

JUNE-JULY 2021

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



**A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721
PRESIDENT DAVID GREEN**

WHY UNIONS MATTER

Like everyone else who knew her, I am devastated by Linda Dent's death. I had the pleasure of knowing her and the privilege of working alongside her for years. She believed it was her job to listen to members, to focus their power and to help them use it to win change. As I assume the presidency of SEIU 721, I'm committed to carrying out what she started.

Linda Dent believed unions were the best chance for ordinary people to fix society's biggest problems — and I agree with her. Here's why:

Labor is the only movement in America with the power, organization and social conscience to secure justice in our society.

We are the only force in American society fighting every day to close the widening gap between rich and poor. We are the strongest voice pushing for racial and economic justice. We're the last line of defense protecting American democracy against a small sliver of ultra-rich political donors and big corporations who want to cut their own taxes and eliminate everything from the minimum wage to environmental, health and safety regulations. They've rewritten the rules of the U.S. economy and now they want to roll back voting rights and lock in their gains so Americans can't fight back at the ballot box.

The Extreme Right and the ultra-rich are clinging to their own power by trying to cripple the Labor movement. We need to strengthen unions and fight back. Here's how we can do it.

We must ensure workers have the right to organize unions without intimidation. This means fighting union-busting groups like the Freedom Foundation and phony "Right to Work" laws. We must ensure the right to strike and protest. When we hit the streets and demonstrate the power of our collective voice — like we did in more than 100 LA County actions for Heroes Pay — we can do anything. And we must pass federal reforms like the PRO Act to level the playing field.

We need to fight to raise wages and standards for all workers. It's the right thing to do and it helps public employees.

I get asked from time to time why a union that represents government workers is involved with the Fight for \$15 and helping fast food workers and Uber and Lyft drivers. That's easy. Economic studies show time after time that, after a city or state raises the minimum wage, it triggers wage increases up the ladder. We also know that governments are much less likely to contract out our work to for-profit corporations when they are required to pay fair wages and benefits.

Unions work — workers know it and corporations know it. Recent polls show unions are more popular now than at any time since World War II. What needs to change is the laws put in place to block organizing. I know what Linda would say: "What are we waiting for?"



David Green



The Battle in



SEIU 721 DELIVERS THOUSANDS OF MESSAGES FROM FRONTLINE WORKERS TO LA COUNTY SUPERVISORS

As LA County prepared to adopt a budget without cost-of-living increases or other meaningful recognition for the frontline workers who kept LA County running during the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of county workers expressed their reactions through personal messages delivered to the Board of Supervisors at a press conference Monday, June 28th.

Hand-signed cards reading “Disappointed,” “Exploited,” “Abused,”

“Under-appreciated” and “Irate” covered a massive display in front of the County’s Hall of Administration. SEIU 721 President David Green presented the cards along with Cynthia Mitchell, an ER Nurse at the LAC+USC Medical Center; Alex Valdez, a Senior Cook at the Probation Department; Lawrence Reyes, a Community Worker with the Department of Mental Health; and Markeitha Harris, a Registered Nurse at the Department of Public Health.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021



for Heroes Pay



SEIU 721 MEMBERS VISIT EACH LA COUNTY SUPERVISOR TO DEMAND SUPPORT FOR FRONTLINE HEROES

Groups of SEIU 721 members fanned out across LA County to the field offices of each LA County supervisor to demand support for our frontline workers. We started off on Monday, June 28 at Supervisor Kathryn Barger's Lancaster Office. The following day, we barreled through the rest. Members found Supervisor Hilda Solis at her East LA Office, where they described their pandemic experiences and their disappointment with LA County's outrageous offer. SEIU 721 President David Green joined members at Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's Van Nuys Office, where he gave an

impassioned speech about essential workers.

Members also visited Supervisor Barger's Pasadena and Chatsworth Offices, as well as Supervisor Holly Mitchell's Lennox Office and Supervisor Janice Hahn's Torrance Office.

SEIU 721 members let Supervisors know that it is flat-out insulting LA County is abandoning its frontline heroes — particularly given our union's advocacy efforts that helped deliver \$1.9 billion in stimulus funds.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021

BUDGET VICTORY IN THE CITY OF LA!

Thanks to the efforts of SEIU 721 members, the City of Los Angeles passed a landmark equity-based budget that prioritizes racial and economic justice and addresses the city's homelessness crisis over policing and incarceration.

On June 2, Mayor Eric Garcetti signed a 2021-2022 City Budget that includes funding for dozens of community reinvestment programs, including **750 additional positions in the Targeted Local Hire program** proposed and championed by SEIU 721.

This budget puts Los Angeles on track to restore City services cut during the 2008 financial crisis and uplift historically marginalized populations in our City by providing a pathway to good union jobs.

On top of that, we're still pushing for a game-changing agreement with the City to extend healthcare benefits and retirement benefits to part-time employees.

The budget win is a direct result of SEIU 721 and others' mobilization to win passage of the American Rescue Plan and secure \$1 billion in direct federal aid for the City.



- ★ **750 New Jobs for the Targeted Local Hire Program**
- ★ **Pushing for Health and Retirement Benefits for Part-Time Workers**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021



SEIU 721 Tri-Counties members in the City of Moorpark and at the Conejo Recreation and Parks District won strong new contracts with wage increases thanks to their solidarity and hard work.

SEIU 721 City of Moorpark members unanimously approved a two-year agreement with salary increases and bonuses.

The agreement grants a 2% cost of living adjustment beginning in July 2021, a one-time lump sum payment equivalent to 2% percent of base salary, and another 2% cost of living adjustment in July 2022.

SEIU 721 Conejo Recreation and Park District members also overwhelmingly approved a strong new contract with wage increases.

The new two-year contract includes a 2.25% salary increase in 2021 and a 2.75% increase in 2022.

CITY OF MOORPARK AND CONEJO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT BRING HOME CONTRACT WINS

CITY OF RIVERSIDE MEMBERS BUILD UNION STRENGTH TO WIN AT THE BARGAINING TABLE



City of Riverside members are gearing up to win at the bargaining table and the ballot box. While the bargaining team is deep in negotiations with the City, our Contract Action Teams and chapter members are busy building grassroots support in the field.



The COVID-19 pandemic brought home the importance of union membership for public employees. As a result, the Inland Region has become the fastest-growing region in our local, as new members join and contribute to COPE in droves. Many of the same local governments that leaned the hardest on public employees to keep vital services operating now are trying to balance their budgets on the backs of the same workers.

Members in Riverside aren't going to let that happen. We're hitting the streets and the phones to turn out voters for pro-worker candidates and ballot measures. Riverside members know that, not only do we make the city run, we also elect our own bosses. We're building the grassroots strength to remind them.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021

“This report blows up the old argument that you can’t fight climate change and create good jobs and a stronger economy at the same time.”

**Adolfo Granados
Environmental Committee
SEIU 721**



SEIU 721 ENDORSES CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ESTIMATED TO PRODUCE 1 MILLION NEW JOBS

California could create 418,000 new jobs per year through a program to cut climate pollution in half over the next decade, according to a provocative new report by one of the world’s leading energy economists.

The “Program for Economic Recovery and Clean Energy Transition in California,” by University of Massachusetts-Amherst Economic Professor Robert Pollin, lays out a bold plan for fighting climate change and already has won the endorsement of 19 major Labor unions, including SEIU 721.

Pollin’s report is notable because it debunks the central big business argument against a transition from fossil fuels to a green economy — that it’s an unaffordable job killer — with detailed figures.

Pollin estimates that as many as 626,000 additional good new jobs would be created by coupling green investments with upgrades to the state’s aging infrastructure, including nearly 100,000 new jobs in the public sector.

California is already committed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to reach net zero emissions by 2045. Achieving

the 2030 goal, along with upgrading the state’s infrastructure and agricultural economy, will require \$138 billion per year in combined investments in clean energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, and displaced worker relief programs. Half of total spending, or about \$70 billion per year, could be provided by private investors, and half through public spending.

Adolfo Granados is a supporter. Granados, an Eligibility Worker II for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services and a member of SEIU 721’s Environmental Justice Committee, developed a passion for environmental issues in the 7th grade when he found himself working alongside farmworkers in the Central Valley.

“My dad was a farmworker. He thought my five siblings and I should understand where he came from, so he made us work the fields in Fresno,” Granados said. “That work — the pesticides, the heat and the punishing effects of droughts — forces you to understand how pollution and climate change hurts working people. A plan to stop climate change and protect workers is what we need.”

Read the full report at californiaclimatejobsplan.com.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021



SEIU 721 MEMBERS CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH WITH A DAY OF SERVICE HONORING LINDA DENT

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY HONORS THE MEMORY OF SEIU 721 PRESIDENT LINDA DENT



Reginald B. Jones-Sawyer, Sr.
California State Assemblymember
District 59, South Los Angeles -D

Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer, a former member of SEIU 721's professional managers association, adjourned the June 17th legislative session by honoring the memory of late SEIU 721 President Linda Dent.

President Linda Dent would not have had it any other way. Dozens of active and retired SEIU 721 members celebrated Juneteenth and the memory of President Linda Dent by volunteering their time distributing food with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank and Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell at Earvin "Magic" Johnson Park.

While the economy is re-opening, the long-term financial effects of the global pandemic are still being felt by thousands of our food-insecure neighbors.

Before the pandemic, an estimated 1 in 5 people in Los Angeles County lived with food insecurity, but after the COVID-19 outbreak, it is estimated that 1 in 4 of our neighbors faces hunger.

Learn more at www.lafoodbank.org



On Thursday, June 17th, the California State Assembly paid tribute to our 'Lioness of Labor' with a session adjournment in honor of Linda Dent, and Assemblymembers Reggie Jones-Sawyer and Wendy Carrillo both delivered moving memorials.

"Linda's reputation extended beyond being an advocate for her community and she became known as a fierce union leader," said Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer, a long-time member of SEIU 721, who served as Director of Asset Management and as Assistant Deputy Mayor for the City of Los Angeles.

"[She] ensured that working individuals were guaranteed necessary protections. She truly dedicated her life to uplifting the lives of working people," he added.

Sawyer recalled how he would turn to Linda for advice when he faced tough personal and political challenges.

"Linda would always say, 'Reggie, we got you.' I know she's gone, but we're gonna continue Linda's work," said Sawyer, looking toward the heavens. "Because, Linda, we got you."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021

Sharonda Wade Appointed to Key Panel on Child Safety



SEIU 721 PRESIDENT DAVID GREEN TAPS VETERAN SOCIAL WORKER FOR KEY CHILD SAFETY PANEL

SEIU 721 President David Green has appointed SEIU 721 Executive Board member Sharonda Wade to a key decision-making panel at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services tasked with implementing major departmental reforms to improve safety and outcomes for children in LA County's foster care system.

Sharonda will serve on the LA County DCFS Outcomes Driven Advisory Team (ODAT), a group of Children's Social Workers and department personnel charged with crafting and implementing reforms in LA County's child welfare system in the wake of the death of Anthony Avalos, a 10-year-old Lancaster boy in the DCFS caseload who was allegedly tortured and murdered by his mother and her boyfriend.

"Sharonda Wade is a force of nature and the right person to fight for and implement the reforms we need to keep LA County

children safe," said SEIU 721 President David Green, who is himself a 20-year veteran Children's Social Worker.

"I've been on both sides of the DCFS system," said Sharonda Wade, who is a Supervisory Children's Social Worker.

"Growing up in South Central Los Angeles, my mom, sister and I were poor. Not just 'couldn't-afford-the-latest-fashions' poor or 'only-ate-peanut-butter-sandwiches' poor, but 'today-we're-gonna-walk-to-the-beach-and-beg' poor."

At 19, Sharonda took on the responsibility of raising her 15-year-old sister to keep their family together. She went on to attend Cal State Long Beach, while working three jobs and commuting via public transit.

"I'm grateful for my work now and the difference I get to make in the lives of the families I assist," Wade said.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021



Governor Gavin Newsom, LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, SEIU 721 President David Green and representatives from Southern California clinics and healthcare providers visited Six Flags Magic Mountain to announce the giveaway of 50,000 free theme park tickets to Californians who receive at least their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by June 16.

The partnership with Six Flags is the latest in a series of incentives to motivate Californians in the hardest hit communities to get vaccinated. The providers selected to distribute free theme park tickets, which include St. John's Well Child and Family Center and other clinics with SEIU-represented workers, have demonstrated an ability to reach communities with hesitancy about receiving the vaccine. For more information about tickets, visit: Covid19.ca.gov/Vax-For-The-Win



SEIU 721 members at the Los Angeles LGBT Center celebrated Pride Month and demonstrated their Union pride with an ice cream social at the LA LGBT Center's Schrader site.

SEIU 721 AND CLINICS JOIN GOVERNOR NEWSOM TO ANNOUNCE "VAX FOR THE WIN" GIVEAWAY

SEIU 721 MEMBERS AT THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER CELEBRATE PRIDE AT SCHRADER SITE



LGBTQ Pride Month is celebrated every June to commemorate the June 28, 1969 Stonewall uprising, when thousands of protestors took to the streets of New York City in response to the arrest and interrogation of Gay and Lesbian bar patrons at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan. The resulting six-day protest was a turning point in the LGBTQ Civil Rights movement.

SEIU 721 members at the LA LGBT Center are currently negotiating a new contract. We're marking Pride Month with a commemoration of our community's struggle for Civil Rights, our Union solidarity and our commitment to providing excellent service to the Center's clients.



Know Your Rights!

Weingarten Rights: A key protection provided by union membership

Weingarten Rights might be the most valuable protection provided by union membership, but many workers haven't even heard of them.

Named after the 1975 Supreme Court case that upheld them — *NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc.* — Weingarten Rights ensure that any union member facing an investigatory interview with his or her supervisor where the member reasonably believes that the interview may lead to a disciplinary action has a legal right to the presence of union representation during the interview.

What is an investigatory interview?

An investigatory interview is any meeting in which an employer questions an employee to obtain information that could be used as a basis for discipline.

Here are some scenarios that may justify invoking your Weingarten Rights:

- You are called to a meeting to investigate your or another employee's alleged poor performance or misconduct;
- You are called into a supervisor's office and attorneys or representatives from Human Resources are present;
- During the course of a meeting with a supervisor you are asked to present "your side of the story" about an incident and asked to confirm specific dates and details.

Remember: You can invoke your Weingarten Rights at any time and ask for a union representative. You can refuse to continue a meeting until a representative is present and you cannot be punished for making the request.

Stewards should educate members about how to effectively enforce their rights:

- The member must make a clear request for union representation using the term **Weingarten Rights**.
- The member has the right to ask that the meeting be 1.) delayed until a representative arrives, or 2.) rescheduled to a date when a representative can attend;
- The member has the right after invoking her Weingarten Rights to refuse to answer any questions unless and until a representative is present and may inform her supervisor that failure to honor this request is an Unfair Labor Practice under federal law.

If you want to learn more about Weingarten Rights, talk to a Shop Steward, or call the Member Connection at 877-721-4968.

When we fight, we win!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE-JULY 2021



After a multi-year fight, SEIU 721 members at LA County's Integrated Correctional Health Services have won a major victory over coding and pay discrepancies related to Weekend Bonuses and Shift Differentials required under our union contract. As a result of a successful group grievance, eligible ICHS workers soon will receive the pay premiums due to them — including retroactive pay.

As part of the restructuring of LA County's public health system, LA County integrated ICHS workers into the LA County Department of Health Services in 2017, but the County refused to account for the unique communications, scheduling and time card requirements of healthcare workers in the County's correctional system. As a result, ICHS workers' paychecks were regularly shorted mandated pay premiums. The grievance finally fixes this longstanding complaint.

SEIU 721 HEALTHCARE DIVISION MEMBERS WIN BACK PAY FOR LA COUNTY ICHS WORKERS

RIDESHARE WORKERS ACROSS CALIFORNIA EXPOSE BROKEN PROMISES TO DRIVERS



At a June 15 "State of the Gig Economy" summit, ridesharing workers with We Drive Progress and the Mobile Workers Alliance shared with California Assemblymembers Miguel Santiago and Wendy Carillo harrowing stories of the risks and abuse they face driving for Uber and Lyft, and called on California legislators and regulators to force ridesharing companies to disburse to drivers

unpaid health care subsidies mandated by Prop 22. Ridesharing companies spent a record-shattering \$200 million to pass industry-sponsored Prop 22 in a play to block classification of their workers as employees in order to evade state wage and benefit requirements. To date, they have failed to make good on even the meager support promised under their own ballot measure.

COMING OUT OF THE PANDEMIC, WORKERS ARE READY TO FIGHT FOR MORE

SEIU 721 IS READY TO ROAR!



The COVID-19 pandemic exposed a lot of truths about our country, our society and our economy — some inspiring, others painful.

Every day, we saw frontline workers in the private and public sector put themselves and their families at risk to hold our society together and keep our economy from collapsing with acts of selfless bravery. We saw a new generation of activists rekindle the spirit of the Civil Rights movement in the wake of George Floyd's death and demand police reform and accountability.

But also we witnessed politicians from the federal level on down botch the response to the pandemic with poor planning, flat-footed responses and partisan bickering. After pushing public workers into the breach without protection, they turned their backs, refusing to compensate their essential workers. We witnessed big companies running melodramatic ads saluting "frontline heroes" while reaping obscene pandemic profits and siphoning billions in PPP loans. We caught some of these same companies turning around and spending millions to crush the unionization efforts of the same hero workers they celebrated in their TV ads.

Well, things are about to change. Here's why:

- **Workers are fed up and demanding more:** As the economy reopens and the job market heats up, American workers are quitting in droves, demanding better wages, more flexible hours and greater opportunity for advancement. A record 4 million workers quit in April of 2021 — many

of them retail, restaurant and other service employees. After blaming the labor shortage on "over-generous unemployment benefits," scores of big companies were forced to raise wages to get workers back.

- **The popularity of unions is way up:** The Gallup Poll and the American National Election Study have found that public support for unions, already on the rise since 2012, is now skyrocketing because of COVID-19. The pandemic got workers thinking about job security, safety precautions and a host of other workplace issues like never before.
- **Support for big business is way down:** Many of the same surveys show a corresponding decline in support for big business and the super-rich. Voters of both parties are increasingly hostile toward industries and individuals they see as profiting from the pandemic while avoiding the hardships faced by ordinary Americans.

Now that the lockdowns are over, the politicians had better take notice — workers are vaccinated, irritated and activated. The droves of LA County workers hitting the streets for Heroes Pay in June are just the beginning. Now that we're crushing the pandemic that robbed us of our most powerful tools — our strength in the field — SEIU 721 is back and ready to roar.



Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

Gilda Valdez



To organize during quarantine, we need Digital Union Voices. Text VOICES to 31996 today!