

SEIU 721 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

JUNE 2017



DEFENDING WORKERS IN THE AGE OF TRUMP

How the SEIU 721 Representational Excellence Program helps our members protect their rights

We've all seen the story time and time again of the kid picked on by the neighborhood bully who, after taking a self-defense class, fights back and wins.

With the biggest neighborhood bully of all sitting in the White House, SEIU Local 721 is putting together self-defense classes of our own for workers. One kind is the all-day Unity Summit we're organizing for July 22nd at Saint Sophia Cathedral in Central L.A. Another is our union's Representational Excellence Program.

What the Representational Excellence Program does is ensure that member leaders and stewards have a working knowledge of members' union and contractual rights and know how to work seamlessly with worksite organizers, Member Connection organizers and other union staff to protect them.

It's clear that, under the Trump administration, we can't depend on the Department of Labor to watch out for workers and protect them from abusive employers. This month, Labor Secretary Alex Acosta took the first steps to dismantle new overtime pay guarantees that will affect millions of workers. In this environment, it's critical that stewards understand basic contract language and how to enforce it, standard procedures for discipline and grievances and group issues and key union rights under state and federal law.

This is a key reason SEIU 721 has worked hard to ensure that all workers covered under contracts bargained by our local understand the protections and privileges provided by full membership in our union. Two key examples are Weingarten and Skelly rights.

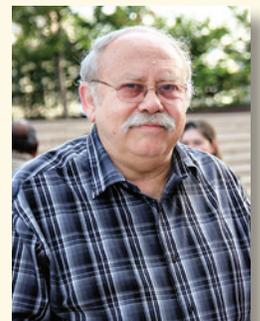
Named after the 1975 Supreme Court case that upheld the National Labor Relations Board decision that created them, Weingarten rights say employees have a right to union representation at investigatory interviews. The court also ruled the employer must either delay questioning until a union representative arrives and the representative has a chance to consult privately with the employee, or end the interview.

Skelly rights, named after the 1975 California Supreme Court case *Skelly v. State Personnel Board* that upheld them, guarantee public employees in California the right to due process in disciplinary hearings that could result in the loss of a job or a suspension. The Skelly decision and other California case law requires employers to notify an employee about a pending disciplinary action, provide a copy of the charges and supporting materials on which the action is based and give the employee the opportunity to respond orally or in writing to the charges.

The Representational Excellence program also teaches stewards how to resolve everything from minor workplace grievances to major contract violations. Understanding our rights under our contracts and knowing how to use the resources of our union to enforce them — our attorneys, advocates, communicators, etc. — can make a huge difference in the lives of our members. Like Kenneth Milton, a Ventura County General Services worker who took on the tile-laying job of an injured co-worker in addition to his own and won six weeks of back pay after he advocated with the help of our union. Or the Children's Social Workers at the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services who received retroactive raises after members discovered a computer glitch had improperly delayed scheduled promotions.

Providing excellent representation to our members takes preparation and a focus on the nuts and bolts of contracts and labor law. It isn't as flashy as a huge street action, but it makes a difference in the lives of our members. Now that the biggest bully of all is living in the White House, workers need to know how to defend themselves.

Bob Schooner



VISIT US AT WWW.SEIU721.ORG TO LEARN HOW TO GET INVOLVED

BARGAINING ENDS VICTORIOUSLY WITH STRONG CONTRACT AT L.A. COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS



It's official! The men and women of L.A. County Sanitation Districts, BU 500, Blue Collar have negotiated for a new five-year contract that will include salary increases and an array of other bonuses. During the tentative agreement voting process, members of this "open shop" overwhelmingly opted to support the contract. Ballots were cast at Sanitation Districts sites throughout L.A. County – from the Antelope Valley to the San Gabriel Valley all the way to the JWPCP in Carson. The SEIU bargaining team negotiated firmly for a fair contract that all members could support. The new contract provides a 3% COLA increase every year for five years, early STEP increase for new employees, binding arbitration, new certification/license pay, a new boot allowance, a new wellness bonus and a new medical opt-out bonus. The new contract, which was ratified by the L.A. County Sanitation Districts Board of Directors at their June meeting, takes effect on July 1 and lasts through 2022. Many thanks to bargaining team members Derek Holland, Eric Mitchell and Ruben Rios for their incredible teamwork, and many thanks to the members of BU 500, Blue Collar for standing strong to protect members' earnings and retirement. **Together, we win!**

SEIU 721 Celebrates Juneteenth

JUNETEENTH, FROM BROKEN CHAINS TO A NEW REIGN

"It's time to revitalize and it's time to re-liberate. It's time to vote, it's time to register," said Reverend William Smart during the prayer section of the SEIU 721 Juneteenth program at the California African American Museum.

SEIU 721 members, elected officials, and community members were decked out in traditional African attire to enjoy an evening of celebration and remembrance.

The mood was electric as the evening charged up with the amazing Sarah Anindo Marshall and ADAWE African dancers, a live DJ, and musical selections by Vision. These rich cultural performances served to remind us that despite attacks meant to divide us and undervalue our worth, art and music continue to connect us and inspire us to resist.

Keynote speaker Dr. Aminah Bakeer Abdul-Jabbaar, Assistant Professor of Pan-African Studies at Cal State L.A., gave a presentation on the African American's role in American cinema and how African American labor has been devalued over time. From D.W. Griffith's racist film "The Birth of a Nation" to Hattie McDaniel in "Gone with the Wind," Dr. Abdul-Jabbaar showed how African American labor has been historically devalued while subservience is rewarded.

The more we learn about the history of our country and our cultural art forms, the more tools we have to resist.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. This was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

SEIU 721 is grateful for the support of Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer in securing the location for this year's celebration.



Bob Schoonover with City of Compton Mayor Aja Brown



From left to right: Laphonza Butler, President of SEIU Local 2015, Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer, Linda Dent, Vice President SEIU Local 721

MARCHES ON BOSS



For the past several weeks SEIU Local 721 has pushed the County of Riverside to establish a fair contract for county workers. Through actions at countless worksites across the county, SEIU Local 721's March on the Bosses has pushed the county to withdraw their agenda of reckless cuts to employee benefits, and has kept the pressure on, asking the county to stop all the takeaways they're still proposing.

After pressure from SEIU Local 721, the County withdrew its proposal to eliminate both the Flex Benefits cash back and subsidies for current employees, and the opt-out option for Flex Benefits. This is a huge step in the right direction, but the county is still proposing a number of cuts. Riverside County is attempting to balance the budget at the cost of frontline workers and the communities we serve. Members at Riverside County Regional Medical Center, 3950 Reynolds DPSS, DPSS La Sierra and Indio CPS have all personally delivered the resounding message to their bosses to cut the contract delays and stand with frontline workers.

The unity and constant pressure have started to have an impact. On June 21st our brothers and sisters at DPSS in Perris led their own peaceful "March on the Boss" during their break time and were illegally retaliated against by two Regional Managers. The managers tried to intimidate them by telling them they were going to be written up and disciplined. What the managers did is illegal. Management cannot conduct surveillance against you, threaten or intimidate you, nor retaliate. Under Federal Law, you have every right to engage in concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining, such as winning a contract that raises up Riverside County. The SEIU bargaining team immediately filed Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges against the County for interfering with, restraining and coercing employees for exercising their union rights. This is a sign that we are gaining momentum and management is cracking under our pressure.

This is only the beginning. For the next several weeks SEIU Local 721 members will be leading actions at worksites throughout the County to finally bring home a contract that raises up workers and the communities we serve. Contact your worksite organizer at 951-571-7700 to report any illegal activity by management and to plan a "March on the Boss" at your worksite.

UNITY SUMMIT



Recommit
with our Union
brothers and sisters

Rise up
and fight the good fight

Resist
to protect our community
and our country



Saturday, July 22, 2017 • 9 am to 4 pm
Saint Sophia Cathedral
1324 S. Normandie Ave., L.A. 90006

Seating is limited. RSVP and confirmation required.
To RSVP, call (877) 721-4968.

"We do these things not because they are easy but because they are hard."

— JFK

FACULTY TURN UP THE HEAT AT USC'S INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

In negotiations for a landmark first contract, faculty are fighting to restore the promise of higher education at Los Angeles' largest private employer.

Since organizing to join SEIU 721 last year, faculty at the University of Southern California's International Academy have been in the midst of bargaining for an historic first contract that sets the gold standard for faculty and students.

The negotiations by the USC International faculty come on the heels of a hard-fought organizing campaign that energized instructors and students, and transformed the conversation around academic work at Los Angeles' largest private employer. The landslide victory in favor of organizing sent shockwaves through the campus, with over 92% voting in favor of joining SEIU 721. Shortly after, faculty began the process of bargaining for a new, strong contract that puts student and faculty needs first.

Already, faculty have introduced a number of comprehensive proposals that stabilize work schedules, create clear paths for advancement and instructor retention, and reform antiquated evaluation structures to reflect the priorities of a 21st century classroom.

Through their hard work, the International Academy team have been able to put the needs of faculty and students front and center, and with big victories on the horizon, faculty show no signs of stopping.



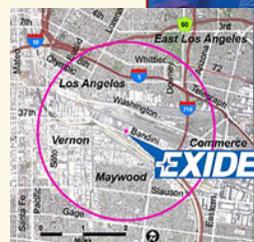
'Let's Talk About Exide'

SEIU 721 MEMBERS GO DOOR-TO-DOOR IN SOUTHEAST L.A. TO FIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

In Southeast L.A. County sits the Exide battery recycling plant, a symbol of environmental injustice. For decades the plant has polluted the surrounding area, affecting the health of locals and the environment. As public sector workers, SEIU Local 721 members care deeply about the health of the communities they serve – so on Saturday, June 10th, we teamed up with L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis and the L.A. County Health Agency to walk door-

to-door in a "Let's Talk About Exide" outreach effort. Teams of SEIU Local 721 members and other volunteers went door-to-door throughout communities in Southeast L.A. County – including Bell, Boyle Heights, Commerce, Maywood, East L.A., Huntington Park and Vernon – and talked with residents affected by decades

of pollution from the Exide battery recycling plant, which is located in Vernon. As they knocked doors, our volunteers helped connect people to the myriad health and social services that SEIU Local 721 members proudly deliver. For information on Exide-related blood lead testing, soil testing and property clean-up, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/exide/>.



OUR HARD WORK PAID OFF!

We knocked on doors, made calls, and helped get voters to the polls for our endorsed candidates. The communities we call home matter too much to sit out these elections – and it was vital to get out the vote for those candidates who stand with workers and our families.

We have elected women and men who will fight for households like yours and mine. We work hard, and we live up to our values. We are proud to support leaders who do the same.

#TogetherWeWin



SEIU 721 VICTORY!
Endorsed & Elected:



Jimmy Gomez
Congressional District 34



Aja Brown
City of Compton Mayor



Tana McCoy
Compton City Council District 3



Andy Melendez
City of Riverside Ward 2



Jim Perry
City of Riverside Ward 6

Together We Will Raise Up
All Working Families!
#TogetherWeWin



E-BOARD DEFENDING THE UNION



In the face of looming attacks on Union Workers, E-Board is fighting back. Attacks on Unions have been targeting our collective voice and the gains for which we've fought so hard: good pay, health benefits, pensions, paid sick leave, and paid vacation. E-Board held a three-day retreat at the end of June, where they geared up for the upcoming Unity Summit and rolled up their sleeves to protect fellow Union members. They are working to ensure that members can continue to protect themselves from unsafe or unfair working conditions, bully bosses, and unfair write-ups and firings. Unions may be under attack, but we're prepared to protect our members and defend the advances we've made.

City of Thousand Oaks – TOCEA/SEIU 721

CONGRATULATIONS – WE DID IT!

With a 98% YES vote City of Thousand Oaks members won a strong two year contract which includes wage increases and health/cafeteria gains

Through your unity and participation your bargaining team was able to win a contract that secures vital services for Thousand Oaks and provides solid gains that help your family keep up with cost of living increases.

The new Agreement includes:

- ▶ 5.5% salary increases over the term of the contract are a good win for our families. (2.75% in 2017, 2.75% in 2018)
- ▶ Gains in our health and cafeteria plan
- ▶ Employee's review and merit increases
- ▶ Improvement in Out-of-class assignment pay increase
- ▶ Improvements in bereavement leave
- ▶ Improved life insurance coverage
- ▶ Increase in vacation cap
- ▶ Gains in union rights to make our collective voice stronger



Thousand Oaks Bargaining Team Jason Siegert, Juan Cervantez, Mike Gildroy, Drew Cronin

Next steps

The City Council will vote on the agreement at the July 11th City Council meeting.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE KICKS IN AND BOOSTS L.A. WORKERS

As we went to press, the minimum wage increases were kicking in a number of California cities, including an increase to \$14 an hour in San Francisco on the way to \$15 next year, and a raise to between \$10.50 and \$12, in the City of Los Angeles, depending on the size of the business. The minimum wage will hit \$15 for all L.A. County businesses by 2021 and all California businesses by 2022.

It all began with SEIU 721's successful Fight for \$15 in Los Angeles when, in the wake of the massive street actions in the Summer of 2015, the L.A. City Council and the L.A. Board of Supervisors adopted historic minimum wage increase legislation. The California State Assembly and Senate soon followed and, in March of 2016, Governor Brown signed the law raising California's hourly minimum wage to \$15 by 2022.

While the new law will provide a raise for up to a half a million Angelenos this weekend, there is still much to do for workers around the country. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour, and Congress hasn't raised it in 10 years.





RECOGNITION FROM THE L.A. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On June 20, 2017, L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis honored 22 members of SEIU Local 721 for a Lifetime of Service working for the Health Information Management (HIM) Division of the Department of Health Services. Each of these 22 members has 40 years or more on the job. They prove that the best judgment comes from the marriage of professional experience and personal wisdom.

Sup. Solis' fellow board members and Dr. Mitch Katz, the Director of the L.A. County Health Agency joined Sup. Solis in honoring these 22 members. In his remarks, Dr. Katz noted that it was the on-the-job acquired knowledge of HIM veterans in the room that made it possible for DHS to clear out a warehouse of paper medical records so DHS could provide better care to patients — and saving taxpayers \$500,000 annually!

The Supervisors and Dr. Katz have devoted a great deal of time, energy and resources to integrating the Departments of Health Services, Public Health and Mental Health into one Health Agency capable of meeting the needs of the over 10 million Los Angeles residents. This work has been made possible thanks to the leadership of SEIU Local 721 members and the partnership our Local enjoys with UAPD, CIR, AFSCME, the Teamsters and County management.

- Rosa Aguirre**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1975.
- Patty Baucham**, from Juvenile Court Health Services, began working for LA County DHS in 1976.
- Gregory Betton**, from Harbor/UCLA, began working for LA County DHS in 1973.
- Willie Bryant**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1971.
- Lillian Cabral**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1978.
- Felipe Chavez**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1972.
- Maria De Jesus Garcia**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1978.
- Miguel Garcia**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1972.
- Michael Hall**, from Harbor/UCLA, began working for LA County DHS in 1973.
- Geniesa Hawkins**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1968.



- Robert Hilty**, from Harbor/UCLA, began working for LA County DHS in 1965.
- Daisy Hoggro**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1974.
- Casey Jones**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1961.
- Susan Knight**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1968.
- Michael London**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1976.
- Edith McGuire**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1968.
- Felix Ozaeta**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1974.
- Deborah Sandiford**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1973.
- Janice Smith**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1973.
- Bonita Sutton**, from Harbor/UCLA, began working for LA County DHS in 1972.
- Robert Torres**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1974.
- Melanie Wilson**, from LAC USC, began working for LA County DHS in 1974.

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“Union Strong means retaining skilled individuals who provide consistent services to our communities. Thank you to all for your years of service.”

— Linda Dent, SEIU 721 Vice-President



BUILDING FORTRESS CALIFORNIA

COPE VICTORIES WILL PROTECT WORKERS' RIGHTS

The election of Donald Trump and the rise of ultra-conservatives in Washington, D.C., have ushered in dark days for American workers, communities of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community and many others.

Conservatives in Congress and a cabinet stocked with billionaires and ultra-conservative anti-worker activists are trying to roll back the Affordable Care Act and dismantle Medicaid. New Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch is leading the charge on a variety of conservative causes and is expected to vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and dismantle the right of workers to form unions. And the White House is working overtime on a host of anti-immigrant policies.

But while the White House threatens to build a physical wall between the U.S. and Mexico, we can use COPE to maintain California as political fortress to protect workers and other vulnerable communities from these misguided policies.

SEIU Local 721 COPE pools the resources of our members — our knowledge of local communities, our relationships, our volunteer time and our contributions — and puts them to work electing candidates for local, state and federal candidates here in California who'll vote to protect the

interests of working families. Last year, we campaigned hard for and won races up and down the ballot, including helping to elect Kamala Harris to the U.S. Senate, passing Proposition 55 on the statewide ballot to secure funding for schools, and defeating misguided Charter Amendment RRR in the City of Los Angeles. Of the 113 races in which we endorsed for federal, state and local candidates and ballot measures, we won in 81 — an incredible 72% win rate.

This June, we campaigned for and helped elect Jimmy Gomez to Congress in the 34th District. In Compton, we helped elect Aja Brown Mayor and Tonja Brown to City Council. In the City of Riverside, we helped elect Andy Melendez and Jim Perry to City Council.

Up and down the ballot and all over California, SEIU 721 COPE is helping make the difference for candidates and on issues that will make a difference for workers. The ultra-right may be attacking workers, but we're building a fortress here in California.

Gilda Valdez

