



SEIU 517M
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

E-FORMER

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UNION PROPOSES PLAN ON AI & SUBCONTRACTING

By Kevin Karpinski,
Senior Labor Relations Specialist



Kevin Karpinski of SEIU Local 517M makes a presentation to the Michigan Civil Service Commission on Wednesday, May 13, 2026. Shown from left are Commission Chair Gail Wilson, Commissioner Jeff Steffel, Commissioner Nick Ciaramitaro, and Karpinski. *Paul Egan/Detroit Free Press*

STAFF DIRECTORY

Labor Relations (State Units)

Scientific & Engineering:

Howard Gordon - 517.267.2070

Human Services Support:

Larry Sedrowski - 313.246.1137

Technical Unit:

Kevin Karpinski - 517.267.2088

Labor Relations (School and Local Gov't)

Clint Bryant - 989.797.4258

Christine Stressman - 616.696.2141

Brandell Tomanica - 517.237.0426

Lamont Williams - 313.314.6511

Austin Brown - 269.978.1994

Executive Director:

Claire Corr - 517.267.2065

Information Services:

Jacob Tkaczyk - 517.267.2090

Director of Operations:

Rita LaMoreaux - 517.267.2095

Dues and Cope Deductions :

Andrea Valerio - 989.797.4241

Member Strength/ Member Only Benefits

Marian Wilcox - 517.744.5393

At the Civil Service meeting on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, SEIU 517M staff members Kevin Karpinski and Joseph Bellgowan presented a plan to create a task force to deal with AI entering the State workplace, and subcontracting overspending, primarily in road, highway, and bridge inspection.

Civil Service Technician Inspectors were reduced by nearly 20% over 10 years (2015-2025) while contracted inspectors experienced explosive growth over the same period at double the cost.

AI is showing up in State employment, and deserves a complete review in order to develop parameters, controls, oversight, training, and the impact on classifications in civil service, including SEIU 517M.

The Civil Service Commission, comprised of one Snyder appointee and three Whitmer appointees, voted unanimously 4-0 to establish the task force. The task force will include Civil Service staff, the State Personnel Director, Interested Unions (one rep per contract), interested departments, and OSE.

The task force will seek best practices, comparable projects in other states, and will review the current Civil Service Rules and Regulations regarding the selection and implementation of private contracts, including AI products.

The Union believes it is of utmost importance to protect human jobs and prevent “skynet” from occurring.

WWW.SEIU517M.ORG

To learn more, please check out Paul Egan’s Article in the Detroit Free Press [Here](#).

HONORING THE LIVES OF TWO MDOT WORKERS

SEIU 517M extends our deepest sorrow and condolences to the families, friends, and coworkers of the two MDOT employees, Bruce Wagner and Steven Spenle, who tragically lost their lives in the recent work zone accident on US-127.

Because SEIU 517M proudly represents many MDOT employees across the state, this tragedy hits especially close to home for our union family. These were not just workers in orange vests and hard hats. They were fathers, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and loved ones who deserved to return home safely at the end of the day.

We also stand in solidarity with our union family at MSEA during this incredibly difficult time as they mourn the loss of two of their own.

This heartbreaking tragedy should serve as a reminder to every driver that work zones are not inconveniences, they are active workplaces filled with real people risking their safety to improve and maintain our roads. Posted speed limits and traffic warnings exist to protect lives, yet far too often drivers ignore them, putting workers and fellow motorists in danger. **Please slow down. Put the phone away. Stay alert. Be patient.**

No road project, delay, text message, or destination is more important than a human life. Every worker deserves to make it home to their family at night.

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN AND MICHIGAN MEDICINE REACH CONTRACT AGREEMENT.

After weeks of uncertainty and concern for many SEIU 517M members, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) and Michigan Medicine announced that they have reached a new long-term agreement that will keep Michigan Medicine hospitals, clinics, physicians, and facilities in-network for BCBSM members.

The agreement comes ahead of the June 30 contract renewal deadline and means members who receive care through Michigan Medicine should be able to continue seeing their providers without disruption.

We know many members were anxious about the possibility of losing access to trusted doctors, specialists, and health systems. Healthcare network negotiations can create real stress and uncertainty for working families, especially when so many depend on consistent access to care.

It is important to note that negotiations between insurance companies and healthcare systems are handled directly between those organizations. Unions are not involved in or able to influence these private network and reimbursement agreements. While SEIU 517M continues to advocate for strong healthcare benefits and support members through situations like this, decisions regarding provider network participation are ultimately made by the insurance carrier and healthcare system.

We understand this uncertainty created concern for many members and appreciate everyone who reached out with questions during the process. We are pleased that an agreement was reached that will allow members to continue accessing care through Michigan Medicine and U of M Health.

SEIU MICHIGAN PRESENTS:

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

AND

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION



JOIN SEIU MICHIGAN AND AFFILIATES FOR THE QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING TO RECAP THE NOTABLE WINS OF THE YEAR AND RECEIVE IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN AND POLITICAL UPDATES.



FOLLOWING THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING, WE WILL GATHER FOR THE ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION, WHICH WILL INCLUDE A PRESENTATION AND PERFORMANCES. INVITE YOUR COWORKERS, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS - YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS THIS!



SAVE THE DATE:

WHEN: JUNE 20, 2026

FROM 12PM TO 4PM

LAFAYETTE CENTRAL PARK

1500 E. LAFAYETTE ST. DETROIT, MI 48207

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER FOR THIS CELEBRATION!



TEAMWORK ON AND OFF THE FIELD!

City of Saginaw members from all three contracts recently faced off in a friendly softball game filled with fun and fellowship. It was such a hit that everyone is already looking forward to making it an annual event!



SAVE THE DATE: SEIU LOCAL 517M ANNUAL MEETING & MEMBER CELEBRATION!

Mark your calendars! The SEIU Local 517M Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at beautiful Pioneer Park in Muskegon along the shores of Lake Michigan. Registration information will be coming soon!

This family-friendly event will be part annual meeting, part summer picnic, and a celebration of the incredible members who make SEIU 517M strong every day.

The meeting and family meal will take place inside the historic Pioneer Park Lodge, built in 1936 with beautiful, handcrafted wood and stonework from the WPA era.

Pioneer Park also offers:

- Lake Michigan beach access and scenic overlooks
- Volleyball courts
- Tennis & pickleball courts
- Basketball courts
- Softball fields
- Playgrounds for kids and families

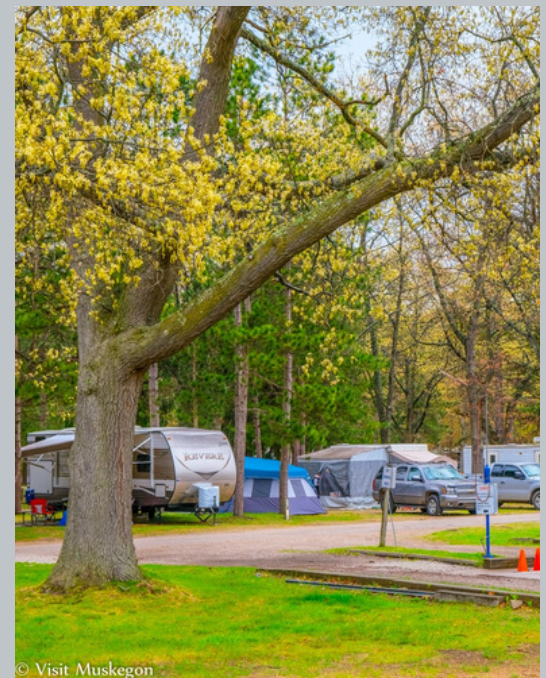
Love camping? Bring the camper or tent and make it a weekend getaway with your union family!

Campground reservations:

<https://muskegoncountyparks.org/pioneer-park/>

For members who prefer hotel accommodations, SEIU 517M will also help coordinate lodging information closer to the event.

Watch for more details and registration information coming soon. We can't wait to celebrate with you in Muskegon!



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© Visit Muskegon

HOW TO BE A LGBTQIA+ ALLY

BY: *BRANDELL TOMANICA, LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST*

In celebration of Pride Month and SEIU's commitment to solidarity and unity, we're reminded that creating an inclusive workplace for everyone starts with everyday actions. Whether you're new to allyship or looking to grow, here are simple ways to show up for your colleagues:



Start with respect

Use people's preferred names and pronouns. If you're unsure, it's okay to ask, or share your own first. Avoid making assumptions about someone's identity or relationships.

Listen and learn

You don't need to have all the answers, acceptance and respect don't require full understanding. Be open, listen to others' experiences, and take initiative to learn on your own.

Speak up when it counts

If you hear something disrespectful or exclusionary, don't stay silent. A simple, respectful comment such as "Hey, that's not ok." can make a big difference.

Use inclusive language

Small shifts matter, try using gender-neutral terms like "partner" or "everyone" in conversations and emails.

Show your support

Join events, participate in awareness initiatives, or add pronouns to your email signature if you're comfortable.

Respect privacy

Never share someone's identity or personal information without their consent. Let people tell their own stories.

Keep growing

Allyship is ongoing. Mistakes happen, what matters is learning, improving, and staying committed.

Bottom line:

Being an ally helps create a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected, and able to be themselves. Here at SEIU 517M, solidarity is more than a word, it's action we take every day to support one another.

CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH & ANNOUNCING SEIU 517M LAVENDER CAUCUS

June is Pride Month. This is a time to recognize the history, resilience, and contributions of the LGBTQ+ community, while also reaffirming the importance of dignity, equality, and respect for all people.

Pride Month began as a commemoration of the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and has grown into a celebration of authenticity, inclusion, and community. It is also a reminder that everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued in their workplace and in their union.

That is why SEIU 517M is proud to announce the formation of our own Lavender Caucus. The Lavender Caucus will serve as a space for LGBTQ+ members and allies to connect, support one another, raise awareness, and help ensure our union continues building an inclusive environment where every member feels welcomed and heard. Unions are strongest when every voice is respected and every worker knows they belong. At SEIU 517M, we believe solidarity means standing together across all backgrounds and identities. We are excited to continue building a union culture rooted in fairness, respect, and support for one another.

More information about the Lavender Caucus and opportunities to get involved will be shared soon. You can join the Lavender Caucus by clicking on this link: <https://secure.everyaction.com/YEyQlmvE7EiYRvTErMdGiA2> and fill out your information! Dues have been waived until further notice.

We look forward to creating a space where members can celebrate community, advocate for inclusion, and support each other proudly and openly.

Happy Pride Month from SEIU 517M!



MAY IS AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

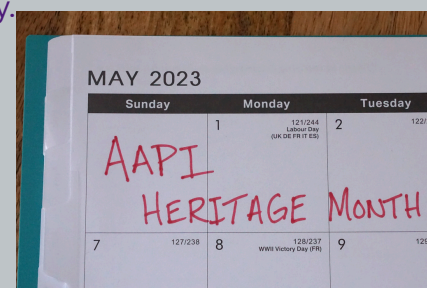
The SEIU Asian Pacific Islander (API) Caucus is celebrating AAPI Heritage Month in May 2026 by uplifting voices, fostering solidarity, and strengthening community power under themes of resilience and joy.

Asian Americans represent approximately 3.5% of Michigan's population, totaling around 350,000 residents, making them the fastest-growing demographic in the state. The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community plays a vital role in various sectors, including education, business, and social justice, contributing to the overall enhancement of life in Michigan.

Unfortunately, there has been an alarming increase in incidents of bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes directed towards the AAPI community, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This month presents an opportunity to reaffirm our dedication to equity and acceptance for the AAPI community. It is essential to actively stand against discrimination while celebrating the rich cultural and historical contributions of these communities. Promoting inclusivity benefits everyone and strengthens our society.

Thank you,

Rabia Keo
517M Unit EB/SEIU API Caucus



“JOBS WITH JUSTICE” CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS ATTACKS ON PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS IN THE SOUTH

BY: CLINT BRYANT, SENIOR LABOR REPRESENTATIVE

At the Jobs with Justice - “Workers Revive Democracy” Conference, labor leaders from across the country shared growing concerns about coordinated attacks on public sector unions, particularly in the South. Florida state-lawmakers are advancing legislation aimed at weakening worker power. Speakers analyzed Florida H.B. 256, and [Florida Senate Bill 1296](#), measures designed to disrupt dues collection, weaken collective bargaining rights, and reduce union membership. Even with collective bargaining protections written into Florida’s Constitution, public workers there are being forced to fight simply to maintain a voice on the job.

For attendees from Michigan, these conversations felt personal. Michigan workers know what it means to face political attacks on unions and public employees. From “right-to-work” laws, reauthorization, repeated attempts to weaken prevailing wage protections and collective bargaining rights, working families across our state have spent years organizing, advocating, and standing together to defend both workers and the public services our communities depend on every day.



Florida’s effort to eliminate payroll dues deductions is a direct attempt to weaken unions from within. Leaders from SEIU 32BJ, SEIU 1199, (International Union of Painters and Allied Trades) IUPAT, and other labor organizations emphasized that these fights go beyond contracts or paychecks. Public sector workers are often the people holding communities together by providing direct services, accountability, and stability during difficult times. As former Acting U.S. Labor Secretary Julie Su, SEIU International President April Verrett and IUPAT International President Jimmy Williams Jr. reminded attendees, public sector unions remain frontline defenders of democracy. (pictured at top of article)

For Michigan labor advocates, the message coming out of the conference was clear: what happens in Florida can impact workers everywhere. The attacks may look different from state to state, but the goal remains the same, to weaken worker voices and diminish collective power. Michigan workers understand that protecting unions means protecting communities, public services, and the future of working families across the country.

AI IN SCHOOLS RAISES NEW QUESTIONS FOR WORKERS, STUDENTS, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION (JOBS WITH JUSTICE CONF. CONTINUED)

BY: CLINT BRYANT, SENIOR LABOR REPRESENTATIVE

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping public education, and labor leaders at the “Jobs with Justice” Conference warned that schools must prepare for both the opportunities and dangers that come with these technologies.

One of the conference’s featured sessions focused on AI’s growing impact in classrooms, school administration, and overall public services. Members explored how artificial intelligence is already influencing lesson planning, grading systems, data collection, and workforce management in schools across the country.

A mock policy session with former Labor Secretary, Julie Su, challenged attendees to think critically about how labor protections can keep pace with emerging technologies. The discussion centered on how workers can ensure AI is implemented ethically, transparently, and with accountability to educators, students, and communities.

Education workers, paraprofessionals, and county employees from Maryland and Pennsylvania discussed concerns that AI systems could increase privatization efforts within public education. Organizers warned that technology companies are aggressively marketing AI products to school districts, often without clear safeguards around worker displacement, student privacy, or public oversight.

As public education continues to face pressures from privatization and budget cuts, conference attendees emphasized that protecting schools also means protecting the workers who make them function every day.



RED ALERT RALLY: SAVE OUR HOSPITALS

Join the Michigan Nurses Association and National Nurses United for an important community rally right here in Kalamazoo!

Where: Bronson Park 200 S. Rose Street, Kalamazoo

When: Saturday, June 13, 2026

Times: Doors open at 11:00 a.m., Rally begins at 12:00 p.m.

Nurses, patients, families, unions, and community members are coming together to stand up for our hospitals and the care our communities depend on. Proposed cuts to Medicaid and other essential healthcare programs threaten hospitals across the country, including Beacon Kalamazoo Hospital (formerly Ascension Borgess).

·This family-friendly event will feature:

·Guest speakers Dr. Abdul El-Sayed and Tony Award-winning actor Celia Keenan-Bolger

·Remarks from our own Austin Brown, 517M Labor Representative and President of the South-Central Michigan AFL-CIO Labor Council

·Live music and activities

·Free tacos

·A free original children's book commissioned for this event!

·Free wellness checks provided by nurses from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Together, we're raising our voices for compassionate, accessible healthcare and strong community hospitals.

Whether you're a healthcare worker, patient, advocate, or ally, your voice matters.

We hope to see you there!



RED ALERT

SAVE OUR HOSPITALS PROTECT OUR PATIENTS

SIXTH STOP » KALAMAZOO, MI

RALLY TO SAVE OUR HOSPITALS

Join Michigan Nurses Association and National Nurses United for the Red Alert: Save Our Hospitals Tour in Kalamazoo

Calling all nurses and community members:

Trump and Republicans in Congress cut health care to fund billionaire tax breaks, ICE terror, and endless war.

Due to massive cuts to Medicaid and other programs that keep our hospitals running, Beacon Kalamazoo Hospital (formerly Ascension Borgess) and hundreds of other hospitals across the country are at risk of cuts to care and even closure.

Together, nurses, patients, and our allies are fighting back against this cruelty, demanding a healthy society based on care and compassion.

Featuring guest speakers Dr. Abdul El-Sayed and Tony Award-Winning Actor Celia Keenan-Bolger

Join us for a community-wide, family-friendly event to save our hospitals. We'll have live music, activities, a free original children's book, and free tacos! The event starts at 11 a.m., and the rally will start at 12 p.m. Nurses will also be providing free wellness checks from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



RED ALERT TOUR RALLY

**SAT JUN 13
12:00PM**

DOORS OPEN AT 11:00AM

**Bronson Park
200 S. Rose Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007**

**Scan here to RSVP
and receive updates!**



nnu.org/Kalamazoo

OUR PATIENTS. OUR UNION. OUR VOICE.



**MI NURSES
Association**
Affiliate of National Nurses United and AFL-CIO