

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – February 2011

Pack the Capitol to Help Correct the Record

At the Michigan Business Leaders event on January 31st, the Governor released “data” on public vs. private sector compensation costs. The Governor invited “anyone with other data” to come forward and add it to the discussion. We plan to do just that. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) and researcher **Jeffrey H. Keefe**, associate professor of labor and employment relations at the School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University, will hold a media roundtable discuss the release of a new “apples to apples” study examining public sector versus private sector compensation in Michigan. This will take place on Thursday, February 3, 2011 at 11 a.m. in room 426 of the Capitol Building. Let’s make our voice heard. Show support for public employees and come to the meeting! Contact **Cindy Mason** (cmason@seiu517m.org) or **Steve Reck** (sreck@seiu517m.org) for more information.

SEIU Responds to Governor Economic Presentation

Members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) respond to Governor Snyder’s January 31, 2011 presentation of the state’s financial health by calling for accountability, innovation and cost savings that include everyone. View the press release here: http://www.seiu517m.org/Michigan_Public_Service_Employees_to_Snyder.aspx

Public Employee Pension Facts

SEIU International has put together some straight forward facts about public employee pensions. View them here: http://www.seiu517m.org/Public_Employee_Pension_Facts.aspx

Union Holds Member Strength Training



SEIU Local 517M held a Member Strength Training conference on January 30-31, 2011. The training started with opening remarks from State Representative **Stacy Erwin Oakes** (D-Saginaw) to welcome us to the area. A conversation about the Fight For a Fair Economy campaign was led by SEIU International representatives **Steve Kest** and **Fred Miller** (former State Representative). This discussion talked about what we as taxpaying public employees can do to make the legislature and the public realize the value of the services we provide. There were education sessions by State Council Political Director **Luke Canfora** on what the misleading term “Right to Work” actually means and the history behind it. Canfora also covered the growing trend of social media and the role it will play in the future. There was a training program put on by **Michelle Kaminski** from the MSU Labor Education Program on how to run a contract campaign. Michigan Employee Benefit Services (MEBS) representatives **Tim Spink** and **Randy Joppie**, gave an introduction to the members about what services this “union-owned” insurance company can provide to employees. SEIU was a founding member of the Public Employee Trust which runs MEBS. Specific training and role playing scenarios were given to get the membership actively involved in the Member Strength program which will be vital in our Fight For a Fair Economy strategy.

View pictures of the conference here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/54989632@N05/sets/72157625830081053/>

Civil Service Commission Approves Other Eligible Individual Benefits

On January 27, 2011 the Civil Service Commission approved the Letter of Understanding that provides health care coverage for "other eligible individuals" who reside with a state employee and meet certain criteria. This ruling will make the benefits effective beginning October 1, 2011.

The Letters were approved on a 3-1 vote over the objections from Office of the State Employer Director **Jan Winters** citing costs as a reason to reject.

Former SEIU Local 517M President **Edward Novak** wrote in on this victory. "Just saw that the Civil Service commission finally approved the same-sex benefits that we negotiated back in 2004. Thanks for the continued effort to get this approved, it's a great victory for the union."

GOP Legislators Go After Workers' Rights as First Order of Business

Elected on a jobs creation platform, the GOP lead legislature has done everything EXCEPT work on jobs creation. With bills ranging from repealing the Michigan Health and Safety Act, restricting access to health care and limiting a worker's right to join a union, the GOP has shown more of a vendetta against those with jobs than it has to help create new jobs. Click to see the bills that were introduced in January:

http://www.seiu517m.org/GOP_Legislators_Go_After_Workers_Rights_As_First_Order_of_Business.aspx

New Local 517M Executive Board Members Sworn In



Swearing in of new Directors L-R: Brenda Greene, Cheryl Merrill, President Bill Ruhf and Steve Haskell

The SEIU Local 517M Executive Board added three new members at their January 12, 2011 meeting in Lansing. The three new members all filled vacancies on the Board. The new members are: **Cheryl Merrill** representing Region 1, **Brenda Greene** representing Region 3 and **Steve**

Haskell representing the Scientific and Engineering unit. Welcome to the new board members!

HSS Unit Membership Meetings

The Human Services Support unit has announced the following general membership meetings across the State for 2011:

http://www.seiu517m.org/assets/assetcontent/87657323-d468-4ff7-a068-4d93028fed5f/546bfa9e-94e2-495f-9d30-54cc81f55e47/8a50927a-8a1f-4a8c-97c9-ad91864edc2f/1/2011_GMM_Schedule.pdf