

APR 16
2014

UNION UPDATE

LOCAL 1000

SEIU
Stronger Together



Local 1000 members, staff and statewide officers with Mayor Castro (center) at our Fresno office.

Mayor Julian Castro inspires local activists, calls on Fresno members to step up efforts against inequality

San Antonio mayor and rising star in national politics—Julian Castro—met with Fresno area members and activists who have been working together to create change in their Central Valley communities.

Mayor Castro headlined an event focusing on what working people can do to combat income inequality. Speaking to Local 1000 members, community leaders, college students and farm workers, Castro said “As mayor, and when I look around the United States, what I see today are a lot of families who are working very hard - often times more than 40 hours a week, but they don’t seem to be getting ahead like they could in previous generations. But I feel like we still have an opportunity—whether we’re in San Antonio or Fresno or Bakersfield—to change things for the better...to roll up our sleeves and work together—like you have already shown you can do—to make improvements in our communities.”

Central Valley Local 1000 members have already been leaders in putting our purpose statement into action as they stepped up to reduce inequality in their own neighborhoods. “As we all know, change starts at the local level, and few activists have embodied that more than our members and allies here in Fresno,” said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker. “From community events that connect their neighbors to health care, financial and veterans services, to standing up with their neighbors to fight a dangerous privatization measure—Fresno Local 1000 members and their community allies are putting our purpose statement to work.”

A standing room only crowd at Local 1000’s Fresno office also heard from Fresno City Councilmember Blong Xiong, Assemblymember Henry T. Perea and Local 1000 Vice Presidents Margarita Maldonado and Tamekia N. Robinson.

The Central Valley has some of the highest poverty rates in the nation; no where has income inequality become more visible in California. “We’re already focused on how we can make a difference in our neighborhoods,” said Manny Rodriguez, DLC 729 president in Fresno. “But hearing from a leader like Mayor Castro - who is making progress against inequality in his city - inspires us and gives us hope to aim high, make more allies and take on the bigger issues facing our community.”

The grandson of a poor, orphaned Mexican immigrant, Julian Castro graduated from Stanford and Harvard and went on to become the youngest mayor of a major American city. In 2012, the mayor became the first Latino elected official to deliver the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention. As mayor, Castro has tackled inequality by investing in public education. In just a few short years, San Antonio has seen increased access to early childhood education, reduced teen pregnancy, high school graduation rates of 92 percent and college enrollments rates have increased by more than 10 percent.

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Local 1000 and allies promote legislation to reduce income inequality

Local 1000 is joining with a broad coalition that includes organized labor and community groups to drive a state legislative agenda designed to strengthen middle-class communities and lift up working families by reducing income inequality.

Among the supported legislation are efforts sponsored by Local 1000's allies in labor. These include bills to require that employers offer sick days to their employees, make it easier for workers to collect lost wages from employers and increase the California minimum wage to \$13 an hour by 2017.

"In December, our union made a commitment to fight income inequality in California and work to preserve middle-class opportunities for future generations; our legislative agenda is just one example of how we are following through on our commitment," Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker said.

At the center of this income inequality legislative agenda is AB 1792, sponsored by Local 1000 and authored by Assemblymember Jimmy Gomez (D-Los Angeles). If passed into law, the bill would reveal the hidden taxpayer subsidies companies like McDonald's and Wal-Mart receive.

Corporations are reaping annual profits in the billions while paying their workers poverty wages, forcing many to turn to taxpayer-funded social services to survive and support their families. AB 1792 would require the California Department of Finance to provide an annual report to the state legislature illustrating the number of employees receiving public assistance like Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWorks and Women Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC).

AB 1792 builds on the examples of other states that have passed transparency bills, increasing oversight to include all public assistance programs, instead of limiting the report to health care programs. A recent Congressional study found that nationally, Wal-Mart receives public subsidies averaging an estimated \$5,185 per employee, per year.

Bill promoting early voting for working families moves forward

Local 1000 is also sponsoring AB 2177, a bill that would make it easier for working people to vote in elections by allowing in-person voting on the Saturday and Sunday before elections. AB 2177, by Assemblymember Cheryl Brown (D-San Bernardino), cleared the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee by a 5 to 1 vote on April 1. The bill would require the use of the state's Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to pay for early voting community outreach and education for all California voters,



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President, SEIU Local 1000

as well as the costs associated with Saturday and Sunday voting.

"At a time when corporations' and billionaires' money can buy nearly unchecked political influence, preserving and expanding the voting rights of working families must be a top priority," said President Walker. "Voting is our single greatest weapon against inequality."