

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



This Holiday Season, Don't get Grinched by the Freedom Foundation

Billionaire Grinch Charles Koch is a major funder of the Freedom Foundation



GROUP FUNDED BY RIGHT-WING BILLIONAIRES IS TARGETING SEIU 721 MEMBERS DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

For the past several years, a group calling itself the "Freedom Foundation" has contacted SEIU 721 members during the holidays — encouraging us to "give ourselves a Christmas bonus" by dropping our union membership.

But the funding behind all these holiday-themed emails, mailers and uninvited home visits comes from a sinister group funded by right-wing billionaire Grinches who want to steal a lot more than just Christmas.

The Freedom Foundation, exposed by Bloomberg News in 2018, is an effort to undermine public employee unions in Washington, Oregon and California by tricking union members into dropping their membership. While the group refuses to disclose its donors, researchers have traced its funding back to a handful of ultra-conservative billionaire family foundations: The infamous Koch brothers (oil, mining and paper); the Bradley family (electronics); the DeVos family (autoparts); and the Scaife family (banking, oil and aluminum).

The Freedom Foundation's main donors have funded nearly every major statewide effort to fight the minimum wage, cut public employees' pay and benefits, and privatize our work so it can be handed over to private corporations.

Why are they doing this? Maybe, like Grinch in the famous children's book, they were born with hearts two sizes too small.

THE FREEDOM FOUNDATION ANTI-UNION PLAYBOOK

1

WEAKEN LABOR RIGHTS

Attack the right to organize and operate unions at the Supreme Court

2

DEFUND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNIONS

Convince public employees to drop union membership

3

ATTACK PUBLIC WORKERS' PAY AND PENSIONS

Mount PR campaigns to convince politicians and voters that public workers are overpaid

4

BUILD PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR PRIVATIZATION

Pressure politicians to privatize public functions and turn them over to corporations using bogus industry-funded think tank studies

Our union has done extensive research on the Freedom Foundation, and I encourage you to read more about their holiday con-job at seiu721.org. Happy holidays to all and watch out for the Grinch!

David Green



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“Congratulations to LA City workers for locking in our raises and bonuses, setting us up to bargain additional unit and classification bonuses and investing in our union to win more down the road.”

Simboa Wright, Vice President, SEIU 721



LA City Workers Ratify New Deal

1-Year Contract Locks in 3% Raise and 5% Bonus

SEIU 721 LA City members overwhelmingly approved a new 1-year contract with the City of Los Angeles.

The new deal locks in our 3% raises effective January 1, 2023 and our one-time 5% cash bonus on July 26, 2023.

We also voted to align our union member dues to the 1.5% of base wages, the standard set by the Executive Board in 2010.

The dues alignment won't go into effect until the year 2024 — and only when a raise kicks in that year.

Once the LA City Council approves this 1-year contract, our elected Bargaining Teams will return to the bargaining table to negotiate unit and classification bonuses, inequities, and salary notes for the one-year contract.



City of LA members count ballots

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66 The SEIU 721 Ventura Bargaining Committee put together a great campaign, collecting 1,400 bargaining surveys, recruiting 360 CAT members and putting pressure on the county to deliver for workers. **99**

Lillian Cabral, Secretary, SEIU 721



Ventura County Workers Reach New TA

3-Year Deal Includes Raises, Heroes Pay Bonuses and More

SEIU 721 Ventura County members reached a Tentative Agreement on a new three-year agreement with raises, bonuses and more.

The new TA includes a 13% general salary increase over the three-year term, significant increases in the county's flex credit contribution, a one-time heroes pay bonus of \$2,000, and a new paid Juneteenth holiday!

The contract also creates a new Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) to help resolve workers' problems on an ongoing basis. The JLMC committee will meet monthly so SEIU 721 Ventura County members can resolve issues as they arise, instead of having to wait until contract negotiations.



Ventura County Members at the August 3 Bargaining Launch

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SEIU 721 911 Dispatcher Ann Marie Cafuentes Helps Deliver the Ultimate Gift to Ventura Parents

County of Ventura Dispatcher Meets the Baby She Helped Deliver

When Ventura County residents need emergency assistance, their first call is to SEIU 721 members who work at Fire and Sheriff dispatch.

SEIU 721 member Ann Marie Cafuentes, a Public Safety Dispatcher II in the County of Ventura Fire Department, answered a 911 call and found herself guiding Alicia Adams through the successful delivery of a new baby while her husband was stationed in Guam with the U.S. Navy.

"I wanted to help calm her nerves and reassure her," Cafuentes told the *Ventura County Star* newspaper.

In October, Alicia, her husband Jake, their 2-year-old daughter and their newborn baby met their hero in person at the dispatch center where Cafuentes works.

"It's the most memorable call I've ever taken as a dispatcher," Cafuentes said.



Ventura County Public Safety Dispatcher Ann Marie Cafuentes

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SAN BERNARDINO COURTS MEMBERS RATIFY TA AS INLAND REGION BUILDS POWER

Superior Court of California workers in the County of San Bernardino ratified a strong new contract in November.

The 3-year agreement includes a double-digit wage increase, thousands in Heroes Pay bonus money, a new paid holiday and more.

The Superior Court contract is the latest in a string of wins in the Inland Region, including court victories that returned \$250,000 to workers after unlawful furloughs, a powerful Riverside contract campaign that secured unprecedented wage gains and Heroes Pay Bonuses, and a massive COPE field effort that elected Yxstian Gutierrez, flipping the Riverside County Board of Supervisors to a pro-worker majority.

Recognizing that their investment is paying off, Inland members ratified a phased-in dues realignment that will bring City of Riverside dues in line with the 1.5% standard set by our elected executive board and fund even more wins.



The Inland Region's Strategy is Paying Off

“Congratulations to San Bernardino Courts Members. Your win is just the latest proof that the Inland Region’s strategy and members’ investments are paying off big-time.”

**Adolfo Granados
Treasurer, SEIU 721**

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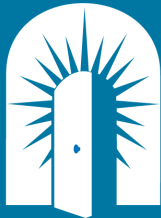
UPDATES FROM AROUND OUR UNION

SEIU 721 RISING



AMERICAN RED CROSS CONTRACT WIN

After more than a year of intense bargaining, we have a newly ratified contract at the American Red Cross! ARC employees in Southern California ratified the National contract with a 100% YES vote and the Local contract with a 93% YES vote. When management tried to take away guaranteed hours, we fought and won a contract that leaves our guaranteed hours untouched, adds lump sum retro bonuses, boosts longevity pay and strengthens contract language.



GATEWAYS HOSPITAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

GATEWAYS WORKERS ELECT BARGAINING TEAM

Workers at Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center have elected their bargaining team! Paraprofessional Counselor Elvis Estrada, Mental Health Social Worker Samantha Gurth, Mental Health Social Worker Jazmin Ramos, Psychiatric Technician Paul Shu, and Case Aide Carlos Zepeda have all answered the call to fight for a contract workers deserve.

Gateways Hospital and Mental Health provides services for children, adolescents, transitional aged youth and adults.



MEMBERS LIKE GERALD RODGERS HELP US WIN

LA County SEIU 721 member and Department of Public Social Services steward Gerald Rodgers has been volunteering for election work for the last 35 years. This year, as Southern Californians flocked to election sites, he was one of the hundreds of SEIU 721 members working the polls to ensure we count every last vote. It's SEIU 721 members like Gerald that make the difference in the close races that directly affect our jobs, wages and retirement security.

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SEIU 721 PEOPLE POWER BEATS BIG MONEY IN ELECTION WINS



From Karen Bass' historic win in the LA Mayor's race, to Pilar Schiavo's upset victory in a conservative district, to Yxstian Gutierrez's election to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, SEIU 721 people power in the field made a vital difference. Thank you to every SEIU 721 volunteer!

SEIU 721 and Allies Take on Starbucks



SEIU 721 and Fast Food Workers Rally at Starbucks Against AB257 Repeal

SEIU 721 members, fast food workers and our allies are taking the fight to multi-billion dollar fast food giants like Starbucks and McDonalds.

On November 15, SEIU 721 joined workers from Fight for \$15, Starbucks Workers United, and the California Gig Workers Union on the streets outside a Starbucks in Northeast LA, where we heard from SEIU 721 President David Green, Senator María Elena Durazo, Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, Assemblywoman Luz Rivas, fast food worker Angelina Hernandez and gig driver Reyna Hernandez. Together, we showed corporations that we refuse to buckle under their deceitful anti-worker campaign to overturn AB 257.

After a decade-long fight, Governor Newsom signed AB 257

into law in September, giving fast food workers a voice on a new California Fast Food Council with the power to improve wages and working conditions — one of the most historic labor victories in recent history.

Sadly, fast food giants immediately committed millions to overturn AB 257 and other efforts to suppress fast food workers' organizing efforts.

These corporations better buckle up, because they're about to see just how tenacious and determined fast food workers, SEIU members, and our community partners can be. We will continue to stand by fast food workers in solidarity and support as they continue to fight for what they deserve.

Starbucks and Fast Food Greed



SEIU 721 Joins CA Gig Workers to Support Nationwide Starbucks Strike

On Thursday, November 17, SEIU 721 and the California Gig Workers Union joined in solidarity with workers at four Los Angeles area Starbucks stores who were on strike with their fellow baristas across the country. Starbucks workers joined a total of over 100 stores participating in the Red Cup Rebellion, a nationwide unfair labor practice (ULP) strike demanding Starbucks fully staff all union stores and begin bargaining in good faith.

The Red Cup Rebellion took place the same day as the corporation's Red Cup Day giveaway, and strikers handed out Starbucks Workers United-branded cups to customers instead.

Striking workers were joined on the picket line by community members, union allies, and elected officials, including Assemblymember Miguel Santiago and incoming LA City Controller Kenneth Mejia.



**Workers
are flexing
their union
power**

“Right now, there’s a resurgence in union activity. We’re witnessing it everywhere from Uber, Lyft and DoorDash to the fast food sector.”

**David Green
President, SEIU Local 721**

LA Superior Court Reporters Rally for Jobs



COURT REPORTERS RALLY FOR JOBS, REMINDING MEDIA AND PUBLIC: "THE MONEY IS ALREADY THERE"

LA Superior Court Reporters joined legislative and labor allies for a rally and press conference outside the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown LA on Wednesday, November 2. It was the opening salvo in a battle brewing throughout Courtrooms across California.

We're fighting to keep Court Reporters in Family Court, in Probate Court and Writs and Receivers — because otherwise, the public will have to pay for Court Reporter services in these three courts.

We're not going to stand for it and neither are our allies in the State Legislature, who authored the state budget bills supplying \$30 million statewide (\$5 million for the LA Superior Court) to keep Court Reporters where we should be.

Indeed, the very same day we held our rally, The Recorder published an opinion piece by these same state legislators. We also got headlines on Ch. 7 Eyewitness News, on Univisión 34 and in LAist, which broadcasts on NPR.

"It's outrageous that people will have to pay hundreds of extra dollars just to get basic court access. But what's even more bewildering about this situation is that the money is already there," said SEIU 721 President David Green.

"It's insulting for anybody to have to pay, but for the vulnerable, the people just getting by, the people without any extra dollars to spare, it is an incredible injustice," said Rose Nava, a Court Reporter for 21 years at the LA Superior Court and an SEIU 721 Union Steward. "It is the opposite of what this Court is all about."

What's happening in LA foreshadows what will happen to Court Reporters elsewhere because Court CEOs claim the problem is a shortage of Court Reporters. That is incorrect. The problem is Court Reporter RECRUITMENT and RETENTION.

We know it but now we need to make sure the State Legislature knows it. If you're a Court Reporter, go to bit.ly/recruitCR and send in your story!



IGNITE THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

SEIU 721 RACIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MOBILIZES TO CONDEMN RACISM

- **SEIU 721 LEADS EFFORTS TO CONDEMN RACISM AT CITY HALL AND WITHIN LABOR**

As one of the most diverse unions in America, SEIU's core mission is to fight for racial, social and economic justice. When an audio recording surfaced of LA City Council members — all long-time allies of Labor — and LA Labor Federation head Ron Herrera making horrifically racist comments, our local union joined with SEIU's national African-American, Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander caucuses to demand the immediate resignations of all involved.

Empowerment of communities of color is not a zero-sum game. Over decades, SEIU 721 has demonstrated the power of Black, Brown, API, immigrant and other communities coming together to build power and win justice for all working people.

- **SEIU 721 STANDS IN SOLIDARITY AND CONDEMNS ANTI-SEMITIC BANNER DROP**

Taking advantage of despicable anti-semitic comments by Kanye West, a small group of racist activists hung a banner with anti-Jewish slogans from an LA freeway overpass. SEIU 721 publicly condemned the action, earning praise from Senator Henry Stern and other area leaders.

- **SEIU 721 CAUCUSES MOBILIZE IN THE NOVEMBER MIDTERM ELECTIONS**

Our Latino caucus organized a delegation to Florida to attend the International Latino Caucus Summit and knocked on doors to get out the vote in Florida.

Our African American caucus campaigned at the Taste of Soul, and organized phone banks for Lola Smallwood Cuevas and Karen Bass.

Our Asian Pacific Islander caucus campaigned for Karen Bass, phone banking at her headquarters with other API groups and joined her citywide bus tour.

- **SEIU 721 VICE PRESIDENT SIMBOA WRIGHT JOINS FACING RACE CONFERENCE**

SEIU 721 Vice President Simboa Wright attended the biannual Facing Race conference in November in Phoenix, Arizona as part of a delegation from SEIU's Racial Justice Center.

Delegates strategized on how to advance racial justice with organizers, educators, creatives and community leaders from across the country.

- **SEIU 721 FAMILY FUN DAY SHOWCASES CAUCUSES**

Our union's Black, Latino, API, Armenian and other caucuses took center stage at Family Fun Day, celebrating the diversity of our membership and the important contributions of all communities to our strength.

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PAUL KIM PERSONIFIES OPTIMISTIC NEW GENERATION OF UNION STEWARDS

When it comes to unions in the US today, Paul Kim is optimistic: “We can only go up from here.”

An Eligibility Worker II at the LA County Department of Public Social Services’ South Family District Office 31, Kim is from a new generation of Union Stewards at SEIU 721 eager to take part of re-energized Labor Movement sweeping across America and beyond.

“We’re seeing Starbucks unionize — that’s a huge one,” Kim noted. “Even the video game company Blizzard, or at least the Quality Assurance people there. As Millennials, most of your friends’ parents didn’t work union jobs or talk about what unions were. Most people my age didn’t care about union jobs. But now, it’s come out of nowhere. In Buena Park, who would have thought Medieval Times would unionize? Even people I went to college with, it might be a small workplace — they’re signing up for union elections. It’s great to see and it gives me lots of hope. And it’s also not just the creation of the union but that they get fair contracts.”

“I was really interested in unions and labor before I got hired,” Kim continued. “Even before I became a Steward, I was trying to join the API Caucus — I’m Korean-American. I was talking with the WSO about what stuff I could do in the union, and this was all during my probation. I heard about the Steward position and said, “Why don’t

I do it?” I immediately signed up for classes. And a lot of people wanted me to become a Steward because they saw I wasn’t afraid to speak my mind. We need a voice here.”

Kim got hired during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that meant doing all Steward training online. But since he lived in Irvine, it worked out well for him.

“I really enjoyed the trainings and I love Earl Thompson,” Kim said. “He’s very knowledgeable. His stories are amazing and he’s an amazing model of what a steward can be. Earl made his presence known!”

Kim officially became a Union Steward in May and found that it is, “kind of like being a lawyer. You do a lot of reading. You become very familiar with policy very quickly. And I like the challenge of it. Anything tied to work is inherently stressful — your pay, your psychological well-being, whether you want it to be or not. A lot of the actions are necessarily tied to emotion. People will become frustrated, sad or angry easily. They might not come to the best decision or say the wrong thing. As a Steward, your role is: How do we use that emotion productively so they can exercise their rights? If you rep them, you literally become their voice in a lot of those situations.”

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Congratulations to Our New SEIU 721 Shop Stewards!

Here are Our Newly Certified SEIU Local 721 Shop Stewards!

In this Month's Steward's Corner, we are acknowledging all our new Shop Stewards that committed to their education and development by undergoing the rigorous Steward Certification Training program. Congratulations to our newly certified Shop Stewards.

Bonnie Backus	Tikoa Carter
Byron Criddle	Maynaure Ornelas
Anthony Alekhuogie	Mary Amaugo
Lisa Anderson	Maritza Armstrong
Shawnte Beacham-Houston	Mike Contreras
Maria Garcia	Lisa Gist
Evangela Hamilton	Lanette Jenkins
Michael Johnson	Danyette Jones
Paul Kim	Ruby Pichardo
Charles Prudholme	Phillip Rhodes
Stephanie Saunders	Theresa Velasco
Christopher Villalobos	Michelle Whyte
Gene Burse	Selene Lariba
Tiffany Froedge	Kimberly Goodman
Mikel Caldwell	Gita Tavassoli
Mary Garcia	Raymond Jimenez

If you are a newly recruited Steward, or if you are Veteran Steward that wants to nurture and grow new Stewards, there is no better time to do trainings than now! To register for Steward Trainings, visit www.seiu721.org and click on the Calendar to find a class and RSVP.

We will continue to report back on the work of our Shop Stewards and their victories. If you want help with representing a member call the Member Connection at 877-721-4968.

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SEIU 721 MEMBERS DISCUSS KEY ISSUES WITH LA COUNTY DMH DIRECTOR

SEIU 721 members working at the LA County Department of Mental Health met recently with DMH Director Dr. Lisa Wong, to discuss key issues raised by frontline SEIU 721 members in the department, including:

STAFF RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND RETENTION:

As all of us know, these are core issues for DMH staff and must be addressed for the department to grow and thrive. We focused on the need for a collaborative effort between our Union and the department, with more education and training for staff.

HIRING IN-HOUSE – LESS CONTRACTING OUT:

This issue is affecting many departments in LA County, DMH included. We emphasized how important it is to us. Our Union wants more hiring in-house, with less contracting out.

TELEWORK:

The COVID pandemic proved that flexible work options are possible, and that includes Telework — which is now part of our work schedule. Our Union wants it kept that way.

MANAGEMENT AT JLM MEETINGS:

We take the Joint Labor Management meetings between our Union and the department very seriously. Accordingly, we expressed the need for management attending JLM meetings to have more executive decision-making authority so that we can expedite progress at DMH.

INFORMAL PROCESS AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS:

Resolving workplace disputes fairly and effectively is a major priority for all of us. Our Union believes that having both an informal process and a grievance process at DMH would help us achieve this goal.

LEGISLATIVE COLLABORATION AND SB 803:

If we want to put policy into practice properly, we need the input of those who will actually do the frontline work. That's us. We expressed our Union's sentiment to Dr. Wong and her team, with special emphasis on SB 803 implementation.

We know that these are big issues for us at DMH — and that's why we made sure they were all on our meeting agenda. Stay tuned for next steps as our Union works hard to make progress on all of them.

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RIDESHARE AND DELIVERY DRIVERS FORM CALIFORNIA GIG WORKERS UNION

App-based drivers and delivery workers from across the Golden State announced the formation of a union October 13 — the California Gig Workers Union (CGWU) — at a rally in front of Uber headquarters in San Francisco.

Citing low wages and a lack of basic protections on the job, gig workers called on Uber and other tech giants to grant them employee protections and to recognize their right to join together in a union. Drivers marched to Lyft and DoorDash headquarters, too, holding similar rallies outside each.

“Every day, gig companies don’t offer fair pay, benefits, or basic worker protections — like paid sick days or access to workers’ compensation,” said Cardell Calloway, 68, who drives for DoorDash in the Los Angeles area, in a speech outside Uber’s offices. “It’s shameful. It’s disgusting. And it’s why we’re here today demanding our rights and forming the California Gig Workers Union!”

The CGWU brings together gig workers from the Mobile Workers Alliance in Southern California and We Drive Progress

in Northern California — organizations that have been fighting for driver rights and protections for the past several years — under one statewide banner.

The more than 30,000 gig drivers that make up the CGWU join a groundswell of workers across the country demanding union rights. Workers for Amazon, Starbucks, Trader Joe’s, Chipotle, and other corporations have made similar calls.

In California, Uber spent more than \$225 million in 2020 campaigning for Proposition 22 — a voter measure that passed in November of that year that misclassified gig drivers as “independent contractors” and not employees of the tech giants.

In August 2021, an Alameda County Superior Court judge ruled that Prop 22 was unconstitutional under state law, in part because it limits workers’ ability to organize and form unions.

Still, gig drivers’ conditions haven’t changed much as the companies appeal the decision.



Worker power trumps big money in key races

On Election Night, early returns showed Congresswoman Karen Bass trailing billionaire businessman Rick Caruso in the LA Mayor's race, but I wasn't worried.

Returns earlier in the night showed that, in state after state, voters were rejecting extremism and rewarding people-powered candidates and campaigns. The long-predicted red wave, powered by massive contributions from ultra-conservative billionaires and corporate-funded PACs, never materialized.

The results of the November midterms were a welcome change from recent contests, like Prop 22, where record-breaking spending by corporations drowned out workers' voices. In the City of LA, a massive field campaign driven by Labor volunteers — including SEIU 721 members — powered Karen Bass to a 10-point win over billionaire Rick Caruso, despite his 10-to-1 funding advantage. Caruso's \$100 million couldn't beat people power.

The same story played out in key races around Southern California, where SEIU 721 COPE-backed candidates in several key races beat long odds and made history.

City of Long Beach — Support from SEIU 721 and other unions helped elect Rex Richardson as the first Black Mayor of

Long Beach. Richardson overcame a business-backed opponent with a \$300,000 fundraising advantage and another million in independent spending by hotels, oil companies and utilities.

40th Assembly District — Support from our union helped Community organizer Pilar Schiavo win a razor-thin victory in traditionally conservative Simi Valley.

Riverside County Board of Supervisors — A massive push by Inland SEIU 721 members helped propel Moreno Valley Mayor Yxstian Gutierrez to victory in the Riverside County Board of Supervisors race, effectively flipping the board to a pro-worker majority. After years of contentious county contract fights led by an anti-worker majority on the Board of Supervisors, SEIU 721's Inland Region members had had enough. They realigned their dues, invested in strategy and organizing, and built a kick-ass field campaign. It paid off.

Members' investment in COPE makes a difference. I don't want to sugar coat it — we will always lose some heart-breaking races to big money. But for now, people power made a difference.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff



Gilda Valdez



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