

AUG 6  
2014

# UNION UPDATE

LOCAL 1000  
  
Stronger Together

## LEARNING LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY FIRST HAND

### FELLOWSHIP OFFERS UP-CLOSE LOOK AT WHY POLITICS MATTER

**Under a new Local 1000 fellowship program, members have the opportunity to work with our legislative team on laws that affect our members and the rest of the middle class.**

MeShan Rachal, a longtime steward at the Employment Development Department (EDD), is the first Local 1000 member to participate in the new program. For the past three months she has been learning about how to advance our legislative priorities at the Capitol.

"It is incredibly gratifying to see the inner workings of the legislative process and to advocate for bills that have a direct impact on worksite issues," Rachal said.

The goal of the program is to create skilled member activists who will then work to engage additional activists in their workplace and their community.

"It's a way of developing leaders so that we can be more effective in every aspect of what we do as a union and as citizens," said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker. "We often say 'politics matter.' Through this fellowship, our members will learn how much legislation matters for all state employees and working families."

Rachal, who started the 14-week program in May, worked on a number of legislative initiatives. One was a budget appropriation that added new staffing and new training at EDD. The other, AB 1656, is a bill that would move thousands of employees out of the troubled Board of Equalization headquarters building in Sacramento.



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*~MeShan Rachal, Employment Development Department*

#### **On the front lines at the Capitol**

"I was able to testify at a hearing about EDD's long-standing problems with workloads and service issues from the perspective of an EDD employee and as a former recipient of unemployment," Rachal said. "It was empowering to directly address a legislative committee on issues that I had experienced firsthand."

Local 1000's work on the state budget, approved in June, included funds to hire 280 unemployment insurance staff, retain additional interim

staff, continue paying overtime and implementing other long-sought reforms at EDD.

On AB 1656, Rachal relied on relationships she developed as vice president/chief steward of District Labor Council 793, which formerly included the troubled BOE building.

"I remember talking to one of my members after she had been stuck in a broken elevator, and wishing I could do more," Rachal said. "Through Local 1000's legislative fellowship, I finally have the opportunity to work directly on solving that problem."

## BUILDING COMMUNITY ALLIANCES

**Local 1000 members and staff recruited more than 800 people at the California State Fair to support our campaigns for affordable quality childcare and retirement security for all.**

“By forging successful alliances with the community, we will accomplish our goal of strengthening the middle class and improving the quality of life for all Californians,” said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker. “One conversation at a time, we added 800 allies to our fight for social and economic justice.”

Erlinda Mancilla and Eglantina Bushgjokaj—two of many member volunteers—reported a high level of support from the public on these important issues. “People are willing to listen and have been very engaged, especially on quality childcare” said Bushgjokaj, who works at the California Department of Developmental Services.

### Advocating for retirement security

About 200 fairgoers were photographed holding a “Retirement Security For All,” banner, including many who are decades away from retirement.



Member volunteers Eglantina Bushgjokaj and Erlinda Mancilla

“I don’t know if I will ever be able to retire, and I think it’s an issue we need to address as a country,” said Heather Sandoval, a 25-year-old from Sacramento. “My parents are struggling to save for retirement and I don’t want it to be that way when I’m older too. I’m glad that SEIU is taking the lead on this.”

Ray Cohn, a retired editor who recently moved to California, also applauded Local 1000 for taking leadership.

“If the unions don’t fight for the middle class, then we are doomed,” said Cohn. “SEIU Local 1000 and other unions are really the only forces that will save our country from becoming a government of the rich and only for the rich. Middle class workers don’t have high priced lobbyists like millionaires do. We need the unions and their members to lead the fight.”

### Resource Center

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

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seiu1000.org

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“By forging successful alliances with the community, we will accomplish our goal of strengthening the middle class and improving the quality of life for all Californians.” ~ Yvonne R. Walker, President, SEIU Local 1000



## Secure Choice board moves forward

Working to provide retirement options for millions of Californians

The Secure Choice Retirement Savings Investment Board took one step closer to developing an innovative new program designed to help more than six million private sector workers—whose employers don’t offer a plan—save money for retirement.

The board, which includes Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker, voted to continue the feasibility study that will guide the Secure Choice program

through its next steps. That study will be presented to the governor next year.

Miguel Cordova, a California Department of Education employee and the chair of Bargaining Unit 21, was one of several speakers who talked about the challenges their families have faced in funding retirement.

Cordova’s mother worked in a packing plant until she was 68 and retired

with little savings beyond Social Security. Now at age 86, she can no longer take care of herself.

“Fortunately her grown children have been able to help take care of her,” Cordova said. “We need Secure Choice to enable millions of younger workers to maintain dignity and independence when they are too old to work.”