

JUNE-JULY 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE & PROTECT OUR HEROES



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

Working people in America are at a crossroads. The federal response to COVID-19 has been a national shame. When the pandemic first hit, the powers that be put frontline workers' lives at risk with insufficient PPE, delayed testing and a bungled response. Now more than 2.5 million Americans are infected and nearly 130,000 are dead. Nearly 1 in 5 Americans is unemployed and state and local governments are on the verge of bankruptcy.

Instead of bringing Americans together in the wake of the senseless death of George Floyd, the White House has stoked racial tensions.

Enough is enough. It is time for our union to fight back for health and safety and for racial and economic justice.

Here's how we can start:

- Push Congress to pass the HEROES Act and deliver \$1 trillion to fund COVID-19 relief and save state and local government services from bankruptcy. The Heroes Act provides \$375 billion to local governments, like the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. It also funds vital election safeguards to ensure people of color aren't disenfranchised at the polls.
- Pass the Schools and Communities First Act in California. S&C First will

restore \$12 billion in funding for schools and local services lost due to corporate real estate tax loopholes.

- Pass the repeal of California Prop 209 to bring back affirmative action, combat systemic racism and create fairness in hiring and promotions.
- Support the Equity Campaign to demand that California legislators push additional revenue measures on the November ballot.

Finally, let's be clear. It's time to get rid of Donald Trump. As President Harry S. Truman once said about the presidency: "The buck stops here." The responsibility for America's disastrous response to COVID-19 rests with our commander in chief.

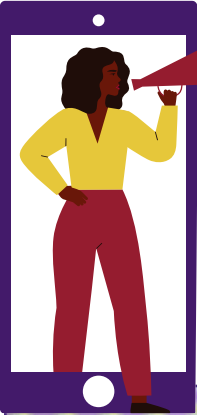
But to vote him out, we're going to have to fight like never before in every way we can — letter-writing, phone calls, texts, social media posts, online, in the streets, in car caravans — you name it.

The good news is that the taxpayers, the media, Democrats and a growing chorus of Republicans are on our side. They are just as outraged as we are. We all are fighting for justice.

Bob Schoonover

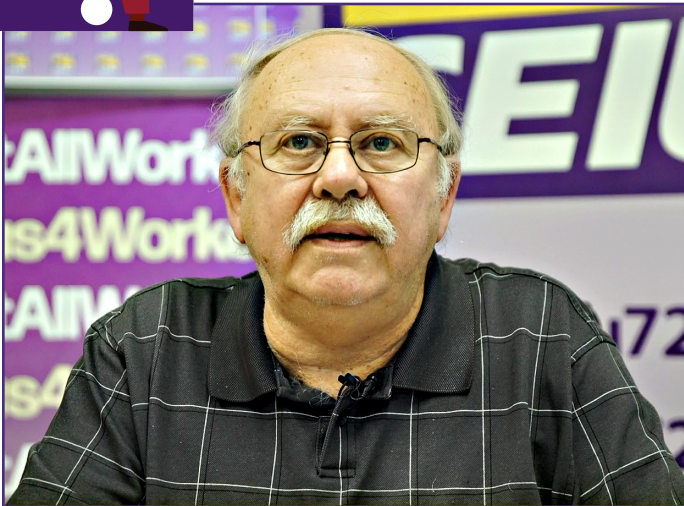


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SEIU LOCAL 721 "STATE OF THE UNION" TELE-TOWN HALL DRAWS 18,000 CALLERS

Members hear from Local 721 Leaders and talk COVID-19 Response, Stopping Furloughs, Funding Local Government and Key Elections



"The failure of the federal response to COVID-19 is a national shame. Yet throughout this crisis, you –721 members– have gone the extra mile. You are the heroes."

**Bob Schoonover
President, SEIU 721**



Hosts of the Tele-Town Hall (from top left): SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover; LA County Regional Director Michael Green; Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez; Treasurer David Green; Executive Board members Rosa Castro (Tri-Counties Region) and Cheylynda Barnard (Inland Region); and Secretary Lillian Cabral.

On Wednesday June 24, SEIU 721 hosted a "State of the Union" tele-town hall meeting to discuss the our union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our plans to head off furloughs and layoffs, the need to pass the \$1 trillion federal Heroes Act to save vital local government services and key local, state and federal elections of vital importance to public employees. During the hour-long town hall, nearly 18,000 SEIU 721 members joined the call.

Welcomed by emcee Michael Green, SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover implored members to call Congress in support of the federal Heroes Act to raise \$1 trillion to save local government services from

bankruptcy. Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez talked about plans to prevent layoffs and furloughs and delivered a message from Vice President Linda Dent. Treasurer David Green updated on key ballot measure and candidate races. E-Board member Rosa Castro talked about victories in the Tri-Counties and the need to pass the Schools and Communities First Act. E-Board member Cheylynda Barnard talked about the fight for PPE in the Inland Area and our union's fight for racial and economic justice. And firebrand speaker Lillian Cabral rallied members to get active as stewards at SEIU 721 worksites. **Members can watch highlights from the State of the Union at www.seiu721.org.**

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LA LABOR FED URGES PASSAGE OF \$1 TRILLION HEROES ACT TO SAVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On June 17, key members of various unions throughout Southern California — including David Green, Treasurer of SEIU 721 — held a community food drive and press conference outside the Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools in LA to urge federal passage of the HEROES Act. The event was organized by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

The HEROES Act would deliver \$1 trillion to help local, state and federal governments respond to COVID-19, including \$375 billion for local governments like LA County and the City of Los Angeles. For many counties and municipalities, funding from the HEROES Act will make the difference between retaining vital employees versus layoffs and furloughs.

"States, counties, cities — the bottom line is that we need relief from Washington, DC to keep the public safety net from shredding," said Green.



SEIU 721 JOINS BLACK LIVES MATTER, CLERGY IN FUNERAL PROCESSION HONORING GEORGE FLOYD

SEIU 721 members and their families joined Black Lives Matter, interfaith leaders, and labor and community groups for a funeral procession and memorial service in Downtown Los Angeles honoring George Floyd and

demanding justice for those killed at the hands of police.

The funeral procession, which began in Leimert Park in South Los Angeles, was led by a hearse and motorcycle escort, with hundreds of cars following behind, and converged with other marches at a massive memorial service in Downtown LA.

SEIU 721's Los Angeles County Regional Director, Michael Green, shared the stage with leaders from Black Lives Matter, clergy organizations, and families of those killed by police.

"As a labor union, we know that racial justice and economic justice go together," said Green.

"One impacts the other. So, we fight for both, because we remember what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said: 'An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.'"



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MOBILE WORKERS ALLIANCE HOLDING EVENTS EVERY WEEK DURING SOLIDARITY SUMMER

SEIU 721 HOLDS VIRTUAL CELEBRATION OF JUNETEENTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Mobile Workers Alliance, an organizing project of SEIU 721 fighting for union rights for app-based workers, is on the move conducting at least one action a week this summer.

Rideshare and delivery drivers are fighting back against a \$110 million ballot initiative sponsored by Uber, Lyft and Doordash that would allow app companies to continue to misclassify drivers as independent contractors, denying them basic workers' rights, like a minimum wage and sick days.

Drivers all over the state are participating in walk-outs with fast food workers, food and PPE banks for drivers, a shutdown of LAX and a two-day global gig workers conference with drivers from all over the world.

As Uber, Lyft, and Doordash's deceitful campaign heads to the November ballot, drivers are fighting back with people power!



SEIU 721's annual Juneteenth celebrations are one of our biggest events every year.

We marked the holiday differently in 2020, hosting a virtual celebration on social media

with Juneteenth Facebook posts throughout the month. George Floyd's murder and the events of the following weeks have shown how far we've yet to go for everyone in our country to truly be free. Still, in the midst of our past and present pain, we celebrate how far we have come.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2020

"The US Supreme Court recently ruled that an employer cannot fire a person because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is a watershed moment, but it's up to us continue fighting for more inclusive workplaces." If you identify as LGBTQ+ or have a loved one that is, join our fight and be part of this movement."

Yuisa Gimeno
SEIU Local 721 Lavender LGBTQ+ Caucus Member
Community Services Analyst II at LA County WDACS

SEIU 721's LGBTQ+ Caucus is celebrating a landmark Supreme Court ruling that federal civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender workers.

The landmark ruling issued June 15 will extend protections to millions of workers nationwide and is a defeat for the Trump administration, which argued that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act that bars discrimination based on sex did not extend to claims of gender identity and sexual orientation.

"This is a watershed moment for every LGBTQ+ worker in America, said SEIU 721 LGBTQ+ Caucus member Yuisa Gimeno. "But it's on us within the labor movement to continue fighting for more inclusive workplaces."

The SEIU 721 Lavender LGBTQ+ Caucus meets on the first Monday of the month via Zoom. For more information, find them on Facebook at SEIU Lavender Caucus Los Angeles.



SEIU 721 MEMBERS AT 211 LA COUNTY CELEBRATE STRONG NEW CONTRACT WITH RAISES

SEIU 721 members at 211 LA County are celebrating a new contract that includes across-the-board raises, additional stipends for telecommuting and stronger language

that protects holiday pay. The contract was ratified with a 100% yes vote. These members are key to keeping the 211 hub running as they provide assistance for community members and community organizations looking for all types of health, human, and social services in Los Angeles County. Congratulations and thank you for your service to our communities - Together We Win!



**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!

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VENTURA COVID-19 RESPONDERS AND FRONTLINE WORKERS WIN INCREASED VACATION ACCRUAL

In response to increased workloads and cancelled vacations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ventura County employees have won the right to accrue an extra 60 hours of vacation time.

SEIU 721 members worked with County management to secure an increase of maximum bankable vacation time from 400 hours to 460 hours to help COVID-19 responders and other frontline workers who have been unable to take vacation because of limited staffing.

This amendment to our MOA will be retroactive through

March 22 and will continue until the end of the pandemic. Members will have 6 months from the end of the crisis to either draw down their hours by using paid time off or through cash redemption pursuant to Section 1203.



SEIU 721 INLAND REGION HONORS BLACK LIVES AT JUNE RIVERSIDE CITY HALL VIGIL

On June 4th, SEIU 721 members in the Inland Region, along with the NAACP, the CA Democratic Club, the Women's March and Black Lives Matter - IE, stood in solidarity with BLM at a vigil outside of Riverside City Hall.



SEIU 721 helped with equipment, logistics and security for the event, providing a strong demonstration of our commitment to the fight for racial justice in Inland communities.

Executive board member Cheylynda Barnard spoke passionately about the need to hold elected leaders accountable for police violence.

"Every time we say: 'not again, never again, nevermore,' but we fail to say [to politicians], 'Fine, you don't do what I ask? I'll find someone to replace you.'" Barnard said.

"If they won't meet with us, then, well, dammit we'll vote them out!" Barnard added.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2020



FAREWELL TO NURSE CHERRI NEWMAN: A FIERCE FIGHTER FOR WORKERS IN THE HIGH DESERT

LA CITY MEMBERS: DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SEPARATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM?



Most everyone working in our union's Health Division knew Cherri Newman, who tragically passed away last week. Cherri was a Licensed Vocational Nurse at the High Desert Regional Health Center in Lancaster, working in the Ambulatory Care Clinic. She served as the Chair of the High Desert Joint Labor Management Council (LMC) and was like a mother to everyone at the Health Center.

As a member of SEIU 721, Cherri stood out as a strong, no-nonsense, yet passionate, leader. She gave with all her heart — donating her time, her money, her ideas, her love, her support and her advice to those who needed it. She went the extra mile, especially when it came to our union. Whether

she was fighting for working people as a union steward, as an SEIU 721 spokesperson, as a program organizer or as an event manager, Cherri was one of the best. We will miss her!



In response to the City budget crisis caused by the COVID19 pandemic, our union negotiated a strong Separation Incentive Program (SIP) with the City of Los Angeles to help create savings in the city budget. The newly approved SIP packs a monetary punch for qualifying employees.

Cash incentive Formula: Figure out your bonus by multiplying your annual salary times years of service and then multiply that by 2% (0.02) AND ADD in another \$7,500! Cash incentives are capped at \$80,000.

Normal Retirement Eligibility: To qualify for the Separation Incentive Program you must be eligible for a normal retirement by January 31, 2021. Check eligibility lists to see if you qualify.

Application Deadline: You must apply for the SIP between July 6, and August 3, 2020. The earlier you apply, the sooner LACERS can process your retirement. The CAO will mail an application July 6 to all eligible employees, but you can learn the details now at www.seiu721.org.

FIGHTING TO PROTECT OUR HEROES AT WORK



WORKERS SHOULD FIGHT TO PROTECT EACH OTHER FROM COVID-19 WHEN OUR EMPLOYERS WON'T

Nurses at Riverside Community Hospital attend a vigil for LA Nurse Celia Marcos, who died after working without an N-95 mask to treat a COVID-19 patient.

The most shocking and upsetting part of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the catastrophic lack of preparedness of the federal government. From chronic shortages of Personal Protective Equipment to delays in testing to partisan wrangling over relief funds — our leaders failed first responders and frontline workers. Time and time again, they called us heroes and then threw us to the wolves.

But in the union, we don't agonize, we organize. That's why SEIU 721 launched a unionwide survey on workplace safety to find out exactly what problems workers are experiencing on the frontlines. Our goal was to find out exactly where we need to fight to ensure our safety on the job and to make sure we fight to protect the funding we need to protect members' jobs, wages and benefits.

We're launching workplace safety committees at SEIU 721 worksites to:

- Require availability of appropriate PPE for SEIU 721 members

- Ensure workers are notified when someone at a worksite tests positive for COVID-19
- Mandate proper social distancing in offices when they are re-opened
- Ensure disinfection of public facilities and require that clients and customers wear masks
- Facilitate increased telework for all functions that can support it
- Protect workers that refuse assignments because they fear for their health and safety

In addition, our union is fighting tooth and nail to pass the \$1 trillion HEROES act to protect frontline workers' jobs and paychecks. It's not enough to call frontline workers heroes — it's time government started treating us that way.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

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