

Members aid national victory for worker rights

Ohio vote may discourage similar attack on California employees

By **Yvonne R. Walker**, President, SEIU Local 1000

I am proud to report that a team of Local 1000 members played a significant role in defeating a nationally funded attack on worker rights in Ohio, giving working families one of our biggest victories in recent years.

“This battle was fought in Ohio, but it was a victory for working people in California and every other state of the union.”

—**Yvonne R. Walker**
President, SEIU Local 1000



Vice President for Organizing/Representation Tamekia Robinson (right) meets with the team that traveled to Ohio.

Ohio voters stood up and sent a powerful message to those who want to divide working families and keep the middle class down. This is a key victory over a nationwide campaign to destroy unions and stop working people from banding together for political power.

A ballot initiative, which would have gutted collective bargaining by public employees in an effort to silence unions, was voted down by more than 62 percent of Ohio voters on Nov. 8.

Well-funded national groups have been pushing similar laws to silence workers in other states including California, where they are trying to put several anti-union measures before voters in the November 2012 election. We're already preparing for at least one major attack on our ballot next year.

Victory for California

This most recent battle was fought in Ohio, but it was a victory for working people in California and every other state of the union.



Local 1000 members canvassed voters in the Cleveland area.

“We came here because we don't want to see this come to California,” said Kim Curry-Goldsby, a Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery employee from Los Angeles. “We told all those politicians who hate labor to keep their hands off the middle class.”

The defeat is a huge setback for anti-labor Ohio Gov. John Kasich and conservative tycoons who poured millions of dollars into an effort to pass restrictions on unions. Kasich signed the anti-worker measure, Senate Bill 5, after it was approved by the Republican-run legislature. Opponents collected enough signatures to put the issue on hold until voters could decide for themselves.

“All over the nation, the 99 percent—firefighters, teachers, nurses, bus drivers, bridge inspectors and social workers—are cheering,” said SEIU International President Mary Kay Henry.

“There is a huge tsunami of anger out here. People are so sick of being beaten down by policies that shamelessly favor the wealthy, but they are happy to have a chance to fight back.”

—**Catherine Peacock**,
California Department of Education

Members' work pays off

At least 73 counties voted against the anti-worker measure while only six backed it. The issue was resoundingly defeated in Cleveland and nearby suburbs—areas where 10 Local 1000 members and staff spent nine days organizing and getting out the vote.

“This is a powerful victory that brings this attack on the middle class to a dead stop,” said Catherine Peacock, a California Department of Education employee from Sacramento. “There is a huge tsunami of anger out here. People are so sick of being beaten down by policies that shamelessly favor the wealthy, but they are happy to have a chance to fight back.”

Our Local 1000 members who campaigned in Ohio were part of a historic victory for organized labor and working families that will mark a change of direction for our entire country.

National policies have local impacts

Member leaders encourage working families to take action



“Fairness for the middle class is a national issue ... California is not an island.”

—Yvonne R. Walker
President, SEIU Local 1000



From left to right John Kern, Tamekia Robinson, Ray Altman, Chris Banzet and Diana King.

step up and become more active politically because of her visit.”

Wealthy prosper, workers flounder

The big picture in the U.S. economy, according to a recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report, shows that the richest 1 percent has gotten much richer while the middle class flounders. “The share of total market income received by the top 1 percent of the population more than doubled between 1979 and 2007, growing from about 10 percent to more than 20 percent,” the CBO report states, while the remaining 99 percent saw stagnant income growth even before the economic recession of 2008.

In addition, the income disparity has been fed by a tax code that allows Warren Buffett, one of the wealthiest people in the world, to pay a lower tax rate than his clerical assistants—which the billionaire says is grossly unfair. Public services in California and other states, are starved for cash so that vital services are being cut all across America—teachers, firefighters, police and other public employees are being laid off in most states.

“Fairness for the middle class is a national issue,” Walker said. “California is not an island.”

Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker and other member activists took the message of economic fairness for the middle class to our members in Susanville, in the rural northeast corner of California.

“It’s important for all of our members to see that the things we have experienced in recent years—furloughs, program cuts and some job losses—are part of a far bigger economic problem in America,” said John Kern, a prison teacher who chairs Bargaining Unit 3.

“What happens in Washington or Sacramento impacts families in all parts of the state,” added Kern, who helped organize the Nov. 8 Susanville tour.

“There are national economic policies that allowed Wall Street banks to get taxpayer bailouts after they crashed the economy, while millions of middle class Americans have lost their homes and livelihood,” said

Walker, who gave a presentation on economic fairness after touring two state prisons in Susanville on Nov. 8.

Struggling local economy

Most Local 1000 members in the Susanville area work at the two state prisons in Lassen County, which is the region’s largest employer. The county as a whole has a 15 percent unemployment rate, according to the state Department of Finance. According to RealtyTrac, Susanville has one of the highest home foreclosure rates in the state.

“This is a conservative, remote area of the state, but we see how bad the economy is here,” said Diana King, a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation employee who serves as vice president and chief steward of Local 1000’s District Labor Council 792. “We’re really excited that Yvonne came up here to talk to our members about the big picture and what we can do to change it. I think a lot of our members will

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