

SEIU 721

PRESIDENT'S

JULY 2015

REPORT



Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins, Governor Jerry Brown and Senate President Pro Tem Kevin DeLeon

SEIU 721 LOBBYING WINS FUNDING FOR WORKING FAMILIES

It's no surprise a lot of public workers dread budget time. Hiding behind jargon and buried under euphemisms like "budget optimization," "realignment," and "paradigm shift" is the same old story: politicians and managers want frontline public workers to do more with less. They want them to help the most vulnerable in our communities and they want them to do it with smaller budgets, fewer workers, bigger caseloads and heavier workloads.

That's why, every year, SEIU 721 members and other public workers from around California make the trek to Sacramento to remind our elected legislators about the importance of the work we do — and sometimes they hear us.

While public employees and the services they provide continue to be a target of budget cuts, SEIU 721 and other public sector locals secured some victories for working families in this year's budget:

- Members in the Health Facilities Inspection Division, tasked with inspecting and licensing all clinics, hospitals, and nursing homes, won a 50 percent increase in staffing.

- Eligibility Workers in Los Angeles County and several other counties — some of whom face caseloads ten times larger than a few years ago — won funding for increased staffing. LA County, alone, will add 245 new positions.
- Through our Health4All coalition, SEIU 721 and other public workers led the fight to win an additional \$40 million for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits for low-income children, regardless of immigration status.
- With its coalition partners, SEIU 721 and other public workers secured an additional \$17.8 million for Relative and Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, and Support. This funding will help relatives caring for kin and keep families together.

You don't have to dress them up in fancy buzzwords, these are big wins delivered by SEIU 721 members and their allies.

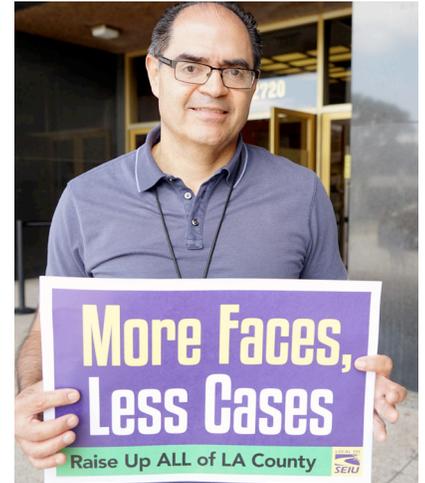
Bob Schoonover, President

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ELIGIBILITY WORKERS TACKLE CASELOAD CRISIS



Worker Actions Force 245 New Hires

“It’s Humanly Impossible for Each DPSS Worker to Serve More than 3,000 Families”

Meeting with an eligibility worker is the first step in accessing vital services, like health care, for tens of thousands of LA families. But the recession, wage stagnation in LA, and a tidal wave of signups for the Affordable Care Act have overwhelmed the system to the point each eligibility worker is expected to serve up to 3,000 families. LA County DPSS workers fought back, taking their demand for “More Faces, Less Cases” to managers, top brass and, finally, the LA Board of Supervisors on June 22nd. Their actions paid off when DPSS Director Sheryl Spiller committed to adding 245 additional eligibility workers by July, with more to come.

LA COUNTY BARGAINING UPDATE

Members Reject Wage Increase Proposal as Insufficient



SEIU 721 LA County members, who have been bargaining for nearly a year, rejected a 7 percent wage increase over 2 years. “SEIU members made sacrifices during the recession. Now that the County’s financial condition has improved, we need to catch up. The County’s salary proposal doesn’t cut it,” said Linda Dent, SEIU 721 Bargaining Policy Chair

SEIU 721 Celebrates Mental Health Workers



The First Annual Mental Health Awareness celebration was held June 6th at the LA headquarters of SEIU 721. This event honored the work done by Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and community clinics workers and their contributions to the mental health of our communities.

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INLAND AREA TEAMS TRAIN FOR BARGAINING



Bargaining teams for the County of San Bernardino Professional Unit and Superior Courts recently participated in contract negotiation training led by the SEIU 721 Education and Training department. Both units will begin bargaining in the next few weeks.

During the training, members learned bargaining table decorum and how to prepare proposals, and reviewed contract surveys submitted by their peers. The results will help set bargaining priorities for the teams. They also discussed the financial landscape of San Bernardino County prepared by a member of SEIU 721's research department.

The professional unit already has negotiated ground rules and is now crafting proposals to submit on Aug. 5, the first day of negotiations. The Superior Court team will meet with management on July 23rd to review ground rules.

Representational Win of the Month



SEIU 721 Tri-Counties members and a legal team led by SEIU 721 General Counsel Rebecca Yee convinced Ventura County to withdraw a plan to switch County Benefit Supervisors from salaried positions to hourly jobs, saving their benefits in the process. Congratulations!

LA County Boosts Minimum Wage to \$15 an Hour



Fight for \$15 LA, led by SEIU 721, racked up another stunning victory in July as the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors voted July 21st to raise LA County's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020. Watch for the next President's Report for complete coverage of this historic victory.

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MEMBERSHIP KEY TO BUILDING WORKERS' POWER

SEIU 721 Launches Drives to Sign Up New Members in the Face of Anti-Worker Attacks in the Courts

To protect workers against a wave of anti-worker lawsuits filed by ultra-conservative think tanks, SEIU 721 last month launched a new effort to ensure that every 721 member is officially signed up to take advantage of the protections and benefits provided by full, official membership in our union.

SEIU 721 is laser-focused on protecting members because a small group of huge corporations and super-rich individuals is investing heavily in sophisticated strategies to increase its own wealth and political power. Their objective is to cut taxes and keep workers' wages low. To accomplish this, they're trying to cripple existing public employee unions and prevent workers from forming new ones. One of their favorite tactics is filing wave after wave of lawsuits that interfere with the ability of workers to form and maintain strong unions.

That's why last month, worksite organizers — all with new training in how best to explain the rights and privileges full members enjoy — fanned out to worksites all over the SEIU 721 territory to ensure that all workers eligible to be 721 members are correctly signed up as full members.

Official members are receiving an updated packet explaining what SEIU 721 has to offer and and four key members-only benefits:

- 1. Winning and Protecting Good Contracts** — Union members set priorities for bargaining, participate in the negotiating process and vote on agreements.
- 2. Helping Elect Leaders and Pass Laws that Protect Workers and Build Strong Communities** — Union members have a direct say in how the union's resources are used. They set the

priorities for which laws and policies — like the \$15 an hour LA minimum wage — the union promotes and vote on candidates to endorse in political races.

- 3. Securing a Voice in the Workplace** — Union members have a right to representation in the workplace.

Weingarten Rights, named after the landmark Supreme Court case protecting them, guarantee that union members may have a union representative present in conversations with a boss that could lead to discipline or termination.

- 4. Access to Valuable Discounts** — SEIU 721 members have access to a range of valuable members-only benefits, like discounted insurance, legal services, and loans.

SEIU 721 is committed to building power for everyday people so workers can level the playing field against bad bosses, powerful government agencies, huge corporations and the richest people in American society.

This means generating the resources for lawyers who go to court to protect pensions, worksite organizers who block wrongful terminations, researchers and negotiators who help win good contracts and the many other tools and tactics we use to fight back to protect the 99 percent of Americans trying to play by the rules and build a decent life. We're proud of the work we do and we're ready to make our case.

We think that membership equals worker strength, and we know new members will, too.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

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