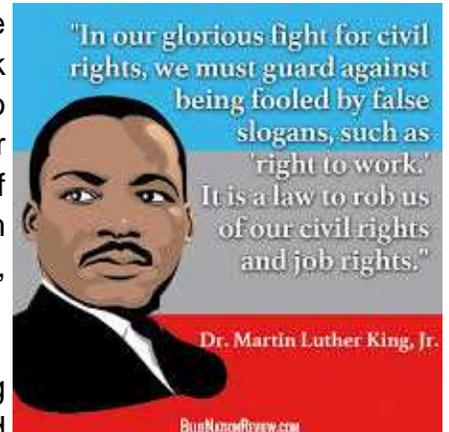




What is "Right To Work"

"Right to Work" laws have been all over the news recently, as more and more states fall prey to this anti-worker legislation. An attack by greedy corporations and anti-worker politicians, so called "Right to Work" legislation is meant to strip workers of their bargaining power and silence the collective voice. "Right to Work" is the creation of Vance Muse, a far-right segregationist and 1940's oil lobbyist from Houston. Muse's hateful views included opposing women's suffrage, child labor laws, and integration.



- In the 40's, Muse set his sights on unions. Unions were growing in power in the South during the 1930's which was a twofold threat to the established order. First, unionization meant that workers could collectively bargain for a bigger slice of the pie and second, unions opposed Jim Crow laws and segregation. Neither of these things sat well with wealthy monies interest in the South. Muse knew that many people in the segregated South believed that black and white workers shouldn't be in the same unions jobs if black workers weren't allowed to unionize.
- One big reason America was far more equal in the 1950s and 1960s was because unions were stronger then. That gave workers bargaining power to get a fair share of the economy's gains – and unions helped improve wages and working conditions for everyone. But as union membership has weakened, the bargaining power of average workers has all but disappeared. In fact, the decline of the American middle class mirrors almost exactly the decline of American labor union membership.

Attend one of the below meetings to learn how Right to Work will impact you and also get information about how you can protect your pension by voting in the CalPERS Election

Date	Location	Time
Tuesday September 12	1430 Freedom Blvd Campus - AG Building	11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 19	1080 Emeline St-Building D (Old Cafeteria Basement)	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 19	SEIU Local 521, 517 Mission St, Santa Cruz	5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, September 20	701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz (CAO Conference RM)	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, September 21	245 Westridge St - Call Center	11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Thursday, September 28	18 W. Beach St –Benefits Division	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

A Message from Chapter President Will Forest

The pay period beginning September 23 marks the beginning of a new year for our SEIU General Representation Unit contract. For this coming year, your bargaining team negotiated to add a new top pay step and to eliminate the bottom existing step. It's a confusing procedure, so I wanted to explain it again so that no one misunderstands it.

All of us who have completed a full year (2080 hours of work) at the old top step will move to the new top step, which generally pays 4% more. Anyone who has completed less than a full year at the bottom step will move up to step two, again getting an immediate raise. For everyone else below top step, adding a step and dropping a step will have no immediate effect; their step increase will happen when it normally would, but down the road, at the point when they would have topped out, the new top step will be available to them and they will get the 4% raise.

Once the add-and-drop takes effect, every step will be re-named to the next-lowest step. For example, those who just moved up to step 8 will be considered to be step 7, and those who just got bumped up to step 2 (along with those who were already step 2) will be considered to be step 1 again. We'll have the new pay rate, but the steps will once again have their old range of numbers.

Management Loses Fight to Control Steward Release-Time

County management's efforts to limit our right to release time for union stewards proved unsuccessful, according to a recent arbitration decision.

In 2016, SEIU designated Chief Steward Jim Heaney to represent a county employee in an arbitration appeal of a disciplinary action. Our contract gives stewards like Jim the right to represent co-workers on work time without loss of pay, also known as "release time." California labor laws also provide employer-paid release time for union activities in certain circumstances.

When Ajita Patel, Deputy Director of Personnel, forced Jim to use his vacation accruals to represent our member, SEIU filed a grievance and took it to arbitration. At the arbitration hearing, the County's lawyer offered several different explanations for denying Jim's release time, arguing that he already spends too much time in negotiations, that his workload would be impacted, and that release time does not extend to disciplinary appeals. In the end, the arbitrator didn't buy it, and she ordered the County to restore Jim's vacation accruals.



"This is a win for all stewards in Santa Cruz County, but it's not over, management is still acting unreasonably in their desire to control who we designate as our union representatives." - Jim Heaney, Chief Steward

Remarkably, two days after receiving the arbitrator's decision, Patel informed us that the County will not authorize release time for Jim to attend an arbitration hearing in an appeal of findings made by the County's EEO officer. Because this issue is so important in the face of "right-to-work" laws threatening our ability to effectively represent our members, management is leaving us with little choice but to pursue yet another grievance against them to defend our stewards' right to release time.

OSHA Issues Safety Complaint Against Santa Cruz County

Managers at Santa Cruz County Environmental Health have ignored safety concerns raised by employees for more than two years. As part of a team of first responders to hazardous materials calls, Tim Epperson recognized that their emergency response vehicle was lacking basic safety equipment - roadside flashers and a two-way radio - which he brought to management's attention in 2015.



As the Hazmat team continued faithfully performing their duties, inclement weather in 2017 reminded them that management had not fulfilled their obligation to keep employees safe. Thankfully, our labor contract contains protections that allow employees to reject any work assignment that they consider unsafe (see Article 20, "Health and Safety"). When SEIU tried invoking this right, management retaliated against workers by threatening to withhold a 5% pay differential if they refuse to continue subjecting themselves to the unsafe condition.

SEIU filed a grievance alleging retaliation. At the grievance meeting, Tim and his co-workers insisted that County Personnel investigate these issues. Unfortunately, Personnel denied that any retaliation had occurred and refused to investigate management, leaving Tim with little choice but to notify the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which recently issued a complaint against the County, citing management's failure to provide proper communication and traffic control equipment to keep our workers safe.

County Management Interferes with Patient's Medical Care by Denying Time-off Request

Porfirio Cervantez is a dedicated Santa Cruz County Public Works employee. With more than 400 hours of PTO on the books, he rarely takes time off. But every now and then, Porfirio needed a day off to help drive a friend to Stanford for cancer treatment, which management knew about. So the time-off request he submitted last April should have come as no surprise. Porfirio even wrote his reason for the request on the form. Unfortunately, management ignored the request, but later claimed it had been denied.

When Porfirio questioned management about the denial, they kept shifting their explanations. They didn't care that his friend had been left stranded without transportation for essential medical care. So Porfirio contacted his Steward to help him file a grievance under Article 16.2(C)(4) of our contract, which prohibits management from arbitrarily denying time-off requests. Before the grievance meeting could occur, we were saddened to learn that Porfirio's friend had passed away. As a remedy, we asked management to issue an apology letter to his friend's family for interfering with his cancer treatment. Not surprisingly, management refused.

Although we will never know if management's actions hastened the outcome for Porfirio's friend, their overall attitude toward the situation was extremely callous and insensitive. At least County Personnel issued a response acknowledging that management failed to follow the rules, despite their unwillingness to apologize for anything.