

SEIU 721

PRESIDENT'S

REPORT

JUNE 2015



FIGHT FOR \$15 VICTORY!



SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover and Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez at an SEIU 721-led Fight for \$15 rally in front of LA City Hall.

SEIU 721 WINS LA MINIMUM WAGE HIKE

After years of hard work, Los Angeles workers finally got the raise they deserved and I'm proud that our union played a lead role in delivering it.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of SEIU 721 members and staff and a broad coalition of community groups, the Los Angeles City Council voted 14-1 on June 10th to raise the City's minimum wage in phases from the current \$9 an hour to \$15 an hour by the year 2020.

This is a game-changing victory for labor and community groups in the region. Experts are saying the Los Angeles law will have enormous impact because, by some estimates, nearly 50 percent of the city's workforce earns less than \$15 an hour. For these workers this is a watershed victory — one that will allow many to keep their homes, feed their families and help their children build better lives.

It's also a game-changing victory for L.A.'s public workers, the vast majority of whom earn higher than \$15 per hour. Here's why: For years, anti-government conservatives have funded efforts to attack the pay, health benefits and pensions of public workers.

They've tried to stoke jealousy among non-union private sector workers in a bid to cut public workers' pay and benefits and contract out their work to for-profit companies with the ultimate goal of eliminating public employee unions entirely.

But by raising standards for all workers, we protect our work. Most schemes to contract out our work rely on replacing us with workers paid poverty wages without key health benefits, pensions and workplace protections. By setting a floor for wages, we make it much tougher for these groups to sneak through contracting out plans by promising elected officials the illusion of huge cost savings based on exploiting service workers.

For many in America, the Fight for \$15 is far from over. But right now in L.A., we're celebrating a sweet victory.

Bob Schoonover, President

Bob Schoonover



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CELEBRATING NURSES

SEIU 721 MEMBERS GATHER TO RECOGNIZE HEROES OF HEALTH CARE



"I applaud the winners of the Florence Nightingale Award. They embody the spirit of its namesake: fighting for healthcare for all and workers' rights."

SEIU 721 Vice President, Linda Dent



Our Los Angeles County nurses were honored for the outstanding care they provide to our community. Both Robin Ellis and Marva Burgess received our Florence Nightingale award for their unrelenting dedication to uplift the critical role of Nursing in the healthcare field.

TRI-COUNTIES PUSHES PAY EQUITY

Urges Santa Barbara Supervisors to Do the Right Thing



SEIU 721 eligibility workers from Santa Barbara County last month urged the Board of Supervisors to deal with pay equity problems for eligibility workers, public defender investigators and probation assistants in this year's county budget.

I TAUGHT THE SHERIFF

721 Members Educate Sheriff on Restructuring at Town Hall



In the wake of a recent vote by the LA County Board of Supervisors to restructure jail health services at the LA Sheriff's Department, SEIU 721 convened a town hall with Assistant Sheriff Terry McDonald, DHS physician Dr. Marc Ghaly and some of the 1,000 SEIU health care workers who could be affected by proposed changes.

"The restructuring of the Los Angeles County Jail Health services cannot afford to be a rushed and insulated project, its success depends on engaging the expertise of those tasked with providing direct care to inmates and ensuring the well-being of everyone within the county jail system," Bob Schoonover told attendees.

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INLAND CITIES RECOGNIZE PUBLIC WORKERS

City Councils Around the Inland Area Sponsor Resolutions Honoring the Contributions of SEIU Members



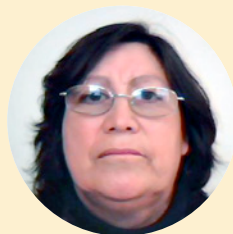
Each year, Public Service Recognition Week highlights the accomplishments of the dedicated public servants who work tirelessly on behalf of all in our community and who rarely get the credit they deserve. This year, five Inland city councils and the Riverside County Board of Supervisors issued proclamations thanking all public service workers. The week culminated with an open house at the Inland Region office on May 8, 2015.

Stewards and Organizers Score Worksite Wins for SEIU 721 Members



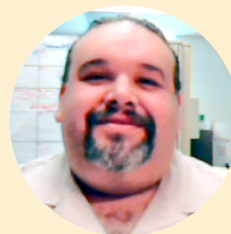
NORMA HERRERA

WSO blocked demeaning psychological testing of employees at LA Assessor's Office



REINA SCHMITZ

WSO won LA Park and Rec employees more than \$90,000 in back pay



ANTHONY NAVARETTE

WSO helped "as-needed" LA Library pages and aides win pathway to permanent jobs



DAVID BLANCHARD

Inland Region Advocate helped stop the termination of a 35-year employee in the City of Riverside Dept. of Public Works

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LEARNING TO HIT HOME RUNS FOR MEMBERS

A New Representational Excellence Program Shows Stewards How to Win for Members



SEIU 721 is focusing on Representational Excellence through enhanced training for Stewards and Worksite Organizers. A six-month pilot program at DPSS is focused on training stewards in new techniques, promoting coordination between the Member Connection, Advocacy Department and Worksite Organizers, and identifying best practices. Pictured here, 721 President Bob Schoonover with participants.

If you're a baseball fan, you've probably seen how the best teams change their strategy based on their opponents and the situation at hand. Sometimes, they send a power hitter to the plate to try for a flashy home run. Other times, they focus on "small ball" — hitting singles and doubles, getting players on base and working as a team to advance them to score. SEIU 721 works the same way. Sometimes, we go all-in on strategies like Fight for \$15 that yield big victories, like the recent City of LA minimum wage increase. But more often, we play "small ball," tackling individual members' workplace problems as a team. This is when stewards, worksite organizers, union lawyers and other union members work together to help solve grievances, win back pay, prevent unfair disciplinary action, protect workers' jobs and deal with bad bosses.

It's when Norma Herrera, a Worksite Organizer in the L.A. Assessor's Office helped workers put an end to demeaning and invasive psychometric testing of employees where, under the guise of a training exercise, workers were asked about early personal details of their lives and separated into groups coded by "color." It's

Reina Schmitz, who won L.A. Park and Rec employees more than \$90,000 in improperly withheld back pay. It's Anthony Navarrette, who is helping "as-needed" aides and pages in the L.A. Library win a pathway to permanent employment. It's when David Blanchard, a regional advocate in the Inland Area, prevented the termination of a 35-year employee in the Riverside Department of Public Works.

This work doesn't grab headlines like the minimum wage or a big contract campaign victory or other home runs, but it's just as important. Most workers join a union because they want someone to have their back. They want to know that, when they're treated unfairly on the job, somebody will go to bat for them. That's why SEIU 721 is focusing on representational excellence, looking at new ways of training our stewards and focusing on "best practices" around SEIU 721 and across the labor movement so we can protect each SEIU 721 member when he or she needs us most.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

Gilda Valdez

