, in the streets, and at the ballot. Fix LA action with neighborhood and community partners (left); SEIU 721-endorsed candidate LA Councilman José Huizar, who won the primary in a landslide with heavy SEIU 721 support.

It's been a busy month at the "Grand Central Station of Campaigns," as we like to call SEIU 721.

The good news, the trains are running with no derailments: We've put some heat on the boss in the City of L.A. campaign and scored some big victories on the ballot.

In the City of L.A. contract campaign, worksite organizers and LA City members turned up the pressure with more than 80 separate "March on the Boss" actions at various worksites.

In the middle of February, the Fix LA campaign, our alliance of more than two dozen Labor and neighborhood groups, took to the streets to expose how LA city management has harmed the city's environment and quality of life by slashing budgets, short staffing departments and turning over public services to irresponsible for-profit contractors.

The same day, LA City Councilman José Huizar joined Fix LA at the city's vehicle maintenance yard to publicize

how short staffing — the City of LA has lost 1 in 5 of its vehicle mechanics — has sidelined garbage trucks and may threaten public safety.

SEIU 721 members, impressed by Huizar's activism against toxic deals between big banks and the City of LA and his support for restoring city services, endorsed him and volunteered more than 1,800 hours on phone banks and precinct walks, helping him score a landslide victory in the March 3rd City Council primary election.

Each of these actions took place on a different track, but all were focused on one objective: building power for ordinary working people. Leaders, staff and members are building this power on the job, in the streets and at the ballot box to help leverage better contracts for all 721 members. Take a look inside to see how these and other campaigns are working.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

*Gilda Valdez*

