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UNION UPDATE

President Obama clears way for Local 1000-supported retirement program

Federal hurdles removed for Secure Choice

A key component of Local 1000's vision for Retirement Security for all Californians can move forward thanks to action by President Obama. On July 13, the President ordered his Labor Secretary, Tom Perez, to create a set of rules for states by year's end that will make it easier for them to set up and run retirement savings programs for workers without access to 401(k) plans.

California has just such a program in the Secure Choice Retirement Savings Program. In 2012, Local 1000 worked with State Senator Kevin de León to craft and pass SB 1234 which created the program. Secure Choice would establish an automatic savings program for the over six million Californians with no workplace retirement plan. Our president, Yvonne R. Walker, sits on the Secure Choice Board to help guide it through the study phase and into implementation.

The union's push for Secure Choice came when Local 1000 leaders voted to take up the fight for retirement security as part of an ongoing commitment to help all Californians achieve social and economic justice and to strengthen the middle class. By taking on retirement security, Local 1000 members recognize that the economic vitality of the state depends upon more than just their own pay and benefits, but on living in communities where there is enough spending money to support businesses and where extended families aren't drained by caring for relatives with no retirement savings. Local 1000's plan for retirement security is comprehensive: Defend public pensions, demand that public officials support and shore up Social Security, and push for programs like Secure Choice that fill in the gaps for those with no retirement.

"Thanks to President Obama, we are a step closer to implementing a plan that will bring retirement security to millions of Californians."

— Yvonne R. Walker
Local 1000 President



Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker at a recent secure choice board meeting.

But states like California that have developed forward-thinking programs like Secure Choice have run into complications related to a federal pension law call the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). That's where President Obama's actions comes in: Now states will have a published rule by the end of the year from the U. S. Department of Labor clarifying how to move forward with these plans with respect to requirements to automatically enroll employees and for employers to offer coverage.

The President's action comes at a time when California's retirement security is facing a grave threat. Former San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed and former San Diego City Council Member Carl DeMaio, two extremists with a history of attacking the livelihoods of public workers, have introduced an initiative that would destroy public pensions; it

is an attack that Local 1000 will fight tooth and nail. But while we fight for our own retirement livelihoods, we will continue to work toward a California where everyone has the right to share in the fruits of economic justice. President Obama's order puts us a little closer to that goal.

"Thanks to President Obama, we are a step closer to implementing a plan that will bring retirement security to millions of Californians," said Walker. "All workers should have access to a secure, stable retirement."

Join us at the CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR

★ July 10-26, 2015 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. ★
★ 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815 ★

The SEIU Local 1000 booth is located in Building D, in the corner near the tunnel—spaces D509-D510-D511

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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Arbitration win says CDCR retaliated against Local 1000 steward

Victory includes back pay for nearly two years of missed overtime

Stewards are at the core of Local 1000's power, the crucial connection between the members in the workplace and the union. So when one of our representatives is treated unfairly for doing the work of the union, they've picked a fight we'll take to the mat.

Local 1000 steward Elsa Monroe, a registered nurse at San Quentin State Prison, was retaliated against for her union activities. She was singled out for a common error and treated differently than others who have made similar mistakes.

Local 1000 came to her defense and forced her employer to compensate her for the bad treatment.

Monroe's error happened in February 2011, when a highly agitated patient who was on methadone for narcotic withdrawal was banging his head and feet against a door. Navigating a volatile situation, Monroe and several others on the shift misinterpreted the

doctor's orders to mean another dose of methadone was due and she administered one. The patient suffered no apparent harm.

As a result of the error, Monroe alone was reassigned away from patient care while the incident was investigated. She was not allowed to work any overtime at the reassignment and her new post was in an isolated area where it was difficult for her to perform her steward duties. Though the reassignment was supposed to last from 90-120 days, it ended up lasting two years and cost Monroe thousands of dollars in lost overtime.

The Local 1000-filed grievance went to an arbitrator who decided that Monroe was retaliated against due to her protected activity and

was due compensation for the loss of overtime. Our legal team is working to negotiate the amount of back pay due to Monroe.

"Steward harassment is unacceptable," said Tamekia N. Robinson, vice president for organizing/representation. "If you take on a steward for doing the work of our union, you've taken on the whole union."

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*—Tamekia N. Robinson
Vice President for Organizing/
Representation*

Weingarten Rights

If you are ever called into a meeting with your supervisor or manager and believe the meeting or the information gathered in the meeting may result in discipline, you have specific representational rights, summarized below:

- You have the right to have a union steward present during investigatory interviews where management questions you to obtain information and you have a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result.
- If you want a steward present, you must ask for one.
- If you do not know why your manager wants to meet with you, ask your manager if it is a meeting that could result in discipline.
- If your manager refuses to allow you to bring a steward, repeat your request in front of a witness. Do not refuse to attend the meeting but respectfully decline to answer questions until your union representative is present.
- You have the right to speak privately with your steward before the meeting and during the meeting.

- Your steward has the right to play an active role in the meeting—the steward is *not* just a witness. For example, your steward can request clarification of confusing questions and otherwise support and assist you.
- If your manager denies the request for union representation and directs you to answer questions even without your steward present, your manager is committing an unfair labor practice and you have the right to refuse to answer. However, you should not leave until excused. Any discipline taken under these circumstances could be challenged as improper at PERB.

This statement could save your job:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, I respectfully request that my steward be present at the meeting before I answer any questions. Without representation present, I choose not to respond to any questions or statements."

If you feel your rights have been violated:

Contact your Local 1000 steward or call the SEIU Local 1000 Member Resource Center at 866.471.SEIU (7348).