

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES FIRST

A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721 PRESIDENT BOB SCHOONOVER

Working families depend on good public schools, quality health care and safe neighborhoods. But these basic needs are at risk because, for four decades, California's biggest corporations and wealthy investors have escaped paying their fair share for quality public services.

SEIU 721 members want to change that. That's why we're working hard to qualify and pass the Schools and Communities First initiative on the California ballot.

Schools and Communities First will reclaim more than \$12 billion per year for public schools, community colleges and local government services by closing commercial property tax loopholes and end shady schemes wealthy investors use to evade paying their fair share of property taxes. At the same

time, it protects middle class homeowners and renters by preserving tax rates for residential property.

Schools and Communities First will raise an estimated \$5.6 billion for the six Southern California Counties in SEIU 721 territory and help to fund members' key priorities, like lower caseloads, safer nurse-to-patient ratios, secure retirement and better health care benefits.

SEIU 721 members met in November to plan a strategy for gathering 32,000 of the 1.6 million signatures to qualify the measure outside of worksites and at community events. Let's work together to put Schools and Communities First!

Bob Schoonover



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THE CITY OF LA HAS 3 VACANT CONDOS PER EVERY UNHOUSED PERSON



Hundreds march outside vacant luxury condos in Pershing Square in DTLA.

HUNDREDS RALLY AT VACANT LUXURY CONDOS IN DTLA AND DEMAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING



On Nov. 20, as storm clouds loomed overhead, hundreds of marchers descended on downtown Los Angeles streets to decry the glut of luxury condo units dominating the skyline while tens of thousands of unhoused Angelenos prepared to sleep on the streets or in their cars. The rush hour march took place in the heart of Pershing Square following the unveiling of a groundbreaking report, “Who’s Buying Los Angeles? How Speculative Finance Keeps Houses Vacant and People Unhoused.”

The report details how, in 2017, there were three vacant housing

units for every homeless person in Los Angeles, as more than 103,000 housing units in the city remained unoccupied — oftentimes held by the wealthy as an investment, not as a primary residence. At that time, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) tabulated that 33,138 unhoused residents lived in Los Angeles. The number of homeless people in Los Angeles has increased since 2017, with LAHSA now declaring that between 50,000 to 60,000 people may be found homeless on any given night in Los Angeles County — and more than 44,000 of them are living on the streets.

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COUNTY OF VENTURA BARGAINING TEAM DELIVERS TENTATIVE AGREEMENT FOR STRONG 3-YEAR DEAL



"Congratulations to the SEIU 721 Ventura County bargaining team for bringing home a big win. Ventura is rising!"

Grace Sepulveda
Tri-Counties SEIU 721 Executive Board Member

We did it! Our bargaining team reached a Tentative Agreement on a strong three-year contract that improves vital county services. Members' participation and activity in the field delivered a big win. Through worksite meetings, actions, and Purple Up days from Simi Valley, Camarillo, Santa Paula and Ventura to Oxnard, we showed our co-workers and the County that we are UNION STRONG.

The Tentative Agreement includes a 2.5% salary increase in 2019 (contingent on the date of the Board approval), 2.5% in 2020 and 2% in 2021. More than 50% of members will receive

increases based on the Market Based Adjustment. There are also significant increases in the flex credit contribution in all three years to help employees and their families meet the increasing costs of healthcare. With the new Organizational Leave item, members can help strengthen worksites across the county. The three-year contract also includes a new holiday: the day after Thanksgiving! Our bargaining team enthusiastically recommends a YES vote.

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CITY OF OXNARD MEMBERS BRING HOME TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

We did it! After hard-fought contract negotiations, City of Oxnard members voted by 94% to approve a strong three-year contract. Here are the key features:

- Increased health care contributions
- Increase in standby pay
- Improved bilingual pay
- Improvements to deferred compensation, bereavement leave and other language improvements



**CITY OF OXNARD MEMBERS VOTE
OVERWHELMINGLY TO APPROVE T.A.**

ST. JOHN'S LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS JOIN SEIU 721

SEIU 721 welcomes Licensed Clinical Social Workers from St. John's Well Child to our union family!

The new members, who are in the clinic's professional unit at St. John's, recently voted to join their co-workers, who already are represented by SEIU 721. By doing so they've gained a seat at the table and are now in a position to bargain for a contract that strengthens their unit and worksite. Welcome to SEIU 721!



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MEMBER LEADERS GET CRASH COURSE ON NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION BEST PRACTICES

On Tuesday, Nov. 19, more than 20 Social Services Division member leaders trained to welcome newly hired co-workers at New Employee Orientations and at worksites, educate them about the benefits of union membership and sign them up as card-carrying members. LA County Regional Director Michael Green and SEIU Local 721 Treasurer and DCFS leader David Green welcomed participants, emphasizing the enormous importance of contacting new employees within their first few months on the job. Topics covered included electronic sign-ups, the political and historical context for the current attack on labor and our local-wide plan to fight back. SEIU 721 Executive

Board Member and SCSW Sharonda Wade taught member leaders how to tell their “union story” using real world personal examples to explain how union membership protects individual members. These stories are the single most effective way to recruit new hires to the union. Member leaders also practiced signing up employees with membership forms and COPE cards. Leaders in the room agreed to take their newfound skills to the next level — assisting at NEOs, creating Welcome Events for new staff, and following up on new hires who missed orientation events. We plan to schedule similar trainings in every division over the next nine months.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FAIR AT HUBERT HUMPHREY

Frontline staff members at Hubert Humphrey have completed another round of continuous improvement projects. Six teams presented their research and findings at a recent fair showcasing projects that focused on areas including general wellness, emotional health, pneumonia, traffic safety and smoking cessation. SEIU 721 members care about their communities and patients and are working hard to improve the care they provide. Contact Member Connection to find out how you can be a part of a Continuous Improvement Team at your worksite!



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RIVERSIDE COUNTY BARGAINING TEAM ACHIEVES TA AFTER GRUELING THREE-YEAR CAMPAIGN

After more than three years of worker actions, nearly 40 ULPs, a 2-day strike and numerous negotiation sessions, your bargaining committee is pleased to announce that we have reached a tentative agreement with Riverside County!

The SEIU Local 721 bargaining committee persevered through long hours of mediation — often early into the morning hours — to reach the best agreement possible with Riverside County.

SEIU members will have an opportunity to vote on the tentative agreement, details of which will be available soon. We will be scheduling worksite meetings throughout Riverside County to educate members on the details of the tentative agreement, with dates, times, and locations of to be announced shortly. It has not been easy, but we are happy to say that we've finally reached a resolution.



UNION POWER PROTECTS MEMBERS IN LA COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS

Our Union power protected BU 500 Blue Collar members at the LA County Sanitation Districts from paying more for their retirement benefits to cover the Districts' unfunded liabilities.

Under the 2013 California Public Employees'

Pension Reform Act — or PEPRA — public employees hired after 2013 have been forced to pay more for their retirement. Workers hired before 2013 are considered "classic" members. Recently, the LA County Sanitation Districts announced — through outside negotiations with another union — that all 580 PEPRA employees would be subject to increased costs. Our classic employees felt this was unfair to all our PEPRA workers. We went directly to the LA County Sanitation Districts Board of Directors and they agreed that PEPRA workers would not bear the burden. It was a victory not just for our BU 500 PEPRA workers but for all PEPRA workers district-wide. Many thanks to LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn, who led us and the coalition of mayors in the districts to a victory!



"Congratulations to workers in the LA County Sanitation Districts for coming together and winning for retirement security."

**Linda Dent
Vice President, SEIU 721**

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After a year at the table, our full-time members from the City of Santa Ana ratified a new, three-year contract with a 10.5% raise over the life of the agreement and substantial increases in benefits and paid leave. A few other highlights of the deal include:

- An increase in the city's contribution to medical insurance by \$50 per month each January 1
- An increase in the city's contribution to dental insurance by \$10 per month in January 2020, \$5 per month in January 2021, and \$5 per month in January 2022
- Expanded eligibility for Medical Waiver Option to any other non-city sponsored group medical plan

The new deal was ratified by an overwhelming 95% margin.



CITY OF SANTA ANA FULL-TIME MEMBERS RATIFY NEW MOU WITH 10.5% RAISE

MOBILE WORKERS TAKE CAMPAIGN TO UBER BILLIONAIRE'S FRONT DOOR

On November 6, the same day Uber executives at Uber were legally able to cash out billions of dollars in company stock, more than 100 Mobile Workers Alliance drivers paid a visit to the \$72 million home of Uber co-founder Garrett Camp.

To highlight the egregious disparity between drivers and their bosses, drivers Cardell Calloway and Rick Heintz shared how Uber and Lyft's poverty wages forced them into homelessness, while UC-Berkeley professor Michael Reich broke down the efforts by so-called gig economy giants Uber, Lyft and Doordash to pass a ballot initiative that would allow them to pay drivers as little as \$5.64 an hour.



Workers need UNIONS FOR ALL. But just over ten percent of American workers belong to unions today, compared with twenty percent in 1983. **Here's how we change that.**



LA County GAIN eligibility worker David Dunbar and other SEIU 721 members train on how to welcome newly hired county employees and sign them up as union members.

WE WIN FOR WORKERS BY ORGANIZING INSIDE AND OUT

Unions give workers the power to improve their jobs and un-rig the economy. When more workers belong to unions, our voice at work gets stronger and our leverage at the bargaining table increases. That's why billionaires and huge corporations have fought so hard to cripple workers' right to organize.

SEIU 721 members are fighting back by organizing inside and out. Inside our union, we organize through the New Employee Orientation (NEO) program, in which we train top member leaders to welcome newly hired local government workers, explain the value of union membership and sign them up for membership. With 20 percent annual turnover in local

government, this program is vital to maintaining our strong union voice. Outside of our union, we help workers across a range of industries organize — from adjunct professors and graduate students at private colleges to “gig economy” workers, like Uber and Lyft drivers.

This “inside and out” strategy is key to our vision of delivering Unions for All.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff



Gilda Valdez

Want to verify that you are receiving all the benefits and protections of union membership?

Call the SEIU Local 721 Membership Department at: (877) 721-4968.