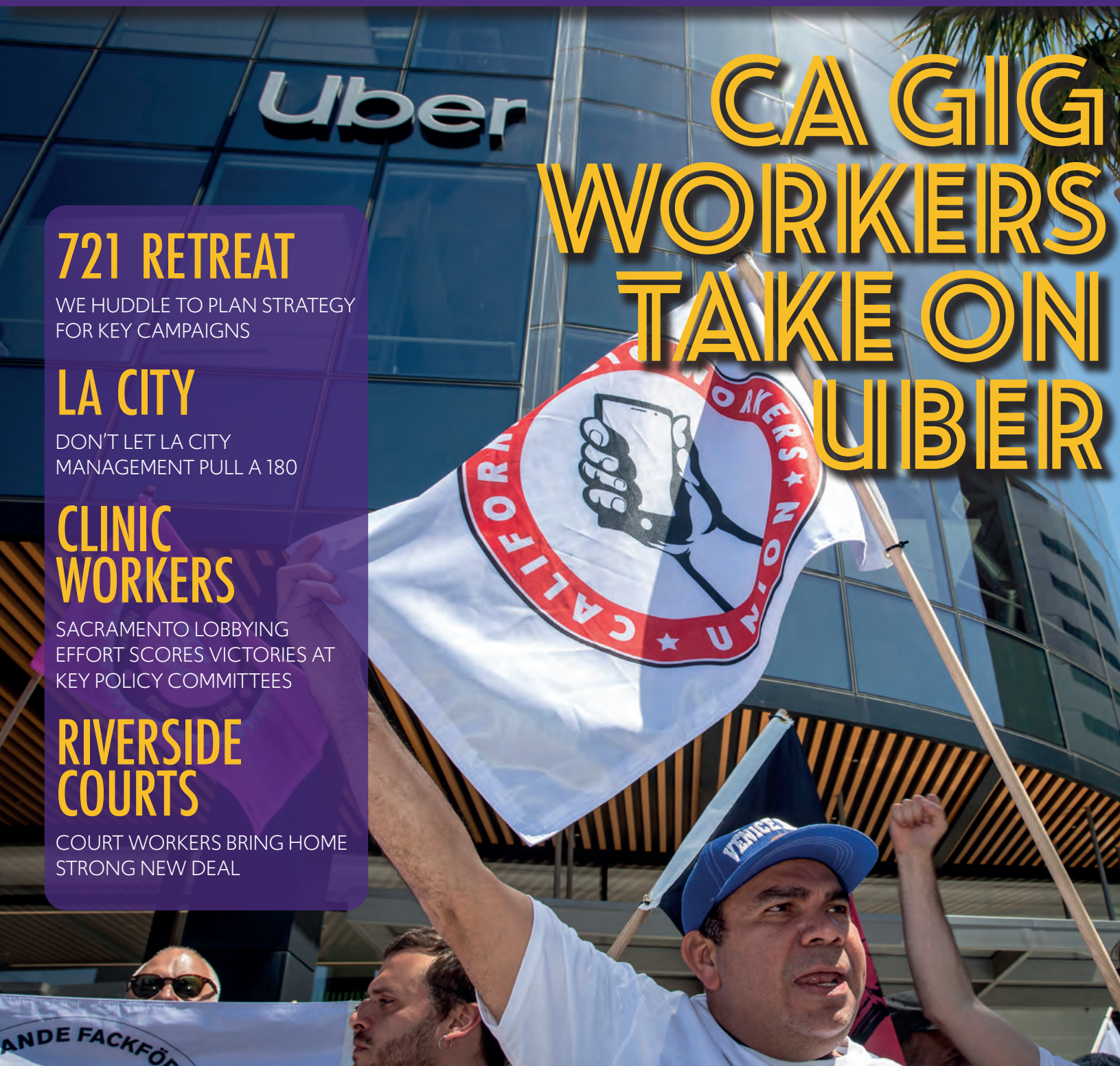
SEIU 721

PRESIDENT'S REPORT APRIL-MAY 2023



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A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721 PRESIDENT

DAVID GREEN



A PLAN TO PROTECT OUR MEMBERS, GROW OUR UNION AND DELIVER RACIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

2022 was a defining year for our union. SEIU 721 members literally held Southern California together during the COVID-19 pandemic, and emerged from the crisis stronger, more unified and wiser.

We learned that many employers, managers and business leaders who praised us as heroes while we kept vital services rolling were all too quick to propose layoffs, furloughs and take-backs when budgets got tight.

Above all, the pandemic taught us to depend on ourselves and the power of our union. So we hit the streets in unprecedented numbers to fight for what we deserve, and we won big. We won strong contracts, passed landmark legislation, beat back union-busting and privatization campaigns and helped elect the first Black woman mayor of Los Angeles on a pro-union platform.

But workers face unprecedented challenges, and we need a plan to keep these wins rolling. That's why the SEIU 721 Executive Board held a strategy retreat to develop a plan to **protect our members, strengthen and grow our union, build power for workers and fight for racial, environmental and economic justice for all**. I'm excited to share our plans in this issue.

David Green

SEIU 721 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

WHAT WE WANT

PROTECT OUR MEMBERS AND STRENGTHEN OUR UNION

- Give members a stronger voice on the job
- Counter union-busting organizations, like Freedom Foundation, through Rise and Resist
- Fight privatization and save members' jobs
- Reduce short-staffing through higher wages and better recruitment and retention
- Protect pensions and retirement security

GROW OUR UNION AND WIN UNIONS FOR ALL

- Engage all new hires at SEIU 721 worksites through expanded NEO program
- Win 90% membership density
- Grow organizing efforts in fast food, gig, clinics and higher education

BUILD POWER FOR WORKERS

- Expand on historic victories in the City of LA and Riverside County with victories in targeted races in 2023-24
- Ramp up lobbying and media campaigns to pass vital legislation to secure funding for vital services and protect workers' rights
- Stop the erosion of workers' rights in the courts

ADVANCE RACIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Build community alliances and drive progress on racial equity and targeted hiring programs, criminal justice reform, immigration reform, voting rights and climate change

HOW WE GET IT

POLICY

- Focus research on early detection of threats to members, like privatization, budget cuts, union-busting campaigns and court decisions that erode workers' rights
- Develop and win policy change that protects SEIU 721 members and other workers at the bargaining table, in the legislature, at the ballot and in the courts

ADVOCACY

- Give members a stronger voice on the job with 1 worksite leader for every 50 members
- Increase recruitment and training of stewards through our Representational Excellence program
- Increase COPE participation to 30%
- Expand the use of high-impact field and media campaigns in targeted races

COMMUNICATIONS

- Streamline online membership signup with a revamped web portal and data system
- Develop a Digital Member Organizer Bureau for rapid response to anti-union attacks
- Ramp up recruitment and training of member spokespeople to drive better coverage of our goals in the media and on social platforms

ORGANIZING

- Overhaul our digital organizing efforts with expanded NEO email and Hustle text contacts
- Expand organizing through common-good strategies, like Targeted Local Hire programs

WHAT'S GOING ON AT SEIU 721

LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL: "RESPECT OUR MOU!"

Management at the LA County Dept. of Animal Care and Control recently began unilaterally changing employees' work shifts with zero regard for our previously scheduled commitments, wreaking havoc on employees' child and elder care commitments and violating our MOU.

Our union's attorneys filed a cease and desist letter and our stewards already have won a hearing on the issue. We want to hear from members at Animal Care and Control about how a switch from 4/10 to 5/40 schedule would affect you.

SEIU 721 MEETS WITH LA COUNTY DMH DIRECTOR DR. LISA WONG

LA County faces an unprecedented homelessness and mental health crisis, and SEIU 721 members at the LA County Department of Mental Health are responsible for the frontline response.

Unfortunately, DMH management has failed to work with frontline workers and our union to resolve severe short-staffing problems at the agency. Members have complained that productivity standards imposed by the department are unreasonable in the face of ballooning caseloads in a hard-to-serve population.

Our union insisted on a face-to-face meeting between DMH Director Dr. Lisa Wong and SEIU 721 President David Green and DMH member leaders met with Wong. Green and member leaders won a commitment from Dr. Wong not to enforce specific productivity percentages that would affect telework or performance evaluations.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

LA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL WORKERS:

SCAN THE QR CODE IF YOU'VE BEEN NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY UNILATERAL SCHEDULE CHANGES







LA COUNTY BU 723 SOCIAL WORKERS: LET'S FIX SHORT-STAFFING! SCAN THE QR TO JOIN THE RE-OPENER CAT TEAM.

AROUND OUR UNION

SEIU 721 COMMEMORATES 1915 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AT MONTEBELLO MEMORIAL

SEIU 721 Armenian Caucus members and SEIU 721 President David Green joined a somber memorial for victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Attendees, including congressmembers Judy Chu and Adam Schiff, laid red roses at the Montebello memorial to commemorate the 1.5 million Armenians killed in the genocide. Our union recognizes the independence of Artsakh and condemns continued aggression by Azerbaijan.

SEIU 721 MEMBERS WELCOME V.P. KAMALA HARRIS

SEIU 721 Executive Board member and Women's Caucus Chair Theresa Velasco and Political Coordinator Kristian Huling joined the welcoming committee for Vice President Kamala Harris when she landed in Los Angeles on April 14.

Vice President Harris was in Southern California to visit Vandenberg Air Force base and the U.S. Space Command, where she announced a U.S. ban on anti-satellite missle testing and encouraged other nations to adopt similar bans.

LA COUNTY SOCIAL WORKERS OF BU 723 GO BACK TO THE BARGAINING TABLE

In the wake of the successful lobbying effort to secure $300 million in state funding for LA County DCFS, LA County Social Workers of Bargaining Unit 723 are bargaining a re-opener with the goal of addressing short-staffing, including new recruitment, hiring and retention measures. If you're a BU 723 Social worker, scan the QR Code to join the CAT team!



RIVERSIDE SUPERIOR COURT MEMBERS WIN STRONG CONTRACT WITH RAISES AND BONUSES

SEIU 721 RIVERSIDE SUPERIOR COURT WORKERS OVERWHELMINGLY RATIFY NEW DEAL WITH 11% ACROSS THE BOARD RAISE

Superior Court of CA, County of Riverside members voted overwhelmingly to ratify our new Tentative Agreement and approved a phased-in dues realignment to continue and expand union-building efforts that have delivered a string of victories.

Our new TA includes an across-the-board raise of at least 11% for all bargaining unit members, a $5,000 bonus, increased employer contributions to health benefits, increased leave accrual, retention and longevity pay for court reporters, bonuses for supervisors, improved contract language and more!

The phased-in dues realignment will allow our union to fight for and enforce even stronger contracts. It brings us to parity with the 80% of SEIU 721 members who are at or on the way to the 1.5% dues rate set by our elected board.

Our victory shows what SEIU 721 members can accomplish when we come together, raise our voices and fight for what we deserve.

> "CONGRATULATIONS TO RIVERSIDE SUPERIOR COURT MEMBERS. YOUR COURAGE AND PERSERVERANCE DELIVERED A STRONG NEW CONTRACT!"



ADOLFO GRANADOS
TREASURER
SEIU 721

SEIU 721 TRI-COUNTIES







VENTURA COUNTY MEMBERS DEMAND A VOICE AT WORK

SEIU 721 City of Ventura bargaining team members Jamie Williams and Felipa Lopez and SEIU 721 Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez testified at the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and presented 1,500 member petition signatures demanding a Joint Labor Management Committee. Ventura members' activism brought county management back to the table to negotiate a side-letter agreement that will give Ventura County members a greater voice at work.

CITY OF VENTURA WORKERS FIGHT FOR A FAIR CONTRACT

City of Ventura members testified at the Ventura City Council meeting to call attention to the vital work done by frontline city workers. City of Ventura member leader and bargaining team member Gene Burse called for fairness in the city's comp and class study, while members held placards that read "We Make Ventura Safer" and "We Make City Hall Shine."

The City Hall action comes as the SEIU 721 City of Ventura bargaining team fights for a strong contract and prepares to head into its fourth bargaining session with city negotiators.

CITY OF SANTA PAULA WORKERS GEAR UP TO BARGAIN

City of Santa Paula members are gearing up for their first bargaining session by showcasing the importance of the work they do. Everywhere you look in the 5.7-square-mile city, SEIU 721 members are making a difference — removing graffiti, keeping parks clean and green, and fixing the streets.

LA CITY BARGAINING TEAMS AUTHORIZE ULP STRIKE VOTE



DON'T LET LA CITY PULL A 180!

LA CITY IS ACTING IN BAD FAITH — THEY'RE TRYING TO PULL A FAST ONE ON AGREEMENTS MADE WITH SEIU 721 AND THE COALITION OF LA CITY UNIONS

SEIU 721 City of LA Bargaining Teams voted March 4 to hold a ULP strike authorization vote in response to the City of LA's repudiation of the 1-year agreement ratified by members and approved by the LA City Council.

In response to the illegal bargaining tactics, on May 3, our union filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against the City of LA with the Employee Relations Board, and our attorneys are preparing additional charges in response to the City's unlawful behavior. The Coalition of LA City Unions also filed ULP charges against the City of LA over the broken agreement.

ULP strike authorization voting began on Tuesday, May 9 and will end on Friday, May 19. Every City of LA SEIU Local 721 member in good standing will get the opportunity to make their voice heard.

PLEASE WATCH FOR UPDATES ON CITY OF LA ULP STRIKE AUTHORIZATION.

TEXT SEIU TO 721721 TO RECEIVE BREAKING NEWS ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE, AND USE YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA TO SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFO.

SEIU 721 STRATEGY RETREAT













SEIU 721 E-BOARD MEMBERS HUDDLE TO STRATEGIZE HOW TO WIN OUR TOUGHEST CAMPAIGNS

The entire elected Executive Board of SEIU 721 met on May 29 and 30 in Long Beach for an intense two-day retreat to plot strategy to strengthen and grow our union and tackle the toughest campaigns we'll face over the next several years.

E-Board members discussed strategies for addressing short-staffing and fighting efforts to privatize public workers' jobs. They reviewed detailed plans for using new communications techniques to build membership, expand our field campaigns to win targeted races for pro-worker candidates and measures, and grow our union through our New Employee Orientation program

They affirmed our union's commitment to racial justice, and reviewed strategies for organizing workers in clinics, app-based gig work, fast food and higher education, and discussed how to strengthen our advocacy efforts through intensive training of new stewards and member leaders.



GIG WORKERS TAKE ON UBER

SEIU 721 HOSTS FIRST INTERNATIONAL GIG WORKERS CONGRESS, AS GIG WORKERS STAGE LA AND SF ACTIONS

The week of April 24, gig workers from 15 countries convened at SEIU Local 721 headquarters in Los Angeles to discuss building power and fighting back against gig-company exploitation at the 1st International Congress of Gig Workers.

During the Congress, gig workers from Asia, Europe, South America, and North America explored problems they all face: low pay despite long working hours, high costs working for gig corporations, job insecurity, unfair deactivations, and gig corporations' denial of the right to unionize.

Gig workers immediately translated their discussion and ideas into actions at locations in Southern and Northern California.

Day one, gig workers rallied outside the CA Supreme Court in L.A., protesting Proposition 22 — the 2020 California ballot measure gig companies spent $220 million to pass — that robbed gig workers of basic rights and protections.

Day two, workers rallied at the Agentine Consulate in L.A. to support SiTraRepA — an Argentinian gig worker organization seeking union recognition.

Day three, workers held a Congress Assembly, sharing experiences from across the world in the gig economy and developing strategies for holding gig companies accountable.

Day four, workers rallied at San Francisco International Airport and Uber's global headquarters, protesting Proposition 22, and demanding fair wages, health benefits, safety measures for riders and drivers, and the right to form a union.













CLINIC WORKERS WIN!

COMMUNITY CLINICS WORKERS UNITED TAKE SACRAMENTO BY STORM TO WIN PASSAGE OF $25/HOUR AND CLINIC TRANSPARENCY REFORMS IN KEY POLICY COMMITTEES

April 12 was a powerful day for SEIU healthcare heroes in Sacramento! Clinic workers joined dozens of healthcare workers from all backgrounds to speak up in support of SB 525 — a bill that will raise the minimum wage for healthcare workers to $25 an hour.

Next, clinic workers advocated for SB 779, which will increase clinic transparency to improve health care services and workforce development. After a hard day of lobbying, both bills won approval in key policy committees!
#FairWages4Health #SB525 #SB779



SEIU 721 Political Director and Inland Region Eboard member Bruce Campbell in Sacramento for SB 525 and 779 lobby day.

211 LA WORKERS ARE ON A ROLL!



211 LA WORKERS RATIFY RE-OPENER

When 211 LA workers fight, we win! Together, we ratified the Salary Re-opener Tentative Agreement with 211 LA, locking in a $3.00 wage increase.

This win follows consecutive victories at 211 LA, including last year's successful fight against LA County's attempt to outsource and automate 211 LA jobs.

This latest achievement is a testament to our collective power to protect and improve union jobs.

From our victory last summer, to this most recent salary increase, our union power is unmistakable.

Stay tuned for more information!

RACIAL JUSTICE





“EACH MONTH, OUR UNION CELEBRATES OUR PURSUIT OF RACIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.”

SIMBOA WRIGHT, VICE PRESIDENT, SEIU 721

SEIU 721 MEMBERS ELECTED AT SEIU’S NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CAUCUS SUMMIT

An SEIU 721 delegation joined SEIU’s National African American Conference in Las Vegas, NV — its first in-person meeting since 2019 — to plan the caucus’ mentoring, community engagement, racial equity and social justice efforts. Congratulations to SEIU local 721 111 bargaining chair Carol Maxey-Ware, who was re-elected as Western Region African American Caucus President, and to LaShawn Tillman, who was elected Vice President of the board.



SEIU 721 MEMBERS SALUTE THE SACRIFICES OF FILIPINO HEALTHCARE WORKERS

SEIU 721 members, including SEIU E-Board member Dr. Kelly Zhou and Monique Hernandez, joined members of our sister locals, SEIU 1000, UHW and 121 RN, at the LA premiere of Nurse Unseen, a documentary about the sacrifices of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. An estimated one-third of healthcare workers who died during the pandemic were Filipino.





HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT

RESOLVING CONFLICTS IS A VITAL SKILL FOR STEWARDS

As an SEIU 721 Steward, you have been selected by your co-workers as their representative in the workplace. The job of a Steward is to find ways to resolve the issues encountered at work, and sometimes that includes dealing with difficult people.

Whether it’s dealing with a bad boss or a negative co-worker, Shop Stewards need the skills and knowledge to address work conflict so they can build a united, organized and involved membership in the workplace.

To start, Stewards need to identify the source of conflict, and then apply the correct method of dealing with the conflict to achieve resolution. Stewards also must learn active listening skills to identify points of agreement and disagreement and focus on participants’ behaviors to develop a plan.

As a Shop Steward, mastery of the MOU and building relationships in the workplace can help you deal with difficult people and situations. Knowing how to manage difficult conversations can transform a divided and toxic work environment into a productive and satisyfing workplace where workers’ voices are valued and their union power grows.

SEIU 721 Shop Stewards are encouraged to attend training to help you with workplace conflict. Our “Conflict Resolution” training provides Stewards with best practices to resolve issues and tips for developing healthy communication among members at work.

SEIU SHOP STEWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP

MONDAY, MAY 22
6:30 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.

RSVP BY VISITING WWW.SEIU721.ORG

USC HOUSING WORKERS FILE TO JOIN SEIU 721



USC HOUSING WORKERS CALL ON USC PRESIDENT TO RECOGNIZE SEIU 721 AS OUR UNION

USC workers responsible for maintaining university housing have filed to join our union.

USC general maintenance workers, facilities technicians, painters and customer service representatives in April filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board asking for an election to join SEIU 721.

In April, USC Housing workers hand delivered the notice of our filing to USC President Dr. Carol Folt and demanded that she voluntarily recognize SEIU Local 721 as our exclusive bargaining agent.





OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE STUDENTS JOIN NTT FACULTY'S FIGHT FOR A FAIR CONTRACT WITH A LIVING WAGE AND JOB SECURITY

HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY JOIN UNPRECEDENTED MARCH IN SUPPORT OF NTT FACULTY'S FIGHT FOR A FAIR CONTRACT.

Hundreds of Occidental students and faculty rallied together on Friday, April 28, to support the non-tenure track (NTT) faculty's fight for a fair contract. In an extraordinary demonstration of solidarity, students held signs, chanted and marched alongside faculty in their campaign for a living wage and job stability.

Students and faculty occupied the lobby of the main administration building and created a visual petition stamped with handprints of students and faculty demanding justice for NTT faculty.

Occidental College NTT faculty endure long hours and meager pay to ensure that students receive a quality education, but Occidental College leadership has resisted efforts to provide them a living wage and job security. The outpuring of support from students and other faculty is firing up the bargaining team as they head back to the negotiating table.

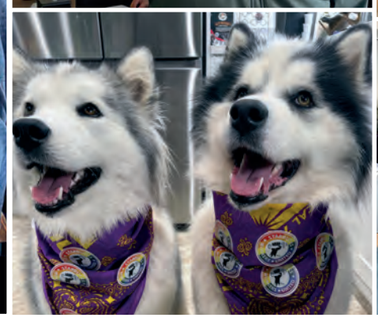
"SEIU 721 SALUTES OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY FOR THEIR HISTORIC SUPPORT FOR NTT FACULTY'S FIGHT FOR A LIVING WAGE AND A GOOD CONTRACT!"



LILLIAN CABRAL
SECRETARY
SEIU 721













SEIU 721 MEMBERS SUPPORT UNIONIZING STARBUCKS BARISTAS IN NATIONAL #STICKITTOSTARBUCKS SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

SEIU 721 MEMBERS CALL ON NEW STARBUCKS CEO LAXMAN NARASIMHAN TO END UNION-BUSTING CAMPAIGN.

On April 11, SEIU 721 members across the local wore Starbucks Workers United stickers and posted to social media to #StickItToStarbucks and show solidarity with unionizing baristas across the nation!

Throughout the country, members of other SEIU locals, unions, and pro-worker groups did the same — amplifying a letter addressed to new Starbucks CEO, Laxman Narasimhan, urging him to "create and build a healthy working relationship with unionized partners" and commit to bargaining in good faith.

Starbucks Workers United alleges that the corporation has launched an "unprecedented union-busting campaign" — more than 500 unfair labor practices have been filed against the coffee giant, according to The Seattle Times — that was especially toxic under the leadership of former CEO Howard Shultz.

"STARBUCKS' NEW CEO HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO STOP THE COMPANY'S UNPRECEDENTED, UNPOPULAR CAMPAIGN OF UNION BUSTING, AND INSTEAD PARTNER WITH ITS WORKERS AND THEIR UNION."

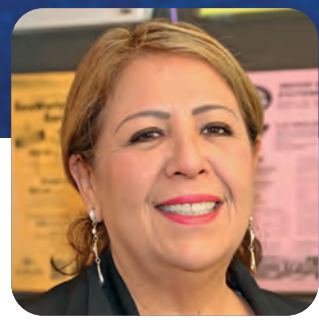


MARY KAY HENRY
INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT
SEIU

SEIU 721 CHIEF OF STAFF GILDA VALDEZ

OUR UNION





FLORIDA REPUBLICANS JUST PASSED A BILL TO WEAKEN PUBLIC-SECTOR UNIONS. DON'T LET IT HAPPEN HERE.

Republicans in the Florida House passed a bill in April aimed at reducing membership in public-sector unions and weakening organized labor's political clout, delivering the controversial legislation to Governor Ron DeSantis for his signature.

Progressive lawmakers, labor and even some Republican lawmakers have blasted the legislation as a political power grab. The law is designed to kneecap teachers unions and other unions that oppose DeSantis' attacks on public education. The bill allows state government to interfere with union organizing and dues collection, and even empowers state regulators to "decertify" unions and nullify collective bargaining agreements.

If you think something like this could never happen in union-friendly California, take a look at who's behind the bill — the same ultra-conservative foundations that fund the Freedom Foundation. That's the union-busting group currently working to trick SEIU 721 union members and other public employees into dropping their union membership.

Our union is working overtime to expose these frauds and their union-busting scams. Keep your guard up!

Gilda Valdez