

SEIU 721

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 2017



RIVERSIDE COUNTY 721 MEMBERS EMERGE FROM STRIKE STRONGER THAN EVER

I am so proud of my brothers and sisters in SEIU 721's Riverside County Chapter — for their courage during their recent historic two-day strike over county management's egregious unfair labor practices and their strength during more than a year of stalemate at the bargaining table beforehand.

Fed up with their foot-dragging, bad-faith bargaining and surveillance and harassment of health care workers trying to improve emergency safety, Riverside County members took the gloves off and exposed the cost of county management's hypocrisy, mismanagement and sweetheart contracting deals.

On September 6th and 7th, thousands of SEIU 721 members picketed Riverside University Health System to highlight management's refusal to protect patients and health care professionals with metal detectors and enhanced security despite

a constant flow of weapons smuggled into county emergency rooms. They marched on the County Administration Center to expose county management's refusal to disclose details of costly failed swap deals with banking giant Wells Fargo and a \$40 million sweetheart consulting contract with Dutch consulting firm KPMG.

Riverside County 721 members' actions drew the attention and support of clergy, hospital patients and all three leading candidates for governor, who joined picket lines and actions. The fight is far from over, but we're stronger than ever.

Bob Schoonover, President

Bob Schoonover



PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2017

FED UP!

After months of bad-faith bargaining, harassment and surveillance by Riverside County management, workers call two-day ULP Strike.



Top candidates for California Governor join striking SEIU 721 Riverside County workers (from left) Antonio Villaraigosa, Gavin Newsom and John Chiang.

After more than a year of stonewalling, worker harassment and unfair labor practices by county management, fed up SEIU 721 Riverside County workers walked off the job on September 6th. The historic two-day unfair labor practice strike garnered the support of the top-three candidates for Governor — State Treasurer John Chiang, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom and former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa — joined thousands of Riverside County workers on picket lines at Riverside University Health System Medical Center and at an action the next day

at the Riverside Board of Supervisors. At RUHS, workers and patients blasted management's refusal to protect them from rising emergency room violence. At the County Administration Center, workers blasted management's refusal to make public details of their financial dealings with Wells Fargo Bank and European Consulting giant KPMG. SEIU 721 Vice President Linda Dent and union members from the region met returning workers on September 8th to offer support and coaching on union rights. They encouraged returning workers to immediately report any retaliation.

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SEIU 721 and National Coalition Save Health Care Again! Failure of Graham-Cassidy Marks Fourth Straight Defeat for Conservatives Trying to Repeal ACA



Working with a national coalition of labor partners, community organizations and health advocates, SEIU 721 helped defeat the Trump-backed Graham-Cassidy bill, the fourth straight effort to repeal Obamacare and gut Medicaid spending. Since 2016, our union has taken part in coalition actions that have generated hundreds of street actions, congressional office visits and Capitol protests. Since we started, weekly

phone banks have generated more than 250,000 calls into Congress. By defeating the Graham-Cassidy bill in the U.S. Senate, we helped save Medi-Cal/Medicaid funding and the Affordable Care Act and preserved access to healthcare for 32 million Americans, including those with pre-existing conditions. The public and politicians won't soon forget that this victory belongs to SEIU 721 and a powerful coalition for affordable care!

SEIU 721 L.A. County CSWs Welcome New DCFS Director CSWs Optimistic that Bobby Cagle's Childhood Experience in Foster Care and Tenure as a Social Worker Will Guide Policymaking

We want to welcome Bobby Cagle to the department and look forward to working with him. Mr. Cagle certainly understands what's at stake — he was in foster care as child and served as a caseworker. As director of Georgia's child welfare system, Cagle was recognized by child advocates for addressing the root causes of a number of child fatalities and other child safety issues in his state — such as high caseloads, inadequate training, and high turnover — instead of simply scapegoating individual workers for systemic problems.

While some press reports have expressed concern about how Mr. Cagle will navigate L.A. County's more diverse, inclusive and pro-Labor political environment, we believe he deserves the benefit of the doubt. We're less concerned about where Mr. Cagle comes from and more interested in where he wants to take the department.

SEIU 721 has made huge progress fighting for lower caseloads, better training and a mentor for every new social worker. We look forward to continuing on the Road to Child Safety with Mr. Cagle behind the wheel.



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SEIU 721 Wins Fair Performance Evaluations at LAC+USC

Successful Effort on Sick Time Encourages Workers to Keep Up the Fight

Fresh off the heels of the sick time victory, SEIU 721, BU 729 members won another grievance in September – this one will bring transparency and fairness to performance evaluations.

After multiple members exposed that management had been conducting surprise performance evaluations, downgrading workers without documentation, overriding direct supervisor evaluations and even outright saying that no grades above “competent” would be given, BU 729 stewards took action and filed a grievance – and the grievance was granted!

This means that evaluations will now function as intended – as a year-round supportive process focused on your development.

Supervisors must have regular meetings with you during your rating period to discuss ratings and expectations.

If you feel that you've received an evaluation that violates policy, contact your steward or worksite organizer, or call Member Connection at (877) 721-4YOU.

We're Not Done Fighting

While this ruling currently only applies to members of BU 729, the rules are clear and we'll be using this victory as a foundation to ensure that all county employees get a fair evaluation.

City of Simi Valley Members Win New Contract

Two-Year Agreement Includes New Deferred Compensation and Additional Benefits

City of Simi Valley members won a strong two-year contract approved at the September 25th City Council meeting that includes improvements in deferred compensation and a new bereavement benefit.

Through members' unity and participation the bargaining team was able to win a contract that secures vital services for Simi Valley and provides gains that help families keep up with cost of living increases.

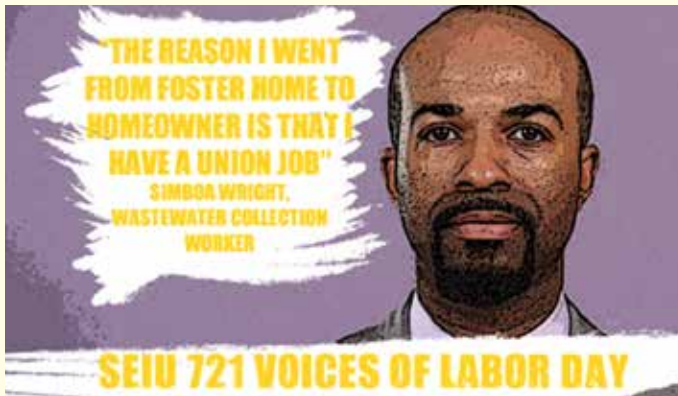
The new Agreement includes:

- Increase in deferred compensation
- Improvements in merit increase practices
- Held strong on Simi Flex benefit formula
- Brand new bereavement benefit
- Improvements in holiday pay
- Increase in life insurance
- Improvements in annual leave accrual rate and maximum accumulation
- Prescription safety glasses
- Improvement in rest and recovery



SEIU Voice of Labor Day

Simboa Wright on How to Make the Promise of Another Olympics Golden for L.A.'s Working Families



I was six years old when the Olympics last came to Los Angeles. I was living in South LA with my adoptive family. I was the kind of kid that Mayor Eric Garcetti and the LA 2028 Bid Committee talk about when they talk about the potential of the games to uplift LA's youth. As a former foster child, I was even the beneficiary of some Olympic goodwill and able to attend a few events.

Now, I'm a happily married father of three. I've got my own house, a good career and a secure retirement. I'm a South LA success story — but the Olympics aren't the reason for that. The reason I went from foster home to homeowner is that I have a union job.

I work for the City of Los Angeles in our wastewater collection division and I'm a proud member of SEIU Local 721. My wife is a pediatric nurse who provides care and comfort to children with rare, often terminal conditions.

She is also in a union. Union membership has allowed us to live the American Dream, which is increasingly rare these days — especially for someone like me, who not only grew up in a rough neighborhood, but also left college to take care of his family.

Aside from a general sense of excitement, I don't remember much about the '84 games. The economic benefits never seemed to make it to my community — except for the folks that sold parking in their yards. Once the final medals were given out and the athletes went home, my neighbors still worked behind the counter at fast food places or retail stores. Their bosses may have seen some of those tourist dollars, but they never did.

Garcetti and LA 2028 say that the games will create 74,000 jobs,

which is welcome news for both a city desperate for solid, middle class employment and a politician looking to put a feather in his cap that would position him for higher office. What I want to know is, what kind of jobs are these going to be?

Are we going to invest in union jobs with a living wage, benefits and dignity? Or are billions of dollars of investment going to go into the pockets of corporations and consultants?

Garcetti has made big job promises before. Last year, his office pledged that the city would hire 5,000 employees to offset recession layoffs. According to the FixLA Coalition, fewer than 1,000 of those jobs have been filled. Every one of these jobs provides the vital city services we need if we're going to host a world-class Olympics.

Part of the Olympic pitch to Angelenos was that we were going to prove that it's possible to host a successful games that would benefit our communities. If we really want to be a "role model for future Olympic and Paralympic host cities," then let's put our money where our mouth is and invest in jobs that provide long-term security.

Imagine what kind of difference \$160 million for youth sports programs will make if it goes toward not only providing great facilities for kids, but also union jobs for the community running the programs. Jobs that you can raise a family on will do a whole lot more to uplift people in the neighborhoods where I grew up than a handful of kids earning athletic scholarships. The influence and expense of the Olympics gives Los Angeles a unique opportunity to flex some pro-worker muscle. With all kinds of organizations looking for a bite of the Olympic apple, we need to make it clear that if you want to profit off our city, you're going to have to provide us with good union jobs.

The projected \$5.3 billion being spent on these Olympics has the potential to do a lot of real, long-term good for working families in Los Angeles. It's up to the city leaders who made big promises about the impact of the games to make sure that happens. Otherwise, they're just giving themselves a gold medal before the race has even started.

Simboa Wright is a Wastewater Collection Worker for the City of Los Angeles and an elected member of the SEIU Local 721 Executive Board.

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SEIU 721 Salutes Departing Dr. Mitch Katz

L.A. County Health Director Praised for Collaborating With and Investing in Employees to Transform Health Care in L.A. County

SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover praised departing L.A. County Health Director Dr. Mitch Katz (above right) for his efforts to collaborate with and invest in L.A. County's 30,000 front-line health care workers as he engineered the integration of L.A. County's Departments of Mental Health, Public Health and Health Services into one unified agency. "By creating labor-management partnerships at all levels, we have transformed the work of our hospitals, coordinated clinical care, provided housing and services for the homeless and improved health care outcomes across the county," said Schoonover. "Mitch Katz worked with us to establish a safe and just culture for patients, employees and the community." Katz is joining the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation as CEO in order to live closer to his parents and family.

SEIU 721 Recognized at International Latino Caucus Convention



SEIU Local 721 was recognized and celebrated at the International Latino Caucus 2017 Convention. Congratulations to Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez, who received the Mike Garcia Award for her leadership, and to Director of Social Services Yadira Villa, who was elected Treasurer of the International Latino Caucus.

The convention, which was hosted by SEIU Local 32BJ in New York City, focused on strategy for achieving sensible immigration reform in the face of the Trump Administration, responding to ongoing crises in Puerto Rico, fighting for racial and economic justice and developing Latino leadership around the country.

Also honored were Javier Valdés of Make the Road New York, Gustavo Torres of CASA and Steven Choi of the New York Immigration Coalition.

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STRONGER THAN EVER IN RIVERSIDE

Images of Solidarity from SEIU 721 Riverside County Members' Historic Two-Day Strike



"Riverside workers are united. Our union will defend any worker targeted for harassment by management."

**Linda Dent
Vice President
SEIU 721**



WE NEED TO RISE AND RESIST MORE THAN EVER

Attacks by Right to Work Groups on Striking Riverside Workers Highlight the Need for Rise and Resist Training

Just a few hours after Riverside County workers launched an historic two-day Unfair Labor Practice strike against county management abuses, a prominent D.C.-based "Right to Work" think tank took to Twitter to attack them for putting Riverside patients at risk.

The Capital Research Center failed to mention that Riverside County workers were on strike, in part, for enhanced patient safety measures in county emergency rooms. Nor did they mention that they are funded largely by a small group of anti-union billionaires, like the Koch Brothers and the family of Richard Mellon Scaife.

The Right to Work attack on Riverside workers highlights why SEIU

721's Rise and Resist workshops are so important. Under Right to Work, a strike to improve workplace safety, like the one in Riverside, would be illegal. These workshops, like our sessions at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center on September 29, use experts and real world case studies to show how Right to Work groups are tricking workers around the U.S. to drop their union membership and surrender their collective bargaining and workplace rights. The sessions document how workers in Right to Work states have suffered wage, health care and retirement take backs. Most importantly, the sessions provide concrete action steps workers can take to protect themselves from Right to Work attacks.

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Puerto Ricans are U.S. Citizens and Thousands of Puerto Rican Workers Belong to Our Union

At the SEIU Latino Caucus Convention in New York on September 28th, Puerto Rico was front and in our members' minds. Even before Hurricane Maria devastated the island commonwealth of 3.4 million people, killing 34 people and leaving millions without water and power, SEIU members have been fighting to save Puerto Rico from the brink of economic disaster at the hands of Wall Street hedge funds that ran up profits at the expense of Puerto Rico's working families.

Despite the creativity and determination of the Puerto Rican people and the island's relatively advanced economy, Puerto Rico has struggled through more than a decade of persistent recession. The expiration in 2013 of an IRS tax credit that incentivized manufacturing and pharmaceutical companies to locate on the island caused an exodus of jobs and tax revenue. This has led to massive government deficits and more than \$71 million in bond debt.

Puerto Ricans have paid a high price for the government's financial setbacks through increased taxes and user fees, job losses, cuts in public services, and potential loss of pensions. Public services in Puerto Rico are being privatized at an alarming rate which is likely to only accelerate in the event of a government default on Puerto Rico's debt.

Puerto Rican workers have taken a leading role in the fight for social and economic justice, forming unions — including two SEIU locals representing thousands of workers in healthcare and in the central and municipal governments — and advocating to audit and restructure the commonwealth's debt and kick-start its economy.

But any hope of an orderly financial recovery was wrecked when Hurricane Maria, the strongest storm to hit Puerto Rico in generations, flooded most of the island's major cities, destroyed its electricity grid and ground its economy to a halt.

SEIU 721 is taking a leading role in publicizing the plight of 3.4 million Puerto Ricans — all U.S. citizens — whose lives have been devastated and holding the Trump Administration accountable for its slow and shamefully inadequate response.

As I write this, there is some small indication our protests are working. Despite his administration's slow-footed action and shameful criticism of San Juan's Mayor, Donald Trump recently told Fox News that Wall Street will have to wipe out Puerto Rico's debt load! Let's hold him to it!

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

Gilda Valdez

