

SEP 16
2015

UNION UPDATE



Representing her coworkers in and out of the worksite

Steward Wandra Pitts understands how personal challenges can affect our work lives



Wandra Pitts, Local 1000 Steward, CalPERS

Local 1000 Steward Wandra Pitts believes her work representing her coworkers doesn't stop at the office door.

An Associate Government Program Analyst at CalPERS, she's halfway through a year's union leave, working at Local 1000's Union Resource Center (URC), solving problems for members facing challenges in the workplace.

Pitts feels her work at the URC is training her to be a more effective steward. While she's had many opportunities during her leave to participate in Local 1000's social justice and political campaigns, her biggest revelations have come while working on cases at the URC. There, she's seen first-hand what happens after stewards advocate for their coworkers and the impressive legal and representational resources the union brings to bear in winning for members.

"We are the voice for the voiceless," says Pitts.

She describes her role as a steward as giving her coworkers a safe place to bring workplace and personal issues that may be too uncomfortable to talk about directly with their managers. After working with members and their stewards, she can determine the best way to present the issues to management and insist on resolution. Pitts has seen time and time again that interceding on behalf of her members has helped them retain their dignity in a way that standing alone before the state's bureaucracy does not.

"It makes me feel good that I can be a support system for our members," said Pitts.

Pitts has a heightened sensitivity to the struggles of those who require accommodation because she has had to fight for the needs of her high school-age son who suffers from severe scoliosis. She knows that often people's needs aren't always visible from the outside and it can be demeaning when authority figures don't take them at their word. Her son's experience has taught her that her coworkers who are struggling with issues may not want to be vocal advocates for themselves.

"People just want to come in and do the job they were hired to do," Pitts said. "They don't want to verbalize what's going on with them. They don't want bring attention to themselves."

But Pitts' representation of her coworkers goes beyond the workplace. For her, the power we build as union members can build a better world for everyone.

Childcare and early education, income inequality, the past and future in the fight for racial justice: Pitts has learned that all of these issues affect the everyday lives of our members and these communities and Local 1000 is active in each of these areas.

"Local 1000 is not just a union for bargaining for state workers," Pitts said. "We can make a better world for everyone when we band together."

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—Wandra Pitts

UNION INFORMATION

Resource Center

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

Website

seiu1000.org

Connect with Local 1000

Facebook
[facebook.com/seiu1000](https://www.facebook.com/seiu1000)

YouTube
[youtube.com/seiu1000](https://www.youtube.com/seiu1000)

Twitter
twitter.com/seiu1000



Open Enrollment for health benefits underway

Make choices now for changes effective January 1, 2016

Open Enrollment starts September 14 and ends October 9.

Changes made during Open Enrollment take effect January 1, 2016.

During Open Enrollment, you can:

- Enroll in a CalPERS health plan if you don't currently have CalPERS health coverage.
- Change CalPERS health plans.
- Add or delete dependents.
- Cancel your CalPERS health coverage.

You can compare premiums for different health plans and see the contribution rates online with CalHR's benefits calculator, available online at <http://eservices.dpa.ca.gov/BenefitsCalculatorExternal/Default.aspx>

Contact your health benefits officer or human resources department for required forms and documentation to make a health plan change.

Settlement forces state to correct holiday pay error

Members organize to enforce contract

Eleven CalTrans toll collectors have been made whole again after Local 1000 forced a settlement to correct the way the Unit 4 members were being compensated when working on premium holidays.

The toll collectors involved all worked four-day, ten-hour Alternate Work Week schedules. When one of their workdays fell on a premium holiday, however, they received premium holiday pay for only eight of the ten hours—with the remaining two hours paid at the regular rate. Additionally, employees who worked on a premium holiday were supposed to be paid eight hours of holiday credit. Instead the members were paid for ten hours, but were charged for two hours of vacation leave – without being given an option.



“This is the power of real representation. When our members stand together for what’s right, we can force the state to play fair with our pay and benefits.”

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

“It was really unfair,” said Larry Collins, a toll collector who is also chief steward of DLC 747. “A holiday is a holiday all day no matter how long your shift is.”

Local 1000's representation team held Caltrans accountable for these unfair vacation compensation practices, filed a grievance on behalf of the members and ultimately reached a settlement after the issue went to arbitration.

The CalTrans toll collectors who work 4/10 shifts and are scheduled for holiday work will now be compensated at holiday rates for their entire ten-hour shift. In addition to ending the unfair practice, Local 1000 won back pay for each time the toll collectors were paid the incorrect rate and the right to buy back to vacation credits to use as they choose.

“This is the power of real representation,” said Tamekia Robinson, vice president for organizing/representation. “When our members stand together for what’s right, we can force the state to play fair with our pay and benefits.”