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2015

UNION UPDATE

LOCAL 1000

SEIU
Stronger Together

Pension attack takes next step

Attorney General releases official summary; signature gathering underway

The deadly 2016 pension-gutting ballot initiative designed to bypass collective bargaining and threaten the retirement security of all public employees has passed another milestone, receiving an official title and summary from California Attorney General Kamala Harris.

Titled the “Public Employees, Pension and Retiree Healthcare Benefits, Initiative Constitutional Amendment,” the ballot measure “eliminates constitutional protections for vested pension and retiree healthcare benefits for current public employees.”

Employees hired in January 2019 and beyond would not receive the kind of guaranteed pensions current state employees receive.

Changes in pensions—cost of living adjustments, vesting,

pension calculations and age of retirement eligibility—would be subject to voter approval, even if they are successfully bargained in a contract.

“Once again, public employees will be called upon to stand together and fight back against this latest assault on their rights,” said Yvonne R. Walker, Local 1000 president. “We must project our power to defend those rights.”

The initiative must gather more than 585,000 valid signatures from registered California voters in order to appear on the 2016 ballot.

“We can stop this dangerous initiative by having conversations with our coworkers, family and friends in the community to encourage them not to sign the petition,” said President Walker.



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—Yvonne R. Walker
Local 1000 President

Here is the official title and summary of the Reed/DeMaio Initiative:

The Attorney General of California has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, PENSION AND RETIREE HEALTHCARE BENEFITS, INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

Eliminates constitutional protections for vested pension and retiree healthcare benefits for current public employees, including those working in K-12 schools, higher education, hospitals, and police protection, for future work performed. Adds initiative/referendum powers to Constitution, for determining public employee compensation and retirement benefits. Bars government employers from enrolling new employees in defined benefit plans, paying more than one-half cost of new employees’ retirement benefits, or enhancing retirement benefits, unless first approved by voters. Limits placement of financial conditions upon government employers closing defined benefit plans to new employees. Summary of estimate by Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance of fiscal impact on state and local government: Significant effects—savings and costs—on state and local governments relating to compensation for governmental employees. The magnitude and timing of these effects would depend heavily on future decisions made by voters, governmental employers, and the courts.

INCOME INEQUALITY AFFECTS US ALL

City task force examines the real economic impact of minimum wage

As the possibility for narrowing the income gap comes closer to reality for low wage workers in Sacramento, Local 1000 members are pushing to keep the needs of the working families top-of-mind for the city’s decision makers. At the third meeting of Sacramento’s Income Inequality Task Force on August 12, our members took their turn at the public comment podium to give voice to the real experiences of working Californians—and their community partners—who struggle to live on minimum wage.

Though almost all Local 1000 members make over \$15 an hour—the top tier of possible increases being discussed—the union represents over 45,000 workers in the Sacramento region and is deeply ingrained in the economic health of the city.

“Income inequality affects more than just low-wage workers,” said Crystal McCray, a steward from DLC 788 who testified at the meeting, noting how poverty ripples through families and communities. “It touches most of us in some way at some time.”

As at previous meetings, task force members and the assembled observers listened to presentations by researchers and analysts. This meeting’s focus was on potential effects on working families, businesses and the Sacramento economy in general when the minimum wage is increased. And, though representatives of the business sector that wish to continue to pay sub-poverty wages without reprisal used flawed research to warn of job loss and rising prices, Local 1000 President Yvonne R.

“Hopefully, the task force can utilize this period of prosperity in Sacramento to build on one of our strengths: communities caring for each other.”

—Crystal McCray, DLC 788



Walker, who is a task force member, continued to bring the conversation back to the real problem: workers not making it.

“No one who works full time should have to live in poverty,” Walker said.

The heart of the income inequality problem is simple: Some people work all day and don’t have enough to live on. The low wage workers who have been testifying at the task force meetings tell heartbreaking stories of how not having enough money coming into their households affects every aspect of their lives, causing them to make can’t-win choices between things like feeding their children or paying the rent and buying needed medication or making a car payment. With a daily list of choices like these, getting the training and support—not to mention child care—to move on to a better job is out of reach.

Local 1000 activists like McCray think the time is right for Sacramento to join major cities like Los Angeles and Seattle in raising the wage to pull residents out of poverty.

“Hopefully,” she said, “the task force can utilize this period of prosperity in Sacramento to build on one of our strengths: communities caring for each other.”

Resource Center

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

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— SACRAMENTO —

INCOME INEQUALITY

Town Hall Meeting

INFO: Member Resource Center (MRC)
toll free: 866.471.SEIU (7348)

WHEN:

August 25 (Tuesday)
6:00 p.m.

WHERE:

SEIU Local 1000
Sacramento Field Office

1325 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95811