

# It's a No-Brainer: Why I'm Voting Yes On the "Better Way for LA" Plan

by Art Sweatman, Tree Surgeon, 721 Steward and Bargaining Team member

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While the rest of the world is trying to figure out how it's going to make house payments and survive, **we stay safe in the greatest economic meltdown in our generation.** We do this without taking any cuts or steps backwards. We do this by simply standing still for two years, and getting it all later--plus some.

To me, it's a no-brainer.

I've been talking to city workers in 721 and Coalition unions all over the city for the last week and a half, about the ratification vote on the "Better Way for LA" agreement. Most of them get it pretty quickly. **They want to keep their jobs and see their co-workers keep their jobs, and not be subject to furloughs and pay cuts.**

They understand this is the time for **solidarity.** This is not the time to stand alone. This is the time for **union.**

I was elected to the bargaining team to represent all workers, not just those with seniority. So I'm not going to let our newest and most vulnerable members be sacrificed to get my raise now. With this agreement, **no members will be left behind!**

By bargaining a contract like we did a couple of years ago, we were able to approach this crisis from a position of strength. We've seen other public service workers suffer through layoffs, furloughs and pay cuts because they didn't have as strong a contract to be able to use as leverage. We also kept the pressure on and forced the Mayor back to the table after he walked away, to come up with a **solution that's good not just for us but for our City.**

**We are fortunate to have good jobs serving the public in these troubled economic times. And we're able to save our jobs and services** without taking any cuts. We get our 3% in two years, and all our previously scheduled raises and additional steps after that. We get an additional 1.75% cash check right before the holidays in 2011 for delaying the raise; plus another one a year later. And we get a COLA of 4 1/2% on July 1, 2013--the 2.75% we already won plus an extra 1.75%.

By now you've probably gotten your ballot in the mail--they went out last Thursday. If not, call your Worksite Organizer or the MRC at (877) 721-4968 to get one.

721 is currently visiting job sites and getting the word out. Check out the calendar on our website.

This is only a tentative agreement until it is ratified. It's all up to you.

***I'm voting Yes to protect all of our members equally and not leave anyone behind.***

In Solidarity, Art Sweatman

P.S. Visit [www.seiu721.org](http://www.seiu721.org) to see the full agreement, a summary, a Q&A on the Early Retirement program and other resources to help you make this important decision.

