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UNION UPDATE



Creating a new vision for retirement security

Local 1000 leads coalition to halt California's retirement crisis

Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker was the keynote speaker at a groundbreaking October 14 conference on retirement security called "Building Tomorrow's California: New Visions for Retirement Security" that brought together activists from labor, faith and social justice groups to take a hard look at the retirement crisis and began to craft solutions that will work for all Californians.

The conference was split into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning unveiled new and disturbing research on the retirement crisis and invited attendees to share their own stories. They brought an array of experiences and observations to the conversation that illustrated the deep-seated reasons the retirement picture is growing dimmer for many. Intergenerational economic burdens were a recurring theme: student debt, caring for aging parents and housing were all identified as ways families get pinched from all sides.

"It's hard enough just to make ends meet, much less save for retirement," offered Bobby Roy, a Local 1000 steward from DLC 764 who attended the conference.



"This is the beginning for us to collectively wield our power to take on retirement security throughout California."

—Yvonne R. Walker, Local 1000 President

In Walker's inspiring remarks, she also decried the lack of overall economic security, noting that we've shifted from a country where risks are taken by groups to one where risks are taken by individuals.



"It's hard enough just to make ends meet, much less save for retirement."

—Bobby Roy, DLC 764 steward

"The only message Americans hear is that they alone are responsible for their successes and their failures," said Walker. "We're supposed to find this acceptable. I just don't."

The afternoon session turned to solutions, including the Secure Choice retirement plan that Local 1000 pushed for and on whose board Walker sits. But the most promising development of the afternoon session was clearly the recognition that the groups represented by the attendees can build a powerful network to steer the

public discussion and public policy to address all of the economic inequality—including the retirement crisis—facing California.

"We have the collective power in this room to work together to come up with solutions for retirement security—and economic security," said Walker. "This is the beginning for us to collectively wield our power to take on retirement security throughout California."

Taking it up a notch

Transforming the next generation of member leaders as we prepare for bargaining

Nearly two dozen member leaders from across the state gathered at Local 1000's Sacramento office October 12-16 to participate in a dynamic new leadership development program. The program is designed to recognize and mentor effective leaders to build Union power and solidarity as we prepare to bargain a new contract as well as fight off continuing attacks on the union.

A full week of interactive workshops empowered these leaders with the skills to engage our members and build the worksite networks that will be crucial for the challenges ahead. Though the sessions were diverse and covered a range of topics, the theme of better and more meaningful communication with coworkers was consistent throughout the training.



Angie Miller, CDCR, Susanville

"I learned how to talk to our members about what's important to them and to encourage more people to get involved with their union. We need to stand up for what we want and move forward with more power, so the things that happened in Wisconsin don't happen here."



G Perdigones, DSH, Vacaville

"I'm honing my skills to communicate better with my membership at the grassroots level. I'm able to have better conversations by sharing my story and learning what's important to my coworkers. I feel more confident as a leader, and I'm ready to do more for my colleagues and for Local 1000."



Bob Mutebi, CHCF, Stockton

"I'm using the things I learned this week to take my role as a steward to a whole other level. Before, I worked to solve problems ... now, I'm not just helping my members, I'm organizing them to build power and identifying other leaders to join me in building that power."



Crystal McCray, CEPA, Sacramento

"Being part of the union and learning how it works changes your perspective of what's important. There's a union-busting movement going on across the nation, and we're learning about building a cohesive team of staff, leaders and members to make a difference at our jobs and in our communities."

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