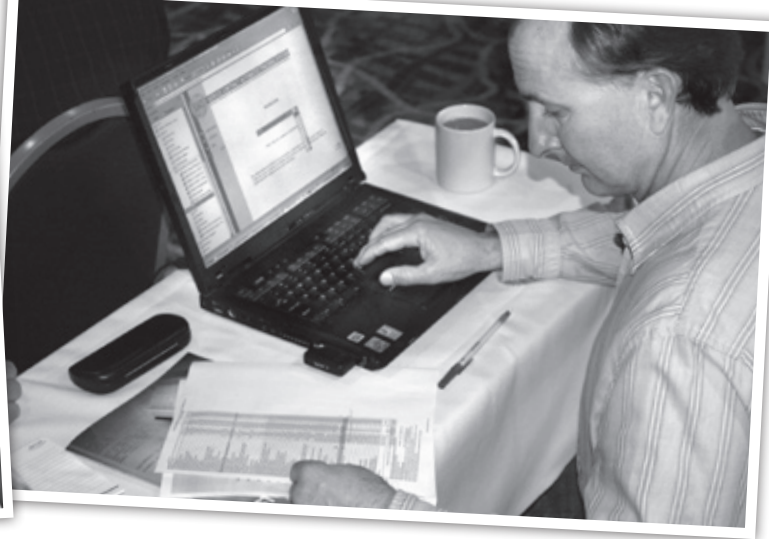


MAY 19, 2010

UNION UPDATE



Kevin Hopkins



Member activist fights outsourcing

Caltrans worker fights back, keeps database of wasteful private vendor contracts

Kevin Hopkins spent 26 years as a union member but was rarely active until 2008 – when he was pushed to the brink after seeing private contractors receive preferential treatment.

“I always believed in unions, but I was just too busy to get involved when my kids were younger,” Hopkins said, whose son and daughter are now 19 and 16 respectively. “Now that I am involved, I wish I could do even more. We’re in a tough fight to protect our jobs.”

Hopkins, a materials and research engineering associate specialist in Santa Clarita, has always pursued his passions with gusto. In his early 20s he used to race motorcycles and his team won the Baja 1000. In recent years, he’s spending time shuttling his kids to their ice hockey and dance practices. But he does find time for long mountain bike rides on hilly trails around his home.

The bike rides are also a welcome break from the outsourcing battle he wages against wasteful private contracts.

Hopkins had long been frustrated seeing private contractors get paid far more money than state employees to do the same work. The unequal treatment came to a head when Gov. Schwarzenegger tried to reduce state worker salaries to federal minimum wage and then imposed furloughs, but private contractors were exempt from a similar wage cut.

“Local 1000 offered me an opportunity – really the only opportunity – I had to fight back against unnecessary outsourcing,” said Hopkins. “I was frustrated after watching this abuse, but no one at Caltrans was listening. It was unfair and the union was the only way I could fight it.”

Hopkins didn’t just stand back and let Local 1000 fight for him. He led the charge. He began methodically researching Caltrans contractors, creating his own database of architectural and engineering contracts. So far he has compiled detailed information on 90 contracts.

“I would say that 80 percent of private vendors are unnecessary. These are jobs state workers are already performing, sometimes at half the cost of contractors. The vast majority of outsourcing is a scam that wastes taxpayer money.”

—Kevin Hopkins
Caltrans District 7,
Los Angeles and Ventura Counties

In order to research contractors, Hopkins needed to expand his technical expertise beyond his comfort zone and he doesn’t like much of what he found.

“The state should be more responsible with taxpayer money,” Hopkins said. “We could be much more efficient if we stopped throwing money at politically connected contractors.”

Resource Center

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

Website

seiu1000.org

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The following is a list of this week's top issues members are asking the Local 1000 Resource Center.

Q: What are the steps of the grievance process?

The five grievance levels are:

- Informal Level:** Meet with the designated supervisor to resolve or correct the alleged contract violation.
- Level 1:** File a written grievance with the designated local manager.
- Level 2:** Elevate the grievance to department director or designee.
- Level 3:** Elevate the grievance to the Director of the Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) or designee.
- Level 4:** Submit the grievance to arbitration.

Read Article 6 of our contract for complete details.

Q: Can I be transferred to another department against my wishes?

Yes, you can be transferred to another department so long as you do not have to relocate from your physical residence. However, if you feel that your transfer is a form of discipline or harassment, you can appeal by filing a grievance. For assistance with the grievance process, consult your Local 1000 steward or call the Member Resource Center.

Read Article 15.1 of our contract for complete details.

Q: Can management change my schedule from day shift to night shift?

Yes, but only with a 30-day notice from your supervisor. In temporary or emergency situations where there is an unforeseen operational need, you are still entitled to 5 working days of advance notice.

Read Article 19.1 C & D of our contract for complete details.

Know Your Rights

Article 14.8 Contracting Out

Stopping outsourcing of state work

Your union contract contains hundreds of provisions designed to protect your rights.

Article 14.8 - Contracting Out, protects our jobs from being outsourced. This Article entitles Local 1000 to meet and confer with departments who contract out, to mitigate or avoid the need for that contracting.

Your Local 1000 contract guarantees:

- The state must make every effort to hire, utilize and retain bargaining unit employees before hiring private contractors.
- Employees should not be displaced by private contracts.
- Displacement includes layoff, involuntary demotion and involuntary transfer to a new location requiring a change of residence and time base reductions.
- Departments must provide Local 1000 with sufficient information to determine if unnecessary and additional costs are being incurred by contracting out.
- Departments must provide Local 1000 with copies of personal service contracts for services in bargaining unit classifications.
- Any contracting by the state must comply with the process governed by the State Personnel Board (SPB).

How to take Action

Contact your Local 1000 steward if you feel your department is not complying with its responsibilities. Your steward will work with you, management and Local 1000's legal and research departments to determine the best course of action. For more information regarding Article 14.8 - Contracting Out, review your contract by logging on to seiu1000.org/know-your-contract

HAVE A QUESTION?

YOUR UNION IS HERE TO HELP!

CALL THE
MEMBER RESOURCE CENTER



"We've got answers for you."

866.471.SEIU (7348)