

SEIU 721

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

AUGUST 2017



Rise and Resist!



FIGHT THE PHONY "RIGHT TO WORK"

THIS LABOR DAY, LET'S COME TOGETHER TO FIGHT "RIGHT TO WORK"

Over Labor Day weekend, we come together to honor Labor — to recognize the sacrifices and celebrate the victories of generations of working people across the country and around the world.

Today, working families are under constant attack by anti-worker politicians, greedy corporations, and the superrich. Why? Because they fear the collective power we build when we organize. That's because unions are delivering results for workers across the United States:

- The Fight for \$15 already has won raises for 22 million workers. Our union, SEIU 721, began the fight in Los Angeles, winning a pathway to \$15 for all Californians by 2022.
- SEIU's Fight for \$15 campaign caused the National Labor Relations Board to put an end to deceptive subcontracting schemes meant to make it more difficult for fast food workers to organize.

- SEIU and other unions are working to raise standards for Uber, Lyft, and other ride sharing companies.
- Adjunct professors and graduate students are forming unions and joining SEIU at campuses around California and across the country.

When workers raise their collective voice through a union, they can accomplish the unthinkable. The greedy few know this. That's why they are putting up structural barriers to forming unions. Today, 28 states have "Right to Work laws" aimed at decimating unions and silencing workers.

As we come together to celebrate our wins, let's also recommit to Rise and Resist phony "right to work" laws and step up to fight for the rights of all workers.

Bob Schoonover

Bob Schoonover, President



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ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Riverside SEIU 721 Members Give Strike Notice After a Year of Management Stonewalling, Bad-Faith Bargaining and Worker Surveillance



Riverside emergency room nurse Terri Lopez describes how county management has refused workers' pleas for better security in county hospitals.

After a year of stonewalling, worker harassment and unfair labor practices by county management, Riverside County SEIU 721 members have had enough. On August 29th, 721 members marched on the Riverside Board of Supervisors and issued a formal notice for a countywide strike. Worker after

worker took the mic to blast county supervisors for refusing to improve security at county hospitals and mental health facilities. Supervisors said cost concerns prevented them from installing metal detectors and hiring full-time security but then voted to spend \$40 million on Dutch management consultants KPMG.

RIVERSIDE WORKERS PICKET UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES



Hundreds of workers across Riverside County joined informational picket lines in August to protest county management's unfair labor practices.

Since labor talks began with Riverside County 14 months ago, SEIU Local 721-represented frontline workers have filed 19 Unfair Practice Charges (UPCs) against the County, from bad-faith bargaining, harassment and surveillance of workers protesting security problems in county hospitals and mental health clinics, and withholding critical information on the County's financial dealings.

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Workers Speak Out for California Clean Energy

SEIU 721's Environmental Team Urges Support for SB 100



SEIU 721 joined a broad coalition of elected officials, health advocates and environmental leaders in support of SB 100, a bill by California Senator Kevin de Leon that will ensure that California generates 100% of its electricity from clean energy sources by 2045.

On August 28th, Keenan Sheedy, co-chair of 721's Environmental Justice Committee, spoke at a news conference in support of SB 100, telling

attendees who gathered on the steps of City Hall that the importance of the bill could not be overstated.

"Thousands of California health care and public service workers speak with one voice—we need 100% renewable, pollution-free energy for our public health, for our communities, for our children," he said.

Governor Appoints 721 Member to Key Mental Health Board

Dr. Keyondria Bunch of LA County Department of Mental Health Appointed to Key Oversight Body

Keyondria D. Bunch, 39, of Los Angeles, has been appointed to the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. Bunch has been a clinical psychologist for the Emergency Outreach Bureau at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health since 2016, where she has served in several positions since 2008, including clinical psychologist for the Specialized Foster Care Van Nuys Co-Located Program, clinical psychologist for juvenile justice mental health quality assurance and a clinical psychologist for Valley Coordinated Children's Services.



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Hundreds Pack St. John's Forum, Pledge to Keep Fighting for ACA



Successful Efforts to Prevent Repeal of the ACA Encourage Activists to Keep Up the Fight

If you think the Affordable Care Act is safe following Congress' failed attempts to repeal and replace, think again.

That was the message from SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover and other officials who spoke at a community forum on August 15 to celebrate National Healthcare Center Week.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra and officials from St. John's Well Child and Family Center joined Schoonover at the town hall, which was held at Los Angeles Trade Technical College.

Hundreds gathered for the forum, many of them waving colorful placards with health-related images and the words "More Care, Not Less."

"Healthcare is a human right and until every single one of us has the healthcare we deserve, we're not going to stop fighting for that right!," Schoonover said.

He said the recent success in thwarting congressional efforts to repeal the ACA were encouraging and showed the powerful results of members putting in countless hours of calls and letters to show

our representatives what we want done. It's more proof, he said, that when we fight we indeed win, but he warned the crowd not to get complacent because, "the fight isn't over."

"Trumpcare means less healthcare, fewer people covered, more people in emergency room – it costs a lot more and it's a lot less effective," he said.

The SEIU president told the story of Local 721 nurse practitioner Jenny Urzua, who shared her journey of caring for a patient with pervasive cancer. Her patient was able to enroll in a clinical trial that would have been closed to her before the Medi-Cal expansion and without the ACA, her diagnosis would likely have been a death sentence.

"It's patients and families like this young mother who were in our hearts as SEIU fought for the Affordable Care Act. It's these most vulnerable patients—the sick, the poor, the disabled—who we are committing to in the long, tough fight ahead," Schoonover said. "We will do what it takes to protect Medi-Cal from the conservative Republican threat in Washington D.C."

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SEIU 721 Leads the Charge at Just Culture Town Hall



L.A. County Health Care Workers Encouraged to Stand Up and Speak Out to Improve County System

SEIU 721 members are leading the charge towards our vision of a Just Culture at the L.A. County Health Agency.

On August 30th, SEIU 721 members, a coalition of unions and L.A. County Health Agency managers who are ready to make positive changes in the county's health care system came together for the "A Just Culture for All" town hall at the Health Agency office in L.A.

The Town Hall was about empowerment, and we're leading the charge!

"Every single one of you—whether you're seeing patients, working with spreadsheets or keeping equipment running—is empowered to make L.A. County Health Agency facilities run safer and more smoothly," said SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover.

"Don't be afraid to speak up! Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself!" Schoonover continued.

Through Just Culture, SEIU 721 members are building a health

agency environment that respects and empowers every employee.

"Just Culture means 'Be Kind, Be Fair.' No blame games. We should not fear coming to work and doing our jobs. No more blaming individuals for systemic errors," said Alina Mendizabal, SEIU 721 Executive Board member and L.A. County Community Health Plan Marketing Representative.

In order for Just Culture to work, there must be buy-in from all key stakeholders at different levels. Managers and Directors from across the Health Agency joined in on the Town Hall to show their commitment and support.

"The only way we understand how things can and do go wrong is by creating a culture where staff feel comfortable telling supervisors what can go or has gone wrong," said Dr. Mitch Katz, Director of the LA County Health Agency.

Hundreds of SEIU 721 members also joined the Town Hall remotely from sites across L.A. County via Skype.

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SEIU 721 Members Fight For Us At The Capitol

MEMBERS TRAVEL TO SACRAMENTO TWICE IN AUGUST TO LOBBY FOR TRANSPARENCY IN CONTRACTING AND BAIL REFORM

SEIU 721 members traveled to Sacramento twice in August to lobby for bills vital to California working families. On Aug 21, members lobbied for AB 1250, which would restrict counties' abilities to enter into pay-to-play contracts with contractors and consultants. On August 23, members advocated for SB 10, which would reform California's bail system and base pretrial release on a comprehensive risk assessment, instead of cash bail.

SEIU 721 Members at LAC+USC Win Back To Back Grievances



The dedicated members and stewards of SEIU 721 BU 729 showed the power of our union by winning two major grievances in August.

When management at LAC+USC denied employees the right to use vacation time for sick time, our members stood up and fought back, filing a grievance showing how existing policy guarantees the right to use vacation, compensatory time off or holiday time to cover an illness or injury. Now, BU 729 members can use any accrued leave in lieu of sick time - without prior management approval.

BU 729's second victory brings fairness and transparency to performance evaluations. Repeated complaints from members showed that LAC+USC management was playing fast and loose with performance evaluations, conducting surprise evaluations, downgrading workers without documentation, allowing managers to overrule direct supervisor evaluations and refusing to offer evaluations beyond "competent."

Our members took action and filed a grievance, demanding that performance evaluations be conducted in accordance with policy. As a result, supervisors must now meet with members throughout the evaluation period to discuss ratings and expectations.

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RISE AND RESIST GATHERS STEAM

SEIU Local 721 Members Train on How to Fight “Right to Work” Laws at Second “Rise and Resist” Unity Summit in Downtown L.A.



“Quote from Linda.”

**Linda Dent
Vice President
SEIU 721**



The Rise & Resist movement gathered momentum in August, as L.A. City and L.A. County members gathered for a second Unity Summit in Downtown L.A.

The morning started with a welcome by President Bob Schoonover, who updated everyone on the right-to-work attack — describing how wealthy, anti-union forces are funding it and how their real goal is to fool workers into giving up their collective bargaining power.

“The middle class is going down unless we fight,” President Schoonover said, declaring that the right-to-work attack in Wisconsin — the birthplace of public sector unions — will not happen here.

In 2011, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker signed the infamous “Act 10”, making Wisconsin a right-to-work state and decimating

Wisconsin’s once-proud public sector union membership by 70-80%.

“That’s why it’s so important for all of us to be full, dues-paying members,” Schoonover emphasized. “Politicians need to respect our power or they will take the easy way out.”

Executive Board members Lilian Cabral and Lydia Cabral explained how the right-to-work attack is really a Trojan horse assault by the forces of greed on America’s working families. Executive Board member Valencia Haralson showed how full union membership delivers tangible benefits that keep our members firmly in America’s middle class. Members held various break-out sessions where they swapped stories on how union membership has personally made a difference for them — and many reported afterward that sharing these experiences reinvigorated their commitment to our union.

THE RACIST ROOTS OF RIGHT TO WORK



A mourner lays flowers at the site of the recent white supremacist terror attack in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Anti-Union “Right to Work” Movement Was Founded by Southern White Supremacists

The deadly terror attack by white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia is a reminder that our nation still has a long way to go to address its legacy of slavery and racism.

Emboldened by President Trump’s nativist rhetoric and his reluctance to criticize white supremacists, a new wave of alt-right and neo-nazis is coming out from the shadows to incite violence at rallies all over the U.S.

Shocking images of young men draped in confederate flags, flashing Klu Klux Klan and Nazi salutes dominate cable new, but lurking behind them is an equally insidious group.

The Right to Work movement, which aims to destroy organized labor in the United States, was founded by Southern white supremacists in the 1930s. Right to work groups with financial backing from Southern oil companies and Northern corporations formed to pass laws crippling workers’ ability to organize. Texas businessman and white supremacist leader Vance Muse founded the Christian American Association to stop unions because he feared that they promoted brotherhood across racial lines against the economic interests of big business.

As unions organized factory workers in the 30s and 40s, Southern

conservatives feared that, if unions could unite working class whites and blacks, they would upend the politics of the Jim Crow south.

That’s why in 1947 conservative Southern Democrats joined Northern Republicans to pass the Taft-Hartley Act allowing states to adopt Right to Work legislation.

No one understood the linkage between racism and Right to Work better than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said “We must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘Right to Work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights.”

In the wake of the civil rights era, the Right to Work movement has worked long and hard to clean up its image, creating a network of Washington, D.C. think tanks, hiring high-priced legal talent and hand-picking disgruntled workers to act as plaintiffs in carefully planned lawsuits to spread Right to Work and cripple the Labor Movement. But make no mistake, the modern Right to Work movement may wear a suit and tie and have a law degree, but it can’t hide its racist roots.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

Gilda Valdez

