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UNION UPDATE

LOCAL 1000

SEIU
Stronger Together

Secure Choice Board moves ahead on innovative retirement plan

Local 1000 is making pension security a priority for all Californians

The state of California is moving forward with efforts to design a retirement-savings program for workers who do not have a pension or a savings plan through their employer.

The California Secure Choice Retirement Savings Investment Board voted on Jan. 26 to hire a law firm to help design the plan and to seek federal approval. Under SB 1234, the Local 1000-sponsored legislation that created Secure Choice, the board will present its final recommendations to the governor and Legislature for approval.

“We are designing a program from the ground up that ultimately will help millions of California workers save for a modest and secure retirement,” said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker, who is a member of the Secure Choice board. “We are working to help the 6.3 million California workers who currently lack access to retirement-savings plans through their jobs.”

Local 1000 leaders voted in 2012 to take up the fight for retirement security for California workers as part of an ongoing commitment to help all Californians achieve social and economic justice and to strengthen the middle class.

Social Security is not enough

The Secure Choice board also heard public testimony from a Local 1000 member leader who



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discussed the challenges her family faces with retirement and elder care.

Bonnie Berger, a steward at the State Compensation Insurance Fund in Sacramento, spoke about the challenges that she is facing after caring for her retired father and his two brothers for the past five years.

“Our country is not facing a retirement crisis in the future. We are in the crisis right now,” Berger said. “My father and my uncles worked their entire adult lives but they were unable to save much for retirement other than Social Security. That is just not enough to survive on. Social Security was never intended to be the only savings available for retirees. But millions of Americans, including members of my own family, have nothing else to rely on.”

“I fear that the problem will only get worse over time,” Berger told the board. “Most workers in their 20s, 30s and 40s do not have access to pension plans and fewer than half have access to 401(k) or similar retirement plans through an employer. Secure Choice will help millions of workers save for retirement and develop an awareness of the need to plan for the future.”

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—Bonnie Berger, Steward
State Compensation Insurance Fund



FIGHTING for ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Members step up to support unfairly terminated McDonald's employees



"I have no doubt that I was targeted for my efforts to organize a union at McDonald's."

—**Miguel Vela**
Fired McDonald's employee

As part of Local 1000's ongoing commitment to building a stronger middle class, nearly 100 members and staff joined fast-food workers on Jan. 26 to protest the firing of a union activist at a McDonald's in Sacramento.

"We're standing up to let McDonald's know that we will not tolerate the illegal firing of union activists in our community," said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker. "The fast-food industry makes billions in profits every year, and they can afford to treat their workers with respect and to pay them a living wage."

Activists targeted for union activity

After standing up for a living wage and union representation at a Dec. 4 rally—and being quoted widely in the news media—activist Miguel Vela became the target of harassment at work by his supervisor and his general manager. He was fired from his job on Jan 22.

Vela is the fifth member of the Fight for \$15 and a Union campaign who has been retaliated against by the McDonald's franchise at 8940 Pocket Road in Sacramento. The same store is now the subject of five pending NLRB complaints for mistreatment of workers active in union organizing

"I have no doubt that I was targeted for my efforts to organize a union at McDonald's," Vela said. "After managers became aware of my union activity, they began to treat me totally different. It was clear that they were looking for reasons to write me up and fire me."

Vela, who is also a full-time student, was active in organizing coworkers who are struggling to support families on the \$9 hourly minimum wage at McDonald's and other fast-food companies.



Local 1000 members joined other workers in the Fight for \$15 and a Union on January 26, 2015.

Vela said many of those workers decline to speak out because they fear retaliation by management.

"McDonald's is making me an example to intimidate other employees," Vela said.

"We're here to let McDonald's know that we will not tolerate the illegal firing of union activists in our community."

—**Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker**

Community partners

Local 1000 is part of a broader alliance of labor, community- and faith-based groups that is seeking to bolster the middle class by raising wages and improving benefits for low-wage workers. Most fast-food workers with families rely on public assistance to survive. Each year taxpayers shell out \$1.2 billion in public assistance to the McDonald's workforce, according to a 2013 report by the National Employment Law Project.



Other fast food workers joined Miguel Vela (second from right) in a show of solidarity.

Resource Center

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