

JULY-AUGUST 2020

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



## FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE & THE HEROES ACT



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

**W**ant proof that the workers in SEIU 721 are heroes? Most Americans have never faced a generation-defining crisis — Meanwhile SEIU members are tackling three of them head-on.

SEIU 721 members are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 health crisis, providing life-saving care and public safety services. They are keeping city and county governments and local governments running in the face of the worst economic meltdown in U.S. history. And they are taking the lead in Black Lives Matter and the movement to deliver economic and racial justice.

Masters of multi-tasking, SEIU 721 members this month helped lead the Strike for Black Lives here in LA while also staffing phone banks and recording selfie videos to sway swing state U.S. Senators to vote for the HEROES Act to save public sector jobs.

On July 20, SEIU and nearly 60 other national Labor and social justice organizations led a nationwide action in 25 cities that saw tens of thousands of workers protesting in support of greater economic and racial equality.

For the rest of the month, SEIU 721 members led in the national effort to help pass the HEROES Act, which is absolutely crucial if we are to prevent large scale furloughs and layoffs in state and local government.

Here's some of what the \$3 trillion HEROES Act would do:

- Provide another \$1,200 stimulus check to every individual eligible for the first one, \$2,400 per couple and another \$1,200 per dependent, up to \$6,000 per family
- Dispense \$500 billion in relief funds for states and \$375 billion in relief for local governments that will protect against layoffs and furloughs
- Create a \$200 million HEROES fund to provide hazard pay, family care and protective equipment stipends for essential workers
- Extend \$600 per week unemployment benefits through January 2021
- Provide mortgage and rent payment assistance to homeowners and renters

The HEROES act passed the House of Representatives in June but is stalled in the Senate because Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell are more interested in bailing out their billionaire contributors than helping workers. So instead, we're calling U.S. senators in swing states to push them to vote for HEROES. Come to [SEIU721.org](http://SEIU721.org) and find out how you can add your voice.

*Bob Schoonover*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2020

# SEIU 721 MEMBERS JOIN STRIKE FOR BLACK LIVES



LA City Council member Herb Wesson fires up marchers at the McDonald's on Crenshaw during the the national Strike for Black Lives on July 20.

On July 20, SEIU 721 members joined tens of thousands of working people in more than 25 cities across the country for a historic Strike for Black Lives.

This first-of-its-kind display of solidarity brought together union and non-union workers from industries across the spectrum, including public sector workers, health care workers, long-term caregivers, ride share drivers, fast food workers and graduate students. Our action featured strikers and activists from SEIU 721, Fight for \$15 and a Union, Mobile Workers Alliance, SEIU 2015, SEIU 99, SEIU USWW, the Los Angeles Tenants Union and Clergy for Black Lives.

We united with one voice to demand real change in the face of the racial

discrimination, public health crisis and broken economy that has pushed our nation to the breaking point.

The Los Angeles action began at a McDonald's on Crenshaw where we supported fast food workers in shutting down the store and were joined by LA City Council member Herb Wesson.

We then headed to Dorsey High School to support our brothers and sisters in Local 99, before moving to a long-term care facility to stand with health care workers, who just won their own union on July 27.

We ended the caravan at the University of Southern California, where grad students and community members called on the university to disband its private police department to fund housing and community services.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2020



**SEIU 721 ENDORSES DAVID GREEN FOR LACERA  
MEMBERS CAN CAST BALLOTS BETWEEN AUG 5-31**

**SEIU 721 MEMBERS RECORD SELFIE VIDEOS TO  
PUSH US SENATE TO PASS HEROES ACT**

SEIU 721 has endorsed David Green for re-election to the board of the Los Angeles County Retirement Association (LACERA).

David has worked for 20 years as a children's social worker at the LA County Department of Children and Family Services. He serves as our elected Treasurer at SEIU Local 721.

During his time on the LACERA Board, David Green has been instrumental in growing the LA County workers pension fund. He will continue to make sure our hard-earned benefits will be there for us when we retire by opposing any cuts to public employee pensions and prudently investing our pension funds.

We need David on the board to ensure County workers have a voice on the LACERA Board of Investments.

Members should receive an email with instructions on how to vote by August 5. Cast your ballot between August 5 and August 31.



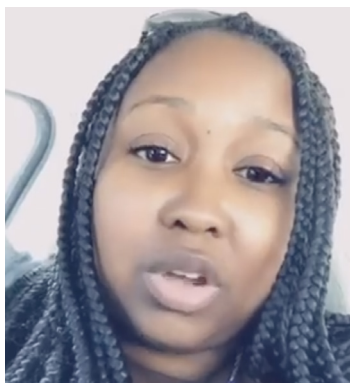
SEIU 721 are getting in U.S. Senators' faces to tell them in personal terms why they should vote for the \$3 trillion HEROES Act to save vital public services and the jobs of the frontline workers who provide them.

SEIU 721 members are using their cellphones to record selfie videos explaining the work they do, how COVID-19 is affecting them, and how they will face layoffs and furloughs if the Senate fails to approve the HEROES bill.

Because the House of Representatives already passed the bill in June and both of California's U.S. Senators already support it, SEIU 721 video makers are targeting senators in neighboring states, like Arizona Senator Martha McSally.

Down in the polls, Senator McSally faces a tough reelection — in part because voters in her swing state think she is too beholden to President Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who have abandoned frontline public service workers.

Visit [SEIU721.org](https://seiu721.org) to watch the videos and learn how to record your own. Add your voice to the fight!



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2020



### SEIU 721 MEMBER CECILIA HERNANDEZ-GARCIA WINS SEAT ON VCERA BOARD

SEIU 721 members congratulate Cecilia Hernandez-Garcia on her election to the Ventura County Employees' Retirement Association (VCERA) pension board.

Cecilia is an SEIU 721 leader and former bargaining team member and won the endorsement and strong backing of SEIU 721 members.

As the only woman and person of color on the board, Cecilia is a welcome addition to VCERA, where she joins our other recently elected SEIU member trustee, Jordan Roberts.

At her first meeting, Cecilia voted to bring the review of disability retirement applications back under the authority of the VCERA Board, instead of handing this review over to County Risk Management — which would have been a clear conflict of interest.

When we vote together, we win!



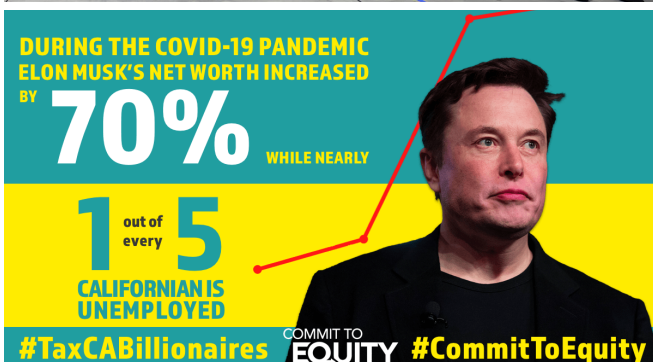
### COMMIT TO EQUITY CAMPAIGN CALLS ON CA LEADERS TO FIGHT WEALTH INEQUALITY

SEIU 721 member leader Markeitha Harris was one of speakers featured in the Los Angeles launch of the Commit to Equity campaign, which calls on California's elected officials to take bold action to fund our

communities. The campaign kicked off with car caravans and news conferences throughout California. Dozens of cars rolled through DTLA with drivers honking their horns and displaying signs calling for economic and racial equity.

Speakers noted that, at a time when more than five million Californians have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic, the wealth of California's five richest billionaires has increased by double digits. Tesla CEO Elon Musk has seen his net worth grow by 70 percent.

The Commit to Equity Campaign coalition includes a cross-section of labor and social justice organizations who are demanding that California legislators dismantle the systemic inequality oppressing Black and Brown people and fund investments to lift up our communities.





## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2020



### ST. JOHN'S WORKERS RATIFY STRONG NEW 3-YEAR CONTRACT BY 98% MARGIN

SEIU 721 members at St. John's Well Child and Family Center have ratified a new contract with an overwhelming 98% YES vote. The strong new 3-year contract raises employee wages, adds new classifications to our bargaining unit, increases funds for education & training, strengthens contract language and more!

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased demand for services at St. John's. Clinic workers are on the frontlines, providing direct care to people experiencing homelessness in South LA, which has the second highest population of homeless individuals in LA County.

A new contract that values and respects the work we do helps ensure we're able to continue providing the high-quality care our communities deserve.



### NEVHC WORKERS APPROVE CHANGE TO COLA TO PRESERVE VITAL SERVICES AND JOBS

Northeast Valley Health Corporation members have approved a proposed change to the Cost of Living Adjustment due to financial hardships from the COVID-19 pandemic. The approval

means NEVHC will be distributing half of the 3.5% COLA increase to employees in August and the remaining 1.75% in January 2021.

NEVHC is a \$100 million agency that operates 16 health centers in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys. Workers provide a variety of medical, dental and behavioral health services. In recent years, SEIU 721 NEVHC workers have fought to prevent layoffs and preserve vital services that are more in demand now than ever because of COVID-19.

NEVHC members have been working hard on the frontlines, and the COLA change will help keep our clinics open and serving our communities.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2020



At our recent essential workers online hearing, union members shared their COVID-19 experiences with each other and voiced their concerns to LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, as well as with union leaders, like SEIU 721 Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez.

Participants included SEIU 721 members, like Fiona Henlon, a Registered Nurse with LA County and member of the BU 311 Bargaining Committee, as well as Mike Robinson, a Lyft driver with the Mobile Workers Alliance, who has been on the forefront of ride share driver unionizing efforts. They joined other essential workers and Labor advocates to testify

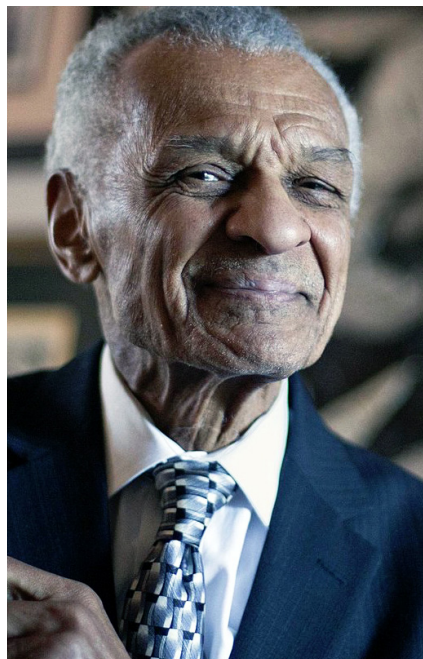
about the ongoing conditions essential workers face as COVID-19 ravages LA County, especially in communities of color, which have suffered disproportionately.

### ESSENTIAL WORKERS JOIN ONLINE HEARING CONVENED BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

### SEIU 721 MOURNS THE LOSS OF TWO PIONEERING HEROES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT



Congressman John Lewis



Reverend Cordy Vivian

SEIU 721 members mourned the loss of two heroes of the Civil Rights movement in the same week in July. Congressman John Lewis and Reverend Cordy Vivian led early struggles for racial and economic justice, leaving an indelible mark on our nation's history.

Representative John Lewis not only led the historic fight for racial justice in Selma, Alabama as a young man, he channeled his passion for racial equality into a lifelong career in public service, becoming known as the "Conscience of the U.S. Congress."

The Reverend Cordy "C.T." Vivian was renowned for both his oratorical skill and legendary organizing abilities. He dedicated his life to service in the church and in public life.

These two extraordinary men exemplified the best of American character. Both were awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation's highest civilian honor, by former President Barack Obama. Rest in Power!



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JULY-AUGUST 2020



### LA CITIES SEIU 721 MEMBERS FIGHT COVID-19 AND RACK UP WORKPLACE WINS

### INLAND REGION MEMBERS FIGHT FURLONGHS, CAMPAIGN FOR HEROES AND BUILD THE UNION



SEIU 721 LA Cities members are fighting to protect themselves and the communities they serve against COVID-19 and racking up some impressive workplace victories in the process.

SEIU 721 members at LAWA took on management for refusing to distribute protective masks while prohibiting members from wearing masks with an SEIU logo. After an SEIU 721 member at LAWA succumbed to COVID-19, SEIU 721 threatened to file a ULP, causing LAWA management to change the policy.

At the same time, Azusa SEIU 721 members ratified a strong new contract with raises with a unanimous vote and La Puente members are scheduled to vote the first week of August.

Finally, LA City SEIU 721 members helped the Targeted Local Hire (TLH) program avoid the recent hiring freeze and are actively working with departments to fill the highest priority positions.



Around the Inland Region, SEIU 721 members buckled down in the face of the pandemic and racked up some big wins.

City of Riverside members are back at the bargaining table after the contract expired on June 30. The City of Riverside team already has won the return to work of nearly 100 members from furloughs caused by COVID-19.

In response to rising case counts, Riverside County again closed its doors to the public on July 13. Our union has been meeting with Riverside County management to go over concerns about re-opening planning. In the meantime, Riverside County SEIU 721 members are joining efforts to pass the HEROES Act, with dozens manning the phone banks and more than 20 members recording selfie videos to send to wavering U.S. Senators.

Despite the pandemic, the SEIU 721 Inland Region has signed up 220 new members to our union in the last two months — proof that these fights are just making us stronger.

# THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION FOR WORKERS IN MODERN TIMES



## IT'S TIME TO WIN BACK THE WHITE HOUSE

CURING COVID-19, REBUILDING OUR ECONOMY AND DELIVERING RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE BEGINS BY WINNING THE WHITE HOUSE IN 2020

**T**he stakes have never been higher for workers in America. Nearly 5 million Americans are infected with COVID-19 and more than 150,000 are dead in the wake of a shamefully incompetent response from the Trump Administration. The American economy is in shambles with 25 million people out of work. Frustration over police brutality and systemic racism has bubbled over into street protests in nearly every major city in America.

Workers across America are fighting back. We're working to pass the \$3 trillion HEROES Act to save state and local government services and prevent layoffs and furloughs of front line workers. We're hitting the streets with Black Lives Matter and hitting legislators' phones with the Commit to Equity Campaign to fight for racial and economic justice.

What's become clear is that — at nearly every turn — this administration has either failed to help workers when they're down or worked to actively silence their voices.

That's why our union SEIU 721 is putting together workplace committees to give members a vehicle to channel their energy and creativity into electing a president, members of congress, state legislators and other leaders who will partner with working people instead of actively working against them.

In the age of COVID-19 and social distancing, we're going to need some different strategies for "putting heat on the street." Knocking on doors will be replaced by texting, calling and a bunch of new techniques using video, social media and other technologies.

Please be on the look out for messages about how to get involved. Look for our SEIU 721 slate card in your region with all our election recommendations. We need to get active and get ready!



Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

**Digital  
Union  
Voices**

To prevent furloughs and stop layoffs, we need to pass the HEROES Act NOW!  
To organize during a lockdown, we need Digital Union Voices. Text VOICES to 31996 today!