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UNION UPDATE

MEMBER GETS JOB BACK & REBUILDS HIS LIFE

LOCAL 1000 HELPS A FALSELY ACCUSED EMPLOYEE RETURN TO WORK

Caltrans toll collector Johnnie Burton cannot get back the year of his life that passed while he was falsely imprisoned. But after Local 1000 persuaded an administrative judge to decide in Burton's favor, he is back at work today.

Burton lost his job after being arrested in Sept. 2012 for a felony that a jury later found he didn't commit. In jail, without a way to contact his employer, he was terminated for being AWOL. Unable to make \$750,000 bail, he waited 14 months in jail for his trial—where he was exonerated of all charges.

After his release, Local 1000 attorney Linda Shipley took his case to hearing where Administrative Law Judge Karla Broussard-Boyd ordered the state to rehire Burton because he had no opportunity to call in sick, explain his absence or appeal his termination while incarcerated.

"SEIU Local 1000 went out and fought for me when no one else would," said Burton, who is scheduled to work his first day back on April 2 at the Benicia-Martinez Bridge. "My union believed in me and because of that I now have my job back."

A false accusation and lengthy jail stay caused Burton to be evicted from his apartment, his car to be repossessed, and his credit ruined. A single father with a 10 year-old boy, returning to work is an important step in rebuilding his life.

"My Local 1000 attorney was like a blessing from the sky for me. The union was ready to listen to my story, to review the facts and to help me put my life back together."

"My union believed in me and because of that I now have my job back."

~Johnnie Burton, Caltrans Toll Collector

PT CLASSIFICATION STUDY MOVES FORWARD

1000+ MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY ABOUT JOB SPECS

A two-week survey campaign to better understand the current job experiences of members working in Unit 4's Program Technician classification has concluded—with more than 1,000 completed surveys received.

Results of the survey will determine next steps in an effort to build an effective case for updating job specifications that have been in place since 1997. Members responded to survey questions that will help Local 1000's Program Technician Classification Committee propose changes in the PT job description that more accurately reflect the important work they perform.



Unit 4 Program Technicians work the phones encouraging fellow members to participate in the PT Classification survey.

"We had responses from nearly a third of all PT workers—an outstanding result," said Sophia Perkins, chair of Bargaining Unit 4. "This important first step went well because members stepped up, talked to one another and got organized."

"We have more than 3,800 program technicians in 50 different state departments," said Margarita Maldonado, Local 1000 vice president for bargaining. "They are the backbone of those departments, and the state has failed to recognize their evolving duties."

Local 1000's PT Classification Committee is scheduled to meet with the state on April 9. You can follow their progress on the Unit 4 bargaining page at seiu1000.org

SEEING the bigger picture

A Local 1000 activist for more than 15 years, Shelia Byars is stepping up once again and volunteering for campaigns that go beyond the worksite—working toward a better life for all Californians.

She's applying the grassroots organizing skills she's learned as an engaged member and applying them to the fight against income inequality and Raising California Together—a campaign that raises awareness and advocates for more early childcare options for members of the community that cannot otherwise afford it. She strongly believes that, "We are in a fight for our future and the future of our children, grandchildren and ourselves. We have a duty to strengthen the middle class and secure a living wage for all. Nothing can just be about us and our interests."

This Bargaining Unit 1 member leader has been in state service for over 18 years and currently works at

the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Driver Safety Office in Stockton. Over the past 15 years, Shelia has served her fellow members as a DLC President, Chief Steward, DLC Secretary, District Bargaining Unit Representative and Sergeant at Arms.

She became involved in the Union when a Local 1000 staff member saw her potential and invited her to a steward training. "I wasn't even aware of a steward's role or how they help protect state workers, but I was taught by my mother that if you see something wrong with a situation—don't just talk about it, fix it," Byars said. "That meeting was my turning point because the Local gave me the tools I needed to set goals, foster teamwork and network with our members. The first thing I did was organize my worksite at the time to 100 percent membership by communicating Local 1000's values and benefits."



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~Shelia Byars, DMV, Driver Safety Office

Shelia Byars testifies at the Senate Subcommittee 2 hearing on March 13 in support of hiring 822 new DMV employees for the implementation of AB 60, which recently became law and will allow undocumented California residents to apply for driver's licenses.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING AND POLITICAL POWER PRODUCE DMV RECLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION VICTORY

In July of 2013, the Local 1000 DMV Reclassification Team reached an agreement with the state updating job specifications for more than 4,000 employees to better reflect the work they perform, and providing pay increases ranging from 1.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Throughout that battle, Shelia grew as a member leader and became a DMV campaign champion who stood up and fought for members at the bargaining table.

"The DMV campaign was successful because we involved our members in every step of the process—

constant two-way communication, surveys, actions, testimony at the bargaining table—and the members trusted us because we stayed honest with them," Byars recalls.

Once the agreement was reached with the DMV, it needed to be ushered through the legislative process and made into law. "I will never forget the name of that bill—SB 102," she said. "It is so important for Local 1000 members to be involved politically, because if we didn't help elect the right governor or legislators, the reclassification effort would still be a battle."

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