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# UNION UPDATE

LOCAL 1000  
  
Stronger Together



## INCOME ~~INEQUALITY~~

We must rise to this challenge

**The middle-class resurgence will only happen if we all step up**

By Yvonne R. Walker  
President, SEIU Local 1000

It is more apparent than ever that we must help lead the fight over income inequality. The need for action has never been greater.

### The time is now.

We have been successful in the workplace – but we don't live at work. We live in communities where the evidence of a shrinking middle class is overpowering.

Most newly created jobs pay less than \$15 an hour. Most of the economic growth of the past 30 years has flowed to the richest 1 percent, who now own 40 percent of the wealth. Meanwhile, the bottom 80 percent own only 7 percent. The average worker's monthly pay is less than what most top CEOs make in an hour.



In a Dec. 4 speech, President Obama said income inequality is “the defining challenge of our time.”

Hearing the leader of the free world use our term – “income inequality” – means our work is taking hold nationally.

### But we need to do more.

Local 1000 is uniquely suited to rise to this challenge because we have been building an army of activists. We have the structure. We must be the voice of the disappearing middle class.

Gov. Jerry Brown spoke to a group of members and staff at our annual Real Time Strategic Change (RTSC) meeting on Dec. 14 about income inequality. He said that the trend has been accelerating since he was governor in the 1980s as business has become more global. He conceded that changing this trend will be incredibly hard but said that it won't happen unless labor steps up.

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# UNION INFORMATION

*“If we fail, the middle class is going to disappear.”*

—Yvonne R. Walker, President SEIU Local 1000

“The only way the people that are not at the top can have their interests looked after, is if they are organized,” Brown said.

We must be a force that helps lead the middle-class resurgence. If we fail, the middle class is going to disappear. This fight is for our children and our grandchildren. We cannot leave them a world in which the middle-class, American Dream is a thing of the past.

This will be the hardest work we have ever done.

At this year’s RTSC, nearly 500 members and staff stepped up on Dec. 14 and agreed to accept this challenge. They didn’t just sign a commitment card. They agreed to take specific actions in the coming months to help increase our influence and build stronger, more meaningful coalitions.

**Are you ready for this challenge?**



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RTSC 2013

# Local 1000 leaders set sights on reducing income inequality

## Members & staff challenged to sharpen outside organizing skills to help revive the middle class

Nearly 500 Local 1000 members and staff spent three days participating in lectures and training sessions to improve their ability to reach out beyond our union to fight for the middle class.

Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker challenged member leaders and staff to step up and meet the challenges of income inequality.

“We have become a large and powerful Local, in a large and powerful state,” Walker said. “So, we are going to take the victories we have earned for our members, and translate that into real, lasting,

relevant progress for the entire middle class.”

Walker and other speakers also focused on how Local 1000 has overcome challenges we have faced over the past five years and how, while the union has become more relevant to members and all Californians, more work remains to be done.

Speakers at the annual conference included Gov. Jerry Brown, who pointed out his own support for raising the state’s minimum wage and declared that Local 1000

needs to be a strong leader in the fight to revive the middle class.

“The only way the people that are not at the top can have their interests looked after, is if they are organized,” Brown said.

California Attorney General Kamala Harris spoke about the victories she has delivered for California working families, including reining in the corporate wrongdoing that led to the housing bubble and foreclosure crisis.

Throughout the meeting, members and staff worked to develop plans for connecting coworkers, neighbors and family members to Local 1000’s goals, campaigns and purpose statement through the power of story.

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