



SEIU LOCAL 721  
1545 WILSHIRE BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90017

# SEIU 721



# 2020-21

PRESIDENT'S ROAD AHEAD REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



## “THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE CANDIDATES.”

I've heard that from workers during every presidential race, and I heard it a lot in 2016. After four years of Donald Trump, I think it's safe to say that voting matters, elections have consequences and it makes a big difference who we put in the White House.

Joe Biden has laid out a detailed and ambitious agenda for helping working people and expanding the middle class by helping workers join unions. He's promised to:

- Check the abuse of corporate power over labor and hold corporate executives personally accountable for violations of labor laws;
- Stop wage theft and raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour;
- Crack down on employers that interfere with union organizing drives and retaliate against employees who organize;
- Incentivize unionization and collective bargaining; and

- Bar companies that violate labor laws and pay poverty wages from government contracting.

Biden has pledged to support and sign the PRO Act, a new federal law that would encourage unionization in the private sector by banning the most egregious tactics used by corporations to block unionization, like captive audience meetings; expediting union elections; and compelling employers to bargain after workers vote for a union.

Biden also backs a national law guaranteeing public employees the collective bargaining rights. He also supports an end to so-called “Right to Work” laws aimed at crippling public employee unions.

We made a difference by putting Biden in the White House. Now we need to help him get the job done.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff



*Gilda Valdez*



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2020-2021

## PRESIDENT'S ROAD AHEAD REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721  
PRESIDENT BOB SCHOONOVER

While I'm glad 2020 is behind us, it confirmed two really important things for me. First, SEIU 721 members are courageous, committed and resourceful enough to hold our communities together in the face of the worst crisis in modern times. Second, these same qualities helped us build a union that fought to protect frontline workers when the White House refused to.

Crisis after crisis put our union to the test throughout 2020. Still we:

- Ratified new contracts in Riverside County, San Bernardino County, the City of Riverside and numerous other cities, nonprofit agencies and special districts.
- Forced local governments to provide PPE for healthcare and other frontline workers, and we directly sourced and paid for PPE when they failed. SEIU 721 bought millions of N95 masks directly from brokers and distributed them to members.
- Joined with allies to create the #ProtectAllWorkers campaign to fight for paid sick and family leave and PPE for frontline workers as well as stimulus funds to save local government services and jobs.
- Led the LA efforts honoring George Floyd and fighting for racial and economic justice.
- Joined the successful nationwide SEIU campaign to defeat Donald Trump. SEIU 721 members took part in an effort that made 39 million phone calls,

sent 80 million texts and knocked on two million doors to get out the vote for pro-worker candidates and policies up and down the ballot.

Our hard work paid off big time with a new administration that embraces working people instead of attacking them. Here's how we can put our win to work:

- Pass #Stimulus4Workers. President Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID stimulus package contains \$350 billion in state relief funds that will help prevent layoffs and furloughs. We need to help pass it at all costs.
- Take the Fight for \$15 nationwide. SEIU 721 helped make FF\$15 a reality in California. A national \$15 minimum wage would raise standards for all workers and gut efforts to contract out our work to for-profit corporations.
- Advocate for true voting rights reform and immigration reform so workers have a real and lasting voice in government.
- Pass the federal PRO Act to roll back state-level anti-union “Right to Work” laws and union-busting schemes funded by ultra-Right Wing foundations so we can help workers win Unions for All.

Brothers and sisters, let's leave 2020 behind and get on the road to economic justice in 2021.

In solidarity,

*Bob Schoonover*

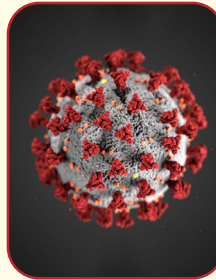




# SEIU 721 FOUGHT TO PROTECT ALL WORKERS IN 2020

SEIU 721 MEMBERS BATTLED COVID-19 ON THE FRONTLINES, PROTECTED WORKERS FROM THE ECONOMIC FALLOUT OF THE PANDEMIC, HELPED DEFEAT DONALD TRUMP AND FACED DOWN THE RIGHT-WING PLOT TO BUST OUR UNION

JANUARY  
2020



FEBRUARY  
2020

U.S. declares COVID-19 public health emergency on February 2, one day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency. At this point, nearly 10,000 people have been diagnosed with the virus, and more than 200 have died.

MARCH  
2020



APRIL  
2020

SEIU 721 delivers on PPE for LA County Nurses and front-line workers, winning ruling from LA County allowing N95 surgical masks on request.

MAY  
2020

SEIU 721 members join other union workers outside Trump National Golf Club in Palos Verdes to call for federal support for frontline workers.

JUNE  
2020

SEIU 721 State of the Union Tele Town Hall draws more than 18,000 callers.

JULY  
2020



AUGUST  
2020

SEIU Local 721 members at Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District win new contract after two-year fight.

SEPTEMBER  
2020



OCTOBER  
2020

Massive union-backed get-out-the-vote program helps power largest voter turnout in US presidential election history, powering Biden-Harris victory.

NOVEMBER  
2020



DECEMBER  
2020

Riverside County members win a good four-year contract with raises and bonuses that also protects members' healthcare and retirement.

San Bernardino County SEIU 721 members reach TA on a strong four-year deal with 11 percent raises.



SEIU 721 secures agreement from LA County avoiding layoffs and demotions due to budget impacts of COVID-19.

SEIU 721 clinic workers at St. John's reach TA on new three-year contract that raises employee wages, increases funds for education and training, and strengthens contract language.



SEIU 721 and Coalition of City Unions win agreement to stop furloughs for City of LA workers.



SEIU 721 secures emergency telework order directing managers to allow LA County workers to work from home "to the maximum extent possible" in the face of the COVID-19 surge.



SEIU 721 joins other locals and allies launching #ProtectAllWorkers campaign to provide paid sick and family leave plus PPE for front-line workers and stimulus for states to save vital services and jobs.

PROTECT  
ALL WORKERS

SEIU 721 joins massive June 8th LA County funeral procession honoring George Floyd in the wake of his murder by Minneapolis police.



SEIU 721 nurse practitioners win huge victory on AB 890, granting them full authority to practice to the full extent of their education and training.



SEIU 721 organizes effort to fight back against billionaire Charles Koch-funded effort to trick SEIU 721 members into quitting their union.



Appeals Court throws out criminal case against four SEIU 721 social workers in Gabriel Fernandez case, saying systemic reform, not scapegoating, is needed to keep children safe.



SEIU unveils \$150 million campaign to defeat Donald Trump, focused on turning out voters of color in eight key battleground states.



SEIU 721 leads lobbying effort at the County Board of Supervisors to prevent delay of implementation of \$15 minimum wage.

SEIU 721 members join July 20th #StrikeforBlackLives for racial and economic justice.



SEIU 721 advocacy campaign preserves LA County workers' 2.5% raise.



With LA County hospitals buckling under the strain of nearly one million COVID-19 infections, SEIU 721 nurses send hundreds of letters to Governor Gavin Newsom, demanding reinforcements from military medical personnel.



"2020 put workers to the test like no year in recent memory: worldwide pandemic; outrage over police shootings and an unhinged president. But 721 members stood strong!"

Lillian Cabral  
Secretary, SEIU 721

Los Angeles Times profiles SEIU 721 frontline workers Reuben Rios, Esbeida Refugio and Simboa Wright.

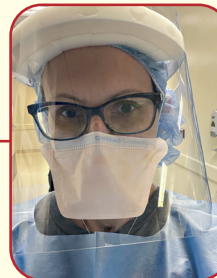


SEIU 721 holds #ProtectAllWorkers townhall with City of LA Mayor Eric Garcetti, LA County Board of Supervisors Chair Kathryn Barger and members to coordinate lobbying for stimulus funds.



SEIU 721 wins COVID-19 night shift differential for Ventura County Fire Dispatchers.

SEIU wins unanimous ruling at Cal/OSHA to protect worker safety during COVID-19 pandemic.



SEIU 721 City of Riverside workers reach TA on one-year deal aimed at heading off take-backs on healthcare.



## PRESIDENT'S ROAD AHEAD REPORT 2020-21

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ON THE FRONTLINES, IN THE STREETS AND AT THE BALLOT BOX

# PROTECT ALL WORKERS



SEIU 721 MEMBERS FOUGHT TO PROTECT ALL WORKERS



1

### BATTLED THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

At the outset of the pandemic, SEIU 721 members literally held society together, often risking their own health and safety to keep SoCal cities and counties running, many without adequate protection.

There were frontline heroes like Natalie Gordon, a nurse at the LAC+USC Medical Center, who fought to save COVID-19 patients while scrounging for PPE and living in a tent in her backyard between shifts so she wouldn't risk infecting her children. And there were the children's social workers, eligibility workers, traffic control officers, sanitation workers, airport drivers and others from the Tri-Counties to the Inland Area to LA and beyond who helped us move forward.

SEIU 721 fought to protect workers at every turn, requiring governments to supply appropriate PPE for our members and buying directly from brokers if they couldn't provide it. We won teleworking privileges for the majority of public workers and demanded disinfection and social distancing rules in offices that remained open. We secured pay premiums and paid sick leave and protected workers who refused to work under unsafe conditions.



2

### SAVED VITAL SERVICES AND PROTECTED JOBS

Throughout the pandemic, politicians praised frontline and essential workers. Media outlets wrote fawning profiles and corporations produced slick commercials calling us heroes. Meanwhile, the Trump Administration handed out trillions in bailouts to corporations while leaving state and local governments to fend for themselves on huge budget shortfalls and essential workers vulnerable to layoffs.

SEIU 721 members said "Hell no!" and swung into action. Our union joined with allies to launch the #ProtectAllWorkers campaign to provide paid sick and family leave along with PPE for frontline workers and to lobby Congress for stimulus funds for state and local governments to save vital services and jobs. We lobbied Governor Newsom to release PPE and won big victories at Cal/OSHA to protect nurses, healthcare workers and other essential employees.

We preserved scheduled raises, headed off October layoffs in LA County and recently reached an accord with the City of LA, beating back layoffs and furloughs for this fiscal year.



3

### FOUGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

SEIU 721 stands for economic justice for all workers. But we will never achieve economic justice without racial justice. The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police forced a national reckoning on racism in America. His name — along with Ahmaud Arbery's and Breonna Taylor's — is just the most recent in a long and painful list.

SEIU 721 members took to the streets to mourn George Floyd — first, in a massive June 8th funeral procession in the streets of LA, and then as part of a national day-long Strike for Black Lives on July 20th. Actions like ours, replicated throughout the country, are changing the conversation about race and policing. A survey conducted by the Washington Post in October found that more than two in three Americans believe police forces aren't doing enough to treat Blacks equally with whites. This is a start, but our society needs to do more to examine, recognize and address structural racism in our nation — a country that still denies people of color the same access to education, jobs, credit and many other avenues of opportunity enjoyed by whites.



4

### DEFEATED TRUMP AND TOOK ON UNION BUSTERS

When it comes to his manipulation of working people, former New York Times labor columnist Steven Greenhouse compared former President Donald Trump to a sleight of hand magician. "With one hand he enchants the crowd, while the other hand, outside the spotlight, steadily pushes down on and squeezes workers day after day," he wrote.

Trump captivated workers in Rust Belt states with tough talk on China trade, but behind the scenes he was the worst president for workers in modern history — rolling back overtime protections for millions of workers, encouraging firms to classify workers as independent contractors, making it easier for companies to eliminate workers' pensions and dozens of other efforts.

He empowered a new breed of aggressive union busters, like the Freedom Foundation, to try to trick union members into dropping their membership.

In response, SEIU built a \$150 million grassroots campaign and helped defeat Trump by turning out an historic number of swing state voters. We finished the year by exposing the Koch Brothers-funded effort to bust our union and others.





SEIU 721 MEMBERS ARE READY TO LEAD THE FIGHT

## SEIU 721 IN 2021 THE ROAD AHEAD

FOR ECONOMIC AND RACIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL WORKERS



1

### #STIMULUS4WORKERS - WINNING FEDERAL RELIEF

Our union's top priority in 2021 is to protect our members and to save vital local government services and the jobs of the workers who provide them. This means passing #stimulus4workers at the federal level.

Massive unemployment caused by COVID-19 economic shutdowns has hammered state and local revenue collection. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that state and local governments will need \$1 trillion in federal support to avoid fiscal collapse and massive cutbacks. California Governor Gavin Newsom predicted a revenue decline of more than 22% and a \$54 billion shortfall for fiscal year 2020-2021.

The good news is that President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus package would rescue state and local governments, heading off the needs for cuts that could tank any economic recovery. His package includes \$350 billion in emergency aid to state and local governments. We will do everything in our power to ensure that Congress passes #stimulus4workers.



2

### THE FIGHT FOR \$15 - A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT

Our union has helped lead the Fight for \$15 — first in Los Angeles and then across California — because the American economy won't work if work doesn't pay. The current \$7.25 federal minimum wage won't pay the rent, let alone support a family, and keeps workers stuck in poverty.

With opinion polls showing two out of three Americans support the increase and both houses of Congress under Democratic control, we now have a real chance to take the Fight for \$15 nationwide. President Biden on January 8 pledged to deliver a national minimum wage increase in the first 100 days of his administration.

"People in both parties now recognize it's time to raise the minimum wage so hard-working people earn at least \$15 an hour," Biden said in January.

Our union continues to lead the Fight for \$15 because it's the right thing to do, but it also helps unionized workers who already make far more than \$15/hour. By raising standards, we will reduce the incentive to contract out government work to corporations who compete by paying poverty wages.



3

### FIGHTING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND TRUE DEMOCRACY

Our union is committed to racial and economic justice for all — the vision of a just, inclusive America, where every worker is respected, protected and paid fair wages.

Contrast this with the January 6th insurrection in Washington, DC, where White supremacists and right-wing militia members, egged on by Donald Trump and his allies, stormed the Capitol with the intent of forcing Congress to overturn the presidential election.

For decades, the ultra-rich and the right wing of the Republican Party have coddled and empowered racists and extremists, scapegoated immigrants and disenfranchised voters of color in order to win elections. The political Frankenstein they created now threatens the foundations of our country.

To fight this, we need fundamental election reform to guarantee the right of every American to register, vote and have their vote count. We need immigration reform to prevent the exploitation of immigrants and create a fair path to citizenship. Stay tuned for our strategy to build multiracial democracy.



4

### HELPING WORKERS WIN UNIONS FOR ALL

Our union is behind the fight for Unions for All, and we finally have the pieces in place in Washington, DC to make it happen.

It's obvious that workers in unions fare much better than their non-union counterparts — they have better benefits and earn on average 11 percent more. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates workers need unions more than ever in a crisis. Union workers won enhanced safety measures, premium pay, paid sick leave and more say on furloughs, work-share arrangements and strategies to save their jobs that non-union workers couldn't.

Already in January, President Biden is signaling support for union workers, choosing Boston Mayor Marty Walsh as Labor Secretary — the first former Labor leader ever nominated to the post — and firing two notoriously anti-worker attorneys at the NLRB. He issued executive orders boosting all federal workers to \$15/hour and restored their right to collective bargaining. And he pledged again to back the Protecting the Right to Organize, or PRO Act, which would roll back anti-union "Right to Work" laws in some states and make it easier for workers to organize.







## PRESIDENT'S ROAD AHEAD REPORT 2020-21

Public pension funds that invest more than \$1 trillion of union workers' pensions are putting pressure on BlackRock, the world's largest asset management firm, to increase disclosure of its political giving in the wake of the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.

The letter was signed by nearly two-dozen elected pension fund trustees, state treasurers and professional managers from across the United States, including several SEIU 721 members and staff, such as elected LACERA board members Vivian Gray and David Green, LACERS board member Elizabeth Lee and Ramón Rubalcava from the CalPERS Board of Administration.

"We expect Black Rock, as the world's largest asset manager, to demonstrate excellence and leadership in best practices...Had Black Rock followed its own policy recommendations, perhaps the firm could have avoided the reputational damage related to its political action committee (PAC) donating \$85,000 to fifteen legislators who continued to deny the results of the 2020 presidential election even after the invasion of the US Capitol," said the letter.

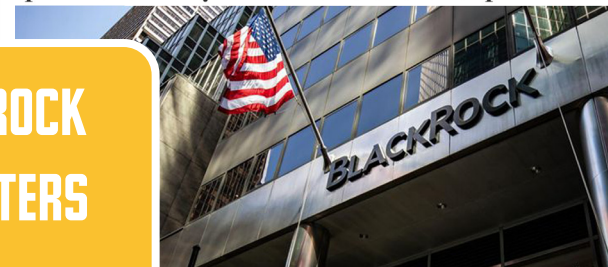


**"The firms that invest workers' pensions need to stop spending corporate PAC money against workers' interests."**

**David Green**  
Treasurer  
SEIU Local 721

### The Washington Post

Pension funds demand BlackRock disclose its political activity in the wake of U.S. Capitol riots



## UNION PENSION FUNDS BLAST BLACKROCK DONATIONS TO CAPITOL RIOT SUPPORTERS

## FREEDOM FOUNDATION SCAM TRIES TO TRICK WORKERS INTO LEAVING UNION

Dr. Lynnette Marie Long is used to fast talkers. A career LA County Child Support Specialist and pastor of an on-line ministry, Dr. Long has street smarts for days. Still, she was deceived into dropping her union membership by a slick, right wing-funded union-busting operation called the Freedom Foundation.

Several months ago, Dr. Long received a call from a Freedom Foundation operative. "He asked why I'd want to be a member of a union that doesn't take care of me?"

"I pushed back. I said the union was a place where I felt protected," Dr. Long said. When the Freedom Foundation organizer heard this, he changed his pitch. "He told me, if I really liked my union, I could stay a member but not pay dues if I would just sign the postcard he sent me. It sounded ok, so I signed it."

Two of Dr. Long's friends at SEIU 721 were surprised to learn she had dropped her membership and called her. "They said, 'we knew that wasn't you,'" Dr. Long said.

Dr. Long was shocked to hear that the Freedom Foundation is part of a multi-state union-busting organization funded by ultra-right wing billionaire Charles Koch. She said she had been deceived and withdrew her opt-out form.

"My advice to other union members — be careful and read the fine print before you sign stuff," said Dr. Long.



**"My advice to other union members is be careful and read the fine print before you sign stuff."**

**Dr. Lynnette Marie Long**  
Child Support Specialist II

## PRESIDENT'S ROAD AHEAD REPORT 2020-21



## CITY OF LA MEMBERS OVERWHELMINGLY RATIFY 2020-2022 CONTRACT AMENDMENT

### Timeline of the LA City MOU Accord

- COVID shuts LA economy and devastates city revenue collection
- Mayor proposes 26 furlough days in April budget proposal
- SEIU President Bob Schoonover blasts proposal to balance budget on the backs of frontline and essential workers in LA Times
- SEIU 721 negotiates hiring freeze and SIP program as alternatives
- After the second wave, SEIU negotiates two unpaid holidays and delayed sick leave cash outs to close the deal on no layoffs and no furloughs



**"Congratulations to SEIU 721 LA City members for standing #UnionStrong!"**

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

In the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we ratified the 2020-2022 City of Los Angeles Contract Amendment with an incredible 79% YES vote, closing the door on layoffs and furloughs and securing a strong future for City of LA workers.

Since we began this fight almost a year ago, the City's economic situation went from bad to worse. That's why the ratification of this Contract Amendment is a tremendous accomplishment.

From the onset, we made it clear that the City cannot call our members heroes one day and turn around and balance the budget on their backs.

Despite the unprecedented \$674 million budget deficit for this fiscal year, SEIU 721 members unity and collective strength helped them avoid furloughs and layoffs this year and set them up well to avoid them in the future.

But our work is far from over. The newly ratified contract amendment contains a reopener for January 2022, which means that every member needs to remain #UnionStrong. We must continue organizing and mobilizing to bring home a federal stimulus package to help rescue vital city services and the workers who provide them.