



**SEIU 517M**  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

*The* **E-Former**

The Official Electronic Newsletter of  
SEIU Local 517M

## June/July 2024

### Staff Directory

Please contact the appropriate staff person using their phone or email (click their name) below:

**Interim Executive Director:**

[Joey Combs](#) - 517.267.2065

**Information Services/PDF/Member-Only Discount Benefits:**

[Dave Corrie](#) - 517.267.2090

**Office Manager:**

[Ashley Konyha](#) - 517.267.2095

**Dues & COPE Deductions:**

[Andrea Valerio](#) - 989.797.4241

**Member Strength Director:**

[Marian Wilcox](#) - 517.744.5393

**Labor Relations Questions:**

**Scientific and Engineering Unit:**

[Howard Gordon](#) - 517.267.2070

**Human Services Support Unit:**

[Janice Cosey](#) - 313.246.1137

**Technical Unit:**

[Kevin Karpinski](#) - 517.267.2088

**School and Local Government Units:**

[Clint Bryant](#) - 989.797.4258

[Christine Stressman](#) - 616.696.2141

[Andy Johnson](#) - 269.978.1994

[Lamont Williams](#) - 313.314.6511

[Brandell Tomanica](#) - 517.237.0426

[Matt Schlofner](#) - 313.335.1585

Click on the map to find out which Region your unit is in.



### Bowling Fundraiser Recap

The Tomorrow's Michigan Today Scholarship fundraising bowling event was held on Friday, June 7, 2024 at the Royal Scot Golf and Bowl in Lansing.

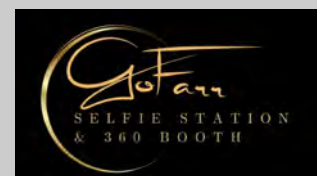
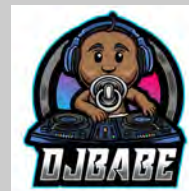
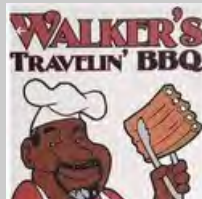
Ten teams participated over the six hour event. Fun was had by all. The event raised over \$1800 for the scholarship fund.



### 2024 Annual Meeting Set For July 28th

The 2024 SEIU Local 517M Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 28, 2024 at the William G. Milliken State Park & Harbor located at 1900 Atwater Street in Detroit. The event will run from 11:00 am and end at 3:00 pm.

Food provided by Walker's Travelin' BBQ. A Selfie Station will be provided by GoFarr. Tunes provided by DJ Babe. Games and much more!



Attendance is limited to the first 140 people so [reserve your spot today!](#)

**STAND TOGETHER — STAND STRONG**

[www.seiu517m.org](http://www.seiu517m.org)

## New Staff Join the Local 517M Team

SEIU Local 517M would like to introduce and welcome two new staff members who started in May and June.



Marian Wilcox is the Member Strength Director and will be working primarily on the state employee reauthorization campaign. Marian is an experienced compliance professional with extensive experience in NCAA Compliance. She also comes with experience working in state government (Director of Workers Compensation Fund/ Director of Workers Claims' Processing and Appeals). Marian was also a former owner of her own business providing non-medical homecare services and transportation to senior citizens. Most recently, Marian worked as a Labor Relations Coordinator in the construction industry where she worked on the Labor Relations Teams in all matters pertaining to Collective Bargaining Negotiations.



Brandell Tomanica is a Labor Relations Specialist. Brandell comes from Astera Credit Union where she was a Senior Consumer Loan Underwriter. During her seven years at Astera, she has filled many positions within their private union ranging from Election Officer, Bargaining Chair member, Vice Unit Chair and Alternate Union Steward. In those roles she has been able to gain invaluable knowledge and experience with contract negotiations, member orientations, filing and resolving grievances, among other various responsibilities. She is passionate about the history of the labor movement in the United States, labor laws and regulations, and current labor politics. Brandell is looking forward to sharing these passions and interests with

SEIU's leadership and membership, with the objective of cultivating an environment of labor related membership education, empowerment and engagement.



Matthew Schlofner is a Labor Relations Specialist. Matt has experience sitting at the bargaining table for an off-Broadway House negotiating with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (I.A.T.S.E) Local 1 and the Shubert Organization. In his long career as a Stagehand he worked on many shows and events, including touring with Sesame Street. Matt is a graduate of Rutgers University with a Master of Labor and Employee Relations who is thrilled to enter the arena on a daily basis fighting for you.

## Unions for All Statewide Tour 2024

Imagine if working people had more say over our future. Join the SEIU Michigan State Council at their final summer convening to learn more! The last convening will be in Detroit at the Durfee Innovation Society (2470 Collingwood Street) on August 10, 2024. The event will run from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm. Lunch provided.

When working people join together in a union, we gain strength in numbers to fight for quality jobs that lift our families up. Join other SEIU members to discuss how we can empower more working Michiganders to join unions, so we can all have a stronger voice about our jobs and future.

Register for final the meeting [here](#).

Our hard work keeps Michigan going. Let's make sure more of us — no matter what zip code we live in — have a seat at the table to build a state that puts working families first.

## 2024 SEIU 517M Tomorrow's Michigan Today Scholarship Winners

SEIU 517M Tomorrow's Michigan Today is proud to announce the recipients of our annual scholarship program. This year we had 21 eligible entries from members, as well as, eligible spouses, children, grand children and step children. Award winners were drawn at random from all eligible submissions.

**Blaine Barkovich**, studying Human Biology Pre-Med at Michigan State University. The stepchild of Jeremy Wiest of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Camille Lozmack**, studying Business at Alma College. The child of Steven Lozmack of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Lashawn Williams**, studying Early Childhood Education at Saginaw Valley State University. A member from Saginaw Schools.

**Cadence Glass**, studying Biology Health and Society at the University of Michigan. The child of Brandon Glass of the Technical Unit.

**Isla McCubbin-Green**, studying Computer Science at Michigan State University or University of Michigan. The child of Andria McCubbin of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Joseph Johnston**, studying Applied Science at West Shore Community College. The child of Jody Johnston of the Technical Unit.

**Taylor White**, is a part-time student at Delta College. The grandchild of Carol Roshy of the Human Services Support Unit.

**Megan Kennedy**, is studying the Program In The Environment at the University of Michigan. The child of Amy Kennedy of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Joshua Walker**, in the Engineering Program at Albion College. The child of Kemeshia Walker from the City of Saginaw.

**Amara Johnson**, studying Art and Design at Northern Michigan University. The child of Jennifer Johnson of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Chase DeKorte**, is attending Calvin University and is Undecided on a major at this time. The child of Scott DeKorte of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Tamia Williams**, studying Environmental Studies and Sustainability at Michigan State University. The child of Terees Williams from the Muskegon DPW Unit.

**Landen Yocum**, in the College of Fine Arts: Technical Theatre & Design at Western Michigan University. The child of Julie Yocum of the Scientific & Engineering Unit.

**Casey Henderson**, studying Chemical Engineering at Michigan Technological University. The child of Heather Henderson of the Human Services Support Unit.

**Addysen Otremba**, studying Animal Science/Pre Vet at Michigan State University. The child of Robert Otremba of the Technical Unit.

Congratulations to the winners and all the best for a successful future on behalf of the members of SEIU Local 517M. Information about next year's scholarship program will be available in January, 2025 so watch the website, the E-Former and your email for details!

## SEIU International Convention Recap

Delegates from across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico assembled in Philadelphia for the SEIU International Convention. The convention ran from Monday, May 20th and concluded on Wednesday, May 22nd. The SEIU International Convention is held every four years to conduct the International including the election of officers.

Our delegates were: President Joey Combs, Human Services Support Unit Divisional Vice President Janice Cosey, Region 3 Divisional Vice President Carmella Johnson (Flint Schools), Region 2 Divisional Vice President Yolanda Johnson (City of Battle Creek), and Scientific and Engineering Unit Divisional Vice President Greg Merricle.

Noteworthy speakers included Vice President Kalama Harris, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Mayor of Philadelphia Cherelle Parker, and the Reverend William Barber II.

The election results for the SEIU International Officers were as follows:

President - April Verrett (The first African American Woman)

Secretary/Treasurer - Rocio Saenz (The first Latina Woman)

Executive Vice Presidents (All were reelected) - Joseph Bryant, Neal Bisno, Heather Conroy, and Leslie Frane.

The delegates approved the future direction of SEIU. A new organizing goal was approved. The goal is to organize an additional 1 million new members by the year 2034.



## **SEIU 517M Attends NASHTU (National Association of State Highway Transportation Unions) Conference**

By Kevin Karpinski, SEIU Staff

On June 3-5, 2024, members and staff of SEIU Local 517M attended the annual NASHTU Conference in Washington D.C. The Technical Unit delegation was George Heath, Steve Gasser, and Kevin Karpinski. The Scientific and Engineering unit was represented by Leni Steiner-Zehender. As usual, the conference was informative and provided the group with a great opportunity to bring matters to the attention of legislators regarding consultant contracting costs, highway and road safety, and ensuring that civil service workers are the primary source of design engineering and inspection work on our highways, roads, and bridges.

### **Consultant Contracting - Public vs Private Cost Analysis**

The numerous State delegations in attendance have the same concern, the rising costs of private sector design engineering and inspection work. Numerous studies show that the cost of using private companies is double and triple the cost of using in-house public workers. States included were California, Montana, Connecticut, Minnesota, Ohio, Maryland, New York, Massachusetts, and Michigan. A current bill is sitting in the House of Representatives, titled the Public Inspectors for Safe Infrastructure Act (HR 3785) that will ensure that public employee Inspector-Technicians will be required for the inspection of roads, highways, and bridges for State and Federally funded projects. Many hours were spent meeting with Michigan legislators, including Senators Peters & Stabenow and Representatives Slotkin, Kildee, Bergman, Scholten, Stevens, and Tlaib. Your Michigan SEIU 517M Union group requested that the Representatives sign on to the bill and the Senators initiate a companion bill in the Senate. This action will be extremely helpful as the legislature begins discussions to reauthorize the Infrastructure Law and funding for the next 5-year cycle.

### **New National Infrastructure Law**

The Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) was passed and put into effect in 2023, and it is comprised of \$108 Billion dollars of funding for public transportation. Currently, there are proposed projects in nearly every County in the United States. This law comes with a loan program called TIFIA



(Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act), and these private company loans do not include audits or end of project analysis or evaluations to determine if the cost was not excessive and if the quality of materials was adequate. In other words, funding with no strings attached. Your Michigan Union delegation made headway with the Congress and Senate offices on this subject. We requested that the reauthorization process needs to include a mandatory and standard cost analysis along with mandating that this work be

done by civil service employees. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg spoke to the group and outlined the priorities and programs being planned and funded by the IIJA. He is now a Michigan resident and resides in Traverse City. (pictured L-R: Leni Steiner Zehender, Steve Gasser, Secretary Buttigieg, George Heath, Kevin Karpinski).

### **Faulty Bridge Design by a Private Contractor**

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Director, Robert Molloy, spoke at the conference and went through the Florida International University (FIU) bridge collapse in 2018. The private design engineering firm was at fault and the facts highlighted the need for in-house civil service design engineering.

### **Guardrail & Barrier Safety**

Your Union delegation mentioned the problems that are arising regarding the safety of barriers, specifically guardrails and the weight of electric vehicles. The NTSB Director mentioned that a study ([https://engineering.unl.edu/news/240131/mwrsf\\_evs\\_safety/](https://engineering.unl.edu/news/240131/mwrsf_evs_safety/)) was done at the University of Nebraska in 2023 showing that since these vehicles are 20%-50% heavier than gas vehicles, the guardrail technology needs to be updated. According to the NTSB Director, tests are being done using the Ford Mach E Mustang EV. The lower center of gravity of these vehicles is a primary concern when heavier force is applied to the guardrails on a lower spot at certain speeds.

**A Pictorial Review of Recent Events**

Unions For All Flint Convening - May 4th



NAACP 69th Annual Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner - May 19th



Women's Legacy Luncheon - May 18th



Juneteenth Celebration - June 15th



# A Pictorial Review of Recent Events

SEIU Lobby Day - June 5th



L-R: Cherese Wilkerson, Marian Wilcox, Matt Schlofner, Joey Combs, Sonya Robinson, Rep. Matt Koleszar

