

MAY-JUNE 2020

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



**A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721  
PRESIDENT BOB SCHOONOVER**

**W**e're 13 weeks into the worst crisis our country has faced in modern times. More than 100,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, the National Guard has been called out in 23 states and more than 40 cities are under mandatory dusk-until-dawn curfews in the wake of George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police. Nearly 40 million Americans are unemployed, and state and local government budgets are in shambles, with threats of service cuts and furloughs.

Meanwhile, the stock market is soaring. The S&P 500 is up 30 percent from its low in mid-March. Giant private equity firms like Apollo and Blackstone are doing even better, their shares up as much as 80 percent.

It's long past time for workers to get mad. We need to get moving and get organized. We need to fight to protect all workers and deliver a federal stimulus bill that protects vital services and helps the front line workers who need it most, instead of more bailouts for Wall Street and billion-dollar corporations.

That's why in the past month our union:

- Invited the media to Trump's Palos Verdes golf club to expose billions in corporate bailouts and call for a #Stimulus4Workers bill.

- Organized a massive phone tree to bombard Congress with calls for #Stimulus4Workers
- Held a virtual town hall with elected leaders in the City of LA and County of LA to join forces to fight for federal stimulus funds for front line workers.
- Organized the first virtual town hall for community clinics and clinic workers with city and state elected officials from around Southern California to demand their support for delivering stimulus funds to save front line health care services and jobs.

We need a #Stimulus4Workers bill that puts working families before corporations and provides \$500 billion in aid to state and local governments. But fighting for this bill during shelter-in-place and citywide lockdowns means we need new tools for hard times.

That's why I'm asking all of you to join Digital Union Voices so we can exercise our union muscle electronically. Text VOICES to 31996 so we can get you in the fight!

In solidarity,

*Bob Schoonover*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020



COUNTY PROPOSAL	UNION RESPONSE
Postpone October 1, 2020 2.5% negotiated raise for 6 months.	<b>NO</b>
Postpone January 1, 2021 2.75% negotiated top-step salary increase for one year.	<b>NO</b>
Suspend county matching contribution to 457 Horizons Deferred Compensation Plan for 1 year.	<b>ONLY IF:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Only if and when all county unions agree</b> to the suspension. If all unions do not agree, the suspension will not become effective.</li> <li>• <b>Only if the suspension ends</b> when the county receives sufficient federal relief, state funding, better than expected revenues, or any of the above.</li> </ul>

## AGREEMENT REACHED WITH LA COUNTY TO AVERT LAYOFFS!

The County of Los Angeles and SEIU 721 reached an agreement Friday, June 5th on a proposal aimed at averting layoffs and demotions. The Union rejected the County's demands for postponement of negotiated raises as premature and unnecessary at this time. In order to avert thousands of proposed layoffs and demotions, the Union agreed to a temporary suspension of the County's matching contribution to the 457 Horizons Deferred Compensation Plan, but with conditions to protect SEIU 721 members.

**Q. Why did SEIU 721 agree to a temporary suspension of the County's matching contribution to the 457 Horizons Deferred Compensation Plan?**

A. The County's budget crisis is real. Due to the COVID-19 Emergency and the steep decline in sales tax revenues, the County is facing a nearly \$1 billion shortfall in the 2020-21 budget. The County has already imposed on non-represented Megaflex

employees (mostly managers) a suspension of the 457 match, as well as a suspension to their 401K match.

**Q: What if other County unions do not agree to the suspension?**

A: If other County unions do not agree, then the suspension will not apply to SEIU 721 members either.

**Q: Will this agreement stop the layoffs and demotions?**

A: The County's position is that the suspension of the 457 match will reduce the number of layoffs, but in order to prevent all layoffs the unions would need to agree to also postpone the October 2020 and January 2021 negotiated raises.

SEIU 721 believes that — with the sacrifice we are making — we will be able to stop all layoffs. The layoffs would not take effect until October 1, 2020. In the meantime, we will continue to fight for the financial relief bill pending in Congress. And we will fight to make sure that the County cuts all fat in the budget rather than laying off anyone. Chop from the Top!

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020



**“SEIU Local 721 firmly opposes furloughs. Our members strongly believe there are other alternatives and less harmful solutions to consider before adding further strain on LA's working families. Destroying our city's safety net by going after basic services when these are vital to our rebuilding is not the answer.”**

**Bob Schoonover  
President, SEIU 721**

### SEIU 721 TELLS LA CITY: CHOP FROM THE TOP, PROTECT THE FRONTLINES!

After praising front line city workers as heroes, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has proposed furloughing thousands of them to balance next year's budget and SEIU 721 is fighting back.

Facing a massive loss of revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Garcetti in April released a proposed 2020-21 city budget with more than \$230 million in hard cuts, including 26 furlough days for non-sworn city employees — the equivalent of a 10 percent pay cut.

SEIU 721 responded with a cease-and-desist letter to LA City General Manager Wendy Macy, demanding meet-and-confer to prevent unilateral action by the city.

“Bottom-line, COVID19 changed what public safety means in our city,” wrote SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover in a letter to elected officials and local media. “Today's heroes are the men

and women who are keeping our city safe from the dangers brought on by this virus. This and the nationwide uprising in the wake of George Floyd's murder have spotlighted in stark terms the disconnect between our civic budgets and the real needs of our communities,” Schoonover said.

In response, SEIU 721 has asked all LA City members to complete a survey describing how a 10 percent pay cut would affect their ability to buy groceries, pay for childcare and keep a roof over their heads. The survey is available online at [www.seiu721.org](http://www.seiu721.org).

SEIU Local 721 firmly opposes furloughs. Our members strongly believe there are other alternatives and less harmful solutions to consider before adding further strain on LA's working families. Destroying our city's safety net by going after basic services when these are vital to our rebuilding is not the answer.



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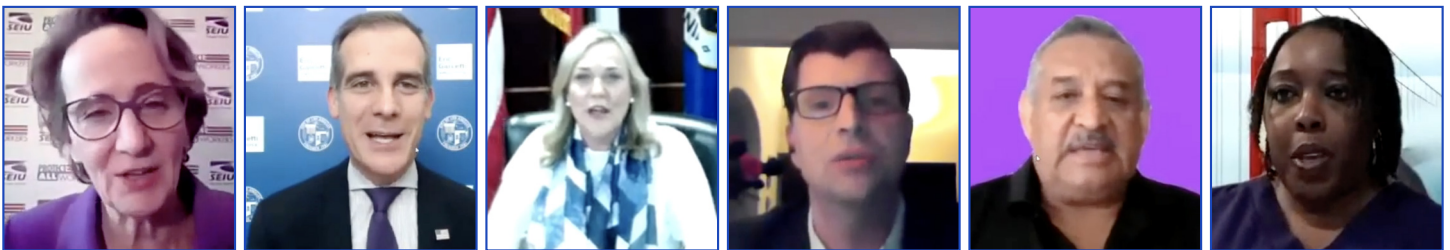
# PROTECT ALL WORKERS

**SEIU LOCAL 721 HOSTS  
#PROTECTALLWORKERS VIRTUAL  
TOWNHALL TO PUSH FOR FEDERAL  
RELIEF FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS**



**"We are facing unprecedented shortfalls in both city and county budgets. This impacts all public employees. We need #Stimulus4All to protect vital services!"**

**Bob Schoonover  
President, SEIU 721**



SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry; Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti; SEIU 721 Treasurer David Green; Andy Morales, SEIU 721 Liaison to the City of LA's Department of Sanitation and Environment; and LAC+USC Nurse Fiona Henlon, a BU 311-312 Bargaining Committee Member.

With the entire State of California still under a mandatory stay-at-home order, our union SEIU 721 hosted a #ProtectAllWorkers Virtual Town Hall. Our mission: To secure up to \$1 trillion in federal stimulus for workers. Members heard directly from SEIU CA and Local 721 President Bob Schoonover and SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry. LA Mayor Eric Garcetti and LA County Board of Supervisors Chair Kathryn Barger, provided the local government perspective. We also heard from our own union voices: SEIU Treasurer David Green, a Children's

Social Worker III at LA County's DCFS; Andy Morales, SEIU 721 Liaison to the City of LA's Dept. of Sanitation and Environment; and Fiona Henlon, a Relief Nurse III at the LAC+USC Medical Center and a BU 311-312 Bargaining Committee Member.

With the City of LA and the County of LA forecasting revenue losses of \$117 million \$1.3 billion, respectively, vital public services and the workers who provide them are at risk without federal support. Want to tell Congress to support the frontlines, not bail out corporations? **Join us by texting VOICES to 31996.**



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020

# TAKING THE FIGHT TO TRUMP



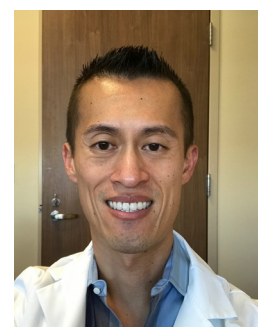
### SEIU 721 members visit Trump's Palos Verdes golf course to demand support for frontline workers

With more than 38 million Americans out of work, the Trump Administration and key allies of the president have threatened to allow state and local governments to go bankrupt, which would devastate local health and public safety and force millions more Americans into joblessness. SEIU 721 members, joined by the SEIU-Committee of Interns and Residents (SEIU-CIR), the LA County Professional Peace Officers Association (PPOA), the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD) and the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS), held a press conference outside Trump's Palos Verdes golf club to call for federal stimulus. "Today's heroes cannot become tomorrow's unemployed!" said SEIU 721 Executive Board Member Simboa Wright, a Wastewater Collection Worker II with the City of Los Angeles.



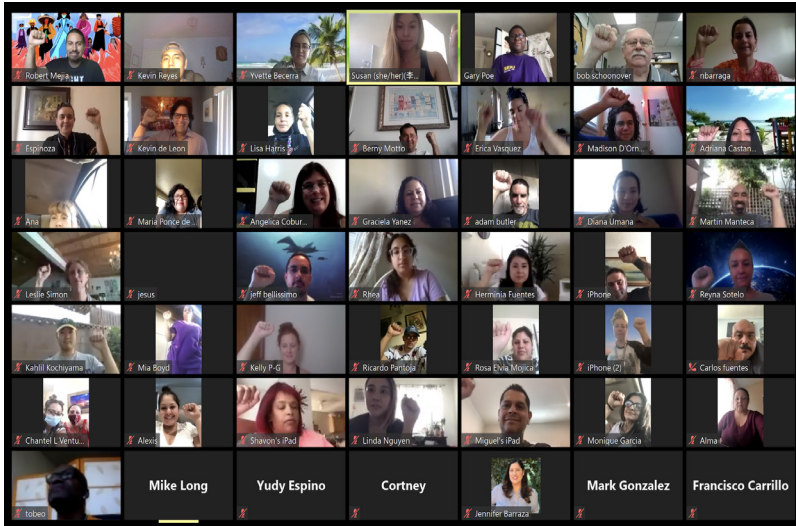
### SEIU 721 SALUTES HEALTH CARE HEROES FOR NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

SEIU 721 nurses on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic aren't just fighting to keep us safe, they are working overtime to boost the spirits of their colleagues and other frontline workers. SEIU 721 nurses at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center made a "Superheroes in Scrubs" TikTok video to recognize and thank their fellow healthcare workers and all others on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic.





# PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020



On the evening of May 7, hundreds of SEIU 721 clinic workers attended a first-ever town hall to discuss the state of community clinics during the Pandemic.

Clinic workers had an opportunity to question elected officials directly about stimulus funds for clinics and how to provide more Personal Protective Equipment and improved sick leave policies for clinic workers. Congresswoman Nanette Barragán, LA City Councilmember-elect Kevin de Leon (District 14), and California Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (53rd District) all fielded members' questions and pledged to work to identify funding streams to keep clinics

open and provide workers with the tools they need to keep communities safe and healthy. Stay tuned for more updates as we fight to protect funding for our community clinics!

## SEIU 721 COMMUNITY CLINICS WORKERS HOLD FIRST-EVER TOWNHALL WITH ELECTED LEADERS

## SEIU 721 AND LA COALITION ORGANIZE "CANCEL RENT" CARAVAN ON MAYDAY



**"It's time to stop bailing out Wall Street and start helping workers keep their homes."**

**Linda Dent**  
**Vice President, SEIU 721**



On May Day, SEIU 721 and Mobile Workers Alliance joined ACCE, LA Tenants Union, Global Women's Strike-LA, California Poor People's Campaign, & TRUST South LA to organize a car caravan in downtown Los Angeles to take a stand as a community and call for

our elected officials to order the cancellation of rent and mortgage debts during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

COVID-19 already has cost millions of workers their jobs. With nearly one in four Angelenos unemployed, thousands of families are at risk of homelessness. So far, the Los Angeles City Council and the state of California have not done enough to help struggling tenants and homeowners keep a roof over their heads.

Unfortunately, Wall Street and the politicians who do their bidding are prioritizing bailing out big corporations over protecting the rest of us who are hanging on by a thread to pay our rent!

SEIU 721 member will use every means at our disposal to convince our elected leaders to take the necessary steps to help workers protect their housing and keep their homes.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020



**SEIU 721 CITY OF VENTURA MEMBERS VOTE  
OVERWHELMINGLY TO APPROVE NEW DEAL**

**LAKE HEMET MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
WORKERS RATIFY NEW TENTATIVE AGREEMENT**



It's official. City of Ventura members have emphatically ratified their contract extension with an overwhelming number of YES votes in each of the G, Q and S bargaining units.

Upon approval from the city council, the contract will now be extended to December 31, 2020.

As the COVID-19 pandemic ravages local government budgets, it is important that members acted affirmatively to lock in this agreement during uncertain times.

When we fight, we win!



While much of the world is on pause, SEIU 721 members are on the front lines of providing vital services and winning at the bargaining table.

In May, Lake Hemet Municipal Water District members ratified a new tentative agreement that locks in COLA raises, increased meal and work boot allowances and more.

Even during these uncertain times, you can be certain that SEIU 721 members are standing strong, staying united and winning at work.

(Photo left: Lake Hemet SEIU 721 members Eddie Geller and Miguel Rodriguez conduct the ballot count.)



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to roil the Tri-Counties region, SEIU Local 721 members are standing strong on the frontlines, whether they are fire dispatchers, hospital workers, public works employees or social services workers.

When the CDC released guidelines recommending cloth masks for the public, they were in short supply. In response, Tri-Counties staff and member leaders helped distribute SEIU 721 masks to hundreds of workers across the region, especially in Ventura County and Santa Barbara County. The masks are not meant to replace work-issued PPE, they are meant to be used for off-duty casual use and for situations where cloth masks are encouraged. The masks are also a way for our workers to show union pride during this crisis.



### TRI-COUNTIES MEMBERS STAY SAFE AND SHOW UNION PRIDE WITH SEIU 721 MASKS

### VENTURA COUNTY SEIU 721 MEMBER BRANDON MILLER NAMED DISPATCHER OF THE YEAR

Brandon Miller, a seven-year Ventura County veteran public safety dispatcher, was named Dispatcher of the Year by the Ventura County Fire Department.

Brandon's leadership role responding to the recent Conception Boat Fire tragedy and his work during the COVID-19 pandemic won him praise from the Ventura County Fire Department and a profile in the *Ventura County Star*.

Brandon's career highlights include seven CPR saves and an emergency childbirth. Brandon started his career in 2002 as a fire cadet at Fire Station 44 in Wood Ranch. He is a Navy Veteran, serving as an aviation warfare specialist second class and an aviation structure mechanic.

Brandon is an SEIU 721 union steward and is co-chair of the SEIU 721 County of Ventura bargaining team that recently bargained a strong new contract.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020



### OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE NON-TENURE TRACK PROFESSORS VOTE ON FIRST CONTRACT

Despite the dislocation caused by COVID-19, faculty at Occidental College persevered and continued organizing and are now voting on their first contract.

The transition to Zoom bargaining and a rapidly shifting workplace environment helped galvanize the team. They beat back concessions by requiring the college to meet and confer over any reductions or changes to pay and benefits.

Voting will continue until June 5th, and the team will meet regularly via a Labor-Management Committee to keep up to date on the financial situation of the college.

*(The Occidental Bargaining team, from left to right:*

*Jeff Miller, Assistant Professor, Math, Melinda Houston, Associate Professor, Kinesiology, Erica Preston-Roedder, Assistant Professor, Philosophy, Corey Davis, Assistant Professor, Urban and Environmental Policy.)*



### SEIU 721 FIGHTS TO PROTECT \$15 MINIMUM WAGE IN LA COUNTY DURING PANDEMIC

For years, SEIU 721 members, alongside our sisters and brothers in the Fight for \$15, led an historic campaign that ushered in a \$15 minimum wage for all working people in Los Angeles County.



**"The last thing working families need right now is less money in their pockets. Thank you to the LA County Board of Supervisors for doing the right thing."**

**Linda Dent  
Vice President, SEIU 721**

This month, we protected that victory by flexing our union muscle to urge the LA County Board of Supervisors to vote against postponing this year's scheduled wage increase.

We thank the LA County Board of Supervisors — both for working closely with our union through this pandemic and for listening to our members, community allies and labor partners across the county.

SEIU 721 member households are affected by rising unemployment — the last thing working families need now is less money in their pockets. Today, more than ever, working people must stand together and support one another.

SEIU Local 721 is committed to protecting working people during this crisis. Together we rise!



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020



On the eve of McDonald's shareholder meeting, hundreds of cooks and cashiers in the Fight for \$15 walked off the job to protest inadequate protective equipment, lack of paid sick days, and the company's failed pandemic response.

In 20 cities, workers spoke out about the burger giant's failure to protect workers from COVID-19, noting that while McDonald's had dished out nearly \$1 billion to shareholders since start of the pandemic, workers were forced to go on strike to receive masks.

In March, a Monterey Park McDonald's worker contracted COVID-19 and spent over a month on a ventilator fighting for her life before being released from the hospital.

Strikers demand that McDonald's immediately halt dividends to shareholders and use that money for increased safety and economic protections for workers, including pandemic pay of \$15 x 2, sufficient PPE, and paid sick leave for all who wear the McDonald's uniform.

### LA MCDONALD'S WORKERS JOIN NATIONWIDE STRIKE OVER COMPANY'S RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC

### VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN SPEAK OUT ON GIG WORKERS



Joe Biden  
@JoeBiden

Last year California passed [#AB5](#), affording gig workers protections and benefits like a minimum wage and overtime pay.

Now, gig economy giants are trying to gut the law and exempt their workers. It's unacceptable.

I urge Californians to vote no on the initiative this November.



Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Elizabeth Warren spoke out this month against Uber and Lyft's deceptive ballot measure aimed at overturning Assembly Bill 5, landmark legislation passed last year which extends

basic workplace protections such as a minimum wage, unemployment insurance, and paid sick days to workers in the gig economy.

Biden tweeted that "Last year California passed [#AB5](#), affording gig workers protections and benefits like a minimum wage and overtime pay.

"Now, gig economy giants are trying to gut the law and exempt their workers. It's unacceptable. I urge Californians to vote no on the initiative this November."

Warren echoed his sentiment, tweeting "Uber, Lyft, and Doordash have stockpiled \$110 million to pass a misguided measure to avoid prosecution and protect their profits.

"Gig workers are struggling on the front lines of this pandemic—it's time for us to show them whose side we're on. I urge Californians to vote no."



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY-JUNE 2020

# STIMULUS 4 WORKERS

### SEIU 721 SLAMS CONGRESSIONAL PHONELINES TO DEMAND #STIMULUS4WORKERS

April 30, SEIU 721 members bombarded congressional phone lines with thousands of calls to protest billion-dollar bailouts for huge corporations and to demand that congress pass a #Stimulus4Workers to rescue state and local budgets protect vital frontline community services and the workers who deliver them.

Our fight isn't over! Dial (844) 967-2163 to be connected to your local legislators toll-free and tell them that today's heroes can't become tomorrow's unemployed. Demand a #Stimulus4Workers of at least \$500 billion to fund our vital work.



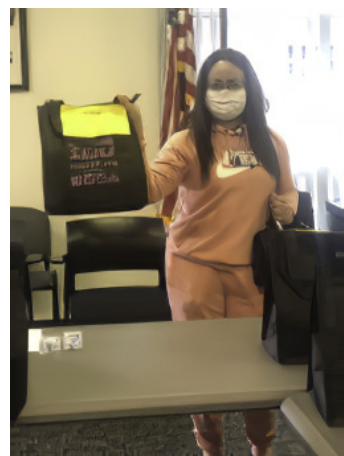
### RIVERSIDE COUNTY SEIU 721 MEMBERS FIGHT FOR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

With nearly 8,800 cases and 355 deaths, Riverside County has the second-fastest rate of COVID-19 spread among California Counties.

Faced with early shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), SEIU 721 Riverside County members took action to protect their colleagues by distributing masks, face shields and other equipment to frontline workers across the county.

To date, SEIU 721 members have distributed approximately 1,900 surgical masks, 200 N95 masks, and 450 face shields. At the same time, the Inland Area team scored the highest number of new membership signups for the union.

SEIU 721 continues to meet bi-weekly with Riverside County Department heads to ensure the safety of frontline workers. Nearly 75 percent of Riverside County workers are now telecommuting.



# THERE IS NO ECONOMIC JUSTICE WITHOUT RACIAL JUSTICE



**THE RAGE IN OUR STREETS IS THE  
INEVITABLE PRODUCT OF RACISM  
IN OUR SOCIETY AND OUR ECONOMY**

**D**r. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that someday his children would live in a country that didn't judge his children by the color of their skin. At the same time, Malcolm X described life for Black and Brown people in America as a "nightmare."

Our union was founded on the dream that workers can come together across all of their differences to fight for a better future for all families. But achieving that dream also means acknowledging that racism is still rampant in our society and is a major barrier to achieving economic justice for all.

The recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd are shocking symptoms of a larger nightmare that Black and Brown people are living every day.

In the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota where a policeman is charged with murdering George Floyd:

- Black residents are 13 times more likely to be killed by police than whites.
- Black families on average earn less than half white families earn.
- Blacks comprise six percent of the population of Minnesota but represent 30 percent of all COVID-19 cases.

The same disparities affect Black and Brown workers across America. On average, they earn less, they are more likely to be working front line jobs during the pandemic, they are more likely to contract COVID-19 and they are more likely to die from it.

It's up to us to make this a turning point — for police reform, for a real national living wage, for equal access to health care and for true economic justice. It begins with acknowledging some hard truths.



Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

**Digital  
Union  
Voices**

To prevent furloughs and stop layoffs, we need a #Stimulus4Workers bill from Congress NOW!  
To organize during a lockdown, we need Digital Union Voices. Text VOICES to 31996 today!