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# UNION UPDATE



## SECURE CHOICE BOARD DEVELOPING PLAN for retirement security for all

### Feasibility study to help private sector workers avoid retirement poverty

**The California Secure Choice Retirement Savings Investment Board**, which was created with the passage of SB 1234, met March 24 to work on developing a market analysis and feasibility study to implement a retirement savings plan for millions of private sector workers who have no retirement plan through their job.

"We're embarking on a deliberate and thorough process to study the feasibility and then set up this program," said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker, who is also a member of the Secure Choice board. "It takes time but it's worth it. The whole nation is watching how California solves this problem so we have to do it right."

Closing the huge retirement gap for working families is a big step toward strengthening the middle class and reducing overall income inequality—a goal Local 1000 adopted last December.

"Millions of Americans are working until they die or retiring into poverty," Walker said. "More than 45 percent of working-age households have no retirement assets. The ability to retire with dignity is a key part of the American Dream that we need to help save for the middle class."

Board members heard testimony from Ruben Garcia, an SEIU Local 521 member and social worker for Santa Clara County, who described the many low-income workers on his case load who seek public assistance for their families because they do not earn enough to make ends meet. These workers are not only unable to save for retirement; most have little or no savings for emergencies.

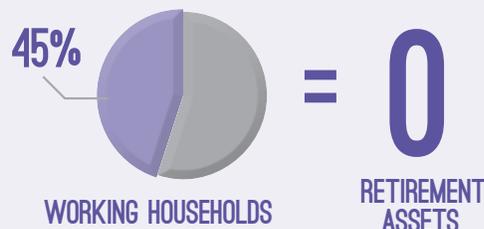


"Secure Choice is one answer to the retirement crisis, a supplement to Social Security that will allow these workers a real chance to avoid retiring into poverty," Garcia said.

The board read aloud written testimony from Sally Copeland, an in-home supportive services provider for Santa Clara County who also works part time at her child's school. Neither job offers a pension or a 401(k) savings plan.

"For home care workers and millions of other wage-workers in California, a comfortable retirement is a distant dream," Copeland wrote. "More likely, we'll work until we are too old or too sick to continue. We'll work till we drop."

#### THE RETIREMENT CRISIS BY THE NUMBERS



**47%** California workers on track to retire into economic hardship close to the poverty level

**45%** Private sector workers in California whose employer offers a retirement savings plan

**37%** California private sector workers who participate in an employer-sponsored plan

Source: CA Secure Choice Retirement Board

"The whole nation is watching how California solves this problem, so we have to do it right."

—Yvonne R. Walker, Local 1000 President & member of Secure Choice Retirement Savings Investment Board

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CONNECT AND MARCH FORWARD TOGETHER



**Over 40 young professionals**—Local 1000 members in state service—made new connections, learned more about their Union and got valuable career advice at The Young DLC networking luncheon held Wednesday, March 26 at the Department of Health Care Services headquarters in Sacramento.

The Young DLC is a pioneering effort of Local 1000's District Labor Council 762. Nearly two dozen members under the age of 35 are working together to build a strong member network in their workplace to communicate union values of social and economic justice. The luncheon was another step in their efforts to organize and engage their coworkers.

Tamekia N. Robinson, Local 1000 vice president for organizing/representation, spoke to the crowd about the key to our Union's success. "Every day we recruit, train and empower our members to become leaders. We give our members the training, the tools and the resources to make a difference on the job and in our communities," she said. "We make progress on the things that matter to you, when you stand up and get active in your Union. We will make our generation the future of organized labor when we stand up together, and make ourselves heard."

The group also heard from John Dexter, a manager and former Local 1000 member who supports the young professionals and lends himself as a resource

to The Young DLC. Dexter gave the group strategic advice regarding upward mobility including skills needed to advance a career in state service.

### Committed to making a difference

Member leader Liam Smith chairs the committee that launched The Young DLC effort, and looks forward to engaging and empowering more young state workers as the program grows. "Nothing will change for the middle class unless we step up, and we take responsibility to make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us," Smith said.

After dealing with a work-related issue and seeing the benefits of being engaged, Liam decided to become active and helped to develop the Young DLC. "We have a full plate of activities for this spring and summer," he said. "We want to look for more ways to become engaged in the community and network with even more young professionals in state service," he said.

Stay tuned for more stories about The Young DLC on the Member Strength webpage at [seiu1000.org](http://seiu1000.org)



**We will make our generation the future of organized labor when we stand up together, and make ourselves heard."**

*-Tamekia N. Robinson, Local 1000 Vice President for Organizing/Representation*



Young professionals connected with each other and exchanged organizing ideas and career tips.

**Resource Center**  
Monday-Friday  
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
866.471.SEIU (7348)

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