

NOVEMBER 2, 2011

# UNION UPDATE

LOCAL 1000  
**SEIU**  
Stronger Together



***“Half of all Californians will retire in poverty ... that’s wrong.”***

**—Yvonne R. Walker**

## Let’s talk about pensions for all workers

### We should expand retirement security, not cut pensions

**By Yvonne R. Walker**  
President

Gov. Jerry Brown’s pension reform proposals provide Californians with another opportunity to have a substantive conversation about the direction of our state.

Do we want California to be a state where we fight for smaller and smaller retirement plans—or any plan at all—or do we want to ensure retirement security for *all* Californians?

Our pension system—just like those in the private sector and 401(k) plans—was hit hard when Wall Street greed crashed our economy in 2008.

#### Retiring in Poverty

Even though CalPERS’ investment portfolio is slowly coming back to pre-crash levels, it hasn’t tempered the calls to reduce our pensions; but cutting pensions will only exacerbate the retirement security crisis California already faces. A new UC Berkeley study projects that half of all Californians will spend their retirement years in poverty. In this day and age, that’s just wrong and must be addressed.

Gov. Brown’s reform proposal is a starting point as we push for pension equity.

While the governor’s 12-point proposal is not limited to state employees (it covers all public employees) and appears to save money, it is long on concepts and short on detail. As details emerge, any portion

that directly affects our members must be addressed at the bargaining table instead of the Legislature. We will also use legislative hearings on his proposals as a platform to address the issue of retirement security for all.

One such proposal should be to make a vehicle like CalPERS available to the private sector.

#### \$26 Billion Economic Impact

In California, pension payments to retired public employees generated \$26 billion in economic activity last year and supported more than 90,000 jobs. If all Californians were part of a modest pension plan, the cumulative resources could be a major engine for our state’s future economic growth and short-term recovery.

The alternative is millions of senior citizens stuck in poverty. That is unacceptable.

We cannot allow the conversation to degenerate to how much to cut pensions in order to balance budgets; in that scenario, only the wealthy are left with retirement security. We must change the debate so that we are talking about our hopes and dreams, not who does and who does not have a pension.

If our politicians are unable—or unwilling—to have this open debate, then as Californians we will have to have it without them. We must have this conversation in our homes, in our places of worship and at social events. We need to talk to our friends, neighbors and families about what is fair.

Wherever I go, I offer this promise: together we will continue to work to achieve a secure retirement for *all* Californians.

## Resource Center

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

## Website

[seiu1000.org](http://seiu1000.org)

## Connect with Local 1000

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## Members energized by Occupy Wall Street movement

### New movement for fair economy draws state employees

In the nearly two months since the Occupy Wall Street movement began, its message of economic fairness has spread around the world with at least 300 similar “occupations,” including 40 in California.

Local 1000 members are getting involved, joining the call for economic policies that strengthen the “99 percent” of Americans who are not wealthy. Here are the stories of two state employees that have been involved since the beginning.

#### Darrell Parker

“I’ve been following Occupy Wall Street since day one,” said Darrell Parker, an associate program analyst for the Medical Board of California in Sacramento. “When I heard about Occupy Sacramento through connections on Facebook, I knew I had to be there.”

Parker took a week of vacation time and founded a key role as a logistics coordinator for Occupy Sacramento. He spent his days developing relationships with the local police department, inventorying supplies, gathering tents and securing gas for generators.

Growing up, Parker witnessed anti-war demonstrations and protests for civil rights. “After the war, everyone handed power over to the political system. It was at that time that the wealthiest one percent of Americans started directing their influence to politics.”

Parker noted that since the 1980s, taxes have been reduced for the wealthiest Americans, who have become richer. At the same time, the middle class has lost ground. Parker is ready for power to come back to the middle class.



Darrell Parker (L) assists Occupy Sacramento organizers as logistics coordinator.

#### Nick Castillo

Nick Castillo joined Occupy Sacramento because he saw the problems in the nation’s financial system firsthand. Houses all around him had foreclosure signs at the same time that the largest banks were getting billions in bailouts.

“When I fail, no one bails me out,” said Castillo, a business analyst at CalPERS. “When we have politicians being tasked with regulating Wall Street—regulating the bankers and the financiers who are also funding their campaigns for re-election—I think that is a clear conflict of interest.”

“I was at Occupy Sacramento the first night,” Castillo said. “I kept wondering why mainstream media wasn’t covering Occupy Wall Street—and then I realized the media is controlled by all these corporations.”

As a former Marine, Castillo felt compelled to defend occupiers arrested in Sacramento. He attended a Sacramento city council meeting to voice his concerns about unarmed citizens being arrested at a peaceful protest by police in riot gear.

“I’m not happy with the direction this country is going,” Castillo told the council. “After serving in the Marine Corps to spread democracy around the world, that same right of democracy is not being allowed to be exercised right here in my own country.”

When Castillo’s friends don’t understand the message from Occupy Wall Street, he puts in bluntly. “Unless your name is Rockefeller or Buffet—you’re not the top one percent.”

“We need to get out of our bubbles and get involved.”

## Delegate nomination begins

### CSEA General Council & SEIU International convention both in 2012

The open nomination period begins on Nov. 4, 2011, for delegates to both the SEIU International Convention and CSEA/Local SEIU 1000 General Council. Since both the SEIU International Convention (May 27-30) and CSEA General Council (Aug. 31 to Sept. 2) are held in 2012, Local 1000’s council decided to save money by combining both elections.

Nomination forms will be mailed to all members on Nov. 4, 2011. The form will contain the candidate requirements for both the SEIU International

delegates and CSEA General Council delegates. If the member is interested in running for both the SEIU International Convention and CSEA General Council, they can submit their nomination form for each, and a 50-word candidate statement (for SEIU International) and a 100-word candidate statement (for CSEA General Council).

The nomination period closes on Jan. 6, 2012.

For additional delegate election information, email [Local1000elections@seiu1000.org](mailto:Local1000elections@seiu1000.org)