

New contract bargaining underway

Members saying value our work ... Value Us!

Members up and down California are demanding that the state "Value Us" as negotiations for a new contract began yesterday in Sacramento. Local 1000 members and staff sat down with the Department of Personnel Administration Tuesday for four consecutive days of bargaining.

Local 1000's contract with the state expires June 30.

"We're showing the state our resolve to win a good contract."

—Robyn Sherles
Unit 15 Bargaining Chair

Demonstrating solidarity with the negotiating team, members at hundreds of worksites "stickered up" and declared their support for the bargaining team. "We're showing the state our resolve to win a good contract," said Robyn Sherles,

chair of the Unit 15 bargaining team. "But we'll need to take more action, with more members, as our contract campaign continues."

Months of intense preparation and communication with members culminated last week as members of all nine Bargaining Unit Negotiating Committees (BUNCs) met for five days to finalize contract proposals and negotiating strategies.

In February, members returned more than 22,000 bargaining surveys, and 10,000 attended "Listen-up" meetings, communicating their most important issues. In March and April, survey results were published and Local 1000 returned to the workplace for "Follow-up" meetings and another round of member feedback.

Members identified a number of key issues that will drive negotiations. Their top priorities: preserving retirement benefits, keeping a cap on health care costs and contributions, and preventing the outsourcing of state work.



"We know what the members really want – because they told us," said Francisca Pass, vice-chair of the Unit 4 bargaining committee.

State's finances will make negotiations difficult

Bargaining began just days after the governor revealed a revised budget proposing hundreds of millions in cuts, and billions in new borrowing. Three years ago, with no budget deficit, he proposed 14 percent in takeaways, yet Local 1000 was able to negotiate raises and a contract worth a half-billion dollars.

"I can't think of a more difficult time to go into bargaining," Local 1000 President Jim Hard said. "Our contract is set to expire right as the governor and the Legislature must find a way to deal with a projected \$17 billion deficit. Because of these challenges we'll need more members to support our bargaining team than ever."

In 2006, more than 18,000 state employees took actions that directly supported our negotiating team.

Stay informed!

about your contract campaign:

- Watch the Channel 1000 News – We'll offer expanded coverage online at seiu1000.org beginning May 20.
- Also online at seiu1000.org
 - Master-table bargaining news on the Local 1000 home page.
 - Unit-specific bargaining reports on the Unit pages.
- E-mail blasts to all members with critical updates.
- Bargaining news printed in *Update* – available in your workplace every Wednesday.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

YOUR UNION CONTRACT PROTECTIONS

Members' and stewards' rights in enforcing our contract

Article 2.6 - Steward Time Off

Article 2.7 - Employee Time Off

Article 2.8 - Union Steward Protection

Article 5.5 - No Reprisals

Your union contract contains hundreds of provisions designed to protect your rights, including compensated time off for representational purposes, and guarantees that you and your steward will not be discriminated against or harassed for exercising rights guaranteed by our contract.

Your Local 1000 contract guarantees:

- Employees are entitled to reasonable state time off, during work hours, to confer with a steward or union representative.
- Employees' release time is subject to approval by the employee's supervisor. (See next section if your supervisor denies your request.)
- Stewards are also given state time off, during work hours, for representational purposes.
- Stewards' release time is subject to prior notification and approval by the steward's immediate supervisor.
- Additional stewards can also be granted time off under this section if agreed to by all parties.
- Managers and supervisors cannot interfere with a steward's work in representing employees or enforcing the contract.
- Managers and supervisors cannot impose or threaten to impose reprisals, or otherwise restrain or coerce union stewards in representing employees or enforcing the contract.

If your supervisor claims that the time requested is unreasonable and will not approve of the meeting, you should:

- Ask your supervisor when would be a reasonable time to meet with your steward.
- Assess the situation and remind the supervisor that the contract says "shall be granted reasonable time off."
- Make sure the supervisor approves a time that will not delay your ability to meet grievance timelines. The bottom line is the supervisor must approve a time for the meeting.

How to take Action:

Contact your Local 1000 steward or the Union Resource Center in your area if you feel your rights have been violated, and/or your supervisor will not approve reasonable time for the meeting. Your steward will work with you, management and your contract to determine the best course of action, including whether or not to file a grievance.

For more information regarding your rights and stewards' rights, review your contract at www.seiu1000.org

Health care cost battle moves forward

CalPERS shares data; "information not enough" says Local 1000

Fighting skyrocketing health insurance premiums – which drastically reduce the money available for wage increases - Local 1000 has made progress in its demand for greater transparency in negotiating health care benefits.

Last week, CalPERS agreed to release the information it uses to negotiate health care coverage to Local 1000. "This is an important first step that must be followed by bringing unions into negotiations with health care providers," said Yvonne Walker, Local 1000 vice president for bargaining.

"Information is not enough. CalPERS has excluded Local 1000 and all other unions from bargaining over co-pays, over what types of procedures are covered, and who can provide our health services. We need to be at the table with CalPERS to ensure that our members receive the best possible health care at the lowest possible price," Walker said.

Local 1000 made the demands at CalPERS' Health Benefits Committee on April 22, followed by thousands of e-mails, letters and faxes sent by members demanding transparency and increased competition to the process that sets premium rates and co-pays. Last Wednesday, members delivered petitions to CalPERS, calling for a better way to set health care rates.



Local 1000 members made their voices heard at CalPERS last week after delivering petitions calling for a better way to set health care rates.

"See what happens when you get involved ... we can make changes," said Yolanda Villanueva, a program technician at the Department of Consumer Affairs. "Our members' actions are helping us keep insurance companies from digging deeper into our wallets."

CalPERS also announced last week that beginning in 2009, there will be no changes in coverage or co-pays for more than 400,000 employees and retirees. Rates for PERS Choice and PERS Care plans will go unchanged and rates for PERS Select will drop by three percent.

2009 rates for HMO plans offered by CalPERS – namely Blue Cross, Blue Shield and Kaiser – have not yet been announced, but Local 1000 will continue to press CalPERS for lower premiums. To make your voice heard, log on to seiuaction.org/campaign/calpers_negotiations

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL LOCAL 1000 TOLL FREE: (866) 471-SEIU (7348) or visit our website: www.seiu1000.org

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