



2019 OFFICERS, DELEGATES AND TRUSTEES ELECTION

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Read their statements.... Exercise your rights and VOTE!

The following candidates submitted long-form statements to post to our website. For the full list of candidates and more statements, please download the Candidates Statement Booklet PDF from members.seiu521.org.

NOTE: All candidates were certified by the Election Committee on December 11, 2018

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICER (Not Contested)



I'm Riko Mendez, Chief Elected Officer of our union, SEIU Local 521. Two years ago, member leaders came together to rebuild our union into one that thrives in the face of extreme anti-union attacks. I look forward to continuing our progress by partnering with you and lifting up the voices of our 40,000 employees across our union.

In 2018, labor faced our most challenging year. With Janus, the Supreme Court decided in favor of the greedy few and ruled against all working people. This case was brought by billionaires seeking to rig the rules in their favor. Their plan is to divide us against each other. Thankfully, we saw this coming and created a plan to win. To continue winning, we must come together and stand up for each other. Today, we have a strong, vibrant union made up of leaders who have renewed their union commitment.

Two years ago, we committed to: **protect our progress, build power in our worksites/communities, ensure transparency/accountability, and secure our future for our families.** In the past two years we have made significant progress towards these goals by:

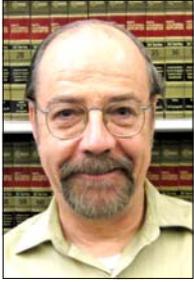
- Improving member communication and providing relevant union information with our new member-only online portal: MemberLink.
- Strengthening contracts and representation by launching our new Steward Training Program. In 2018, more than 200 stewards were trained.
- Winning strong contracts in Kern, Fresno, and San Mateo Counties with member-led campaigns and the highest member engagement in our union's history.
- Filling vacancies on our Executive Board, which increased participation in our decision-making process and Improved transparency and accountability.
- Increasing our political power and electing government leaders who respect all of our families and will govern for all of us.
- Renewing our efforts to grow our union by supporting thousands of Childcare Providers who have been fighting for years to gain the right to form a union.

Our work is far from over. Janus was just the beginning. In 2019, billionaire-backed, anti-worker organizations will intensify their efforts to divide us. They will continue to fund organizations, like the Freedom Foundation, to deceive us into dropping our membership and tell us we are better off alone. They will say things like: "give yourself a raise, drop your membership", but their true intention is to weaken our union. Our "Together We Win" team has a plan to win. It starts with talking to our co-workers and sharing what's at stake, and educating new employees about the power of union membership.

No matter our differences, we all want similar things: fair returns for our work and better futures for our families. To win, we need to join together with people from all walks of life to fight for our future, just as we won better wages, safer workplaces, and civil rights in our past. Our united voice is powerful. Vote for me and together, we can win for our families. Vote **Together We Win**.

Riko Mendez
Chief Elected Officer, SEIU 521

TRUSTEE-AT-LARGE



We face numerous challenges in maintaining and expanding the protections, opportunities, and outreach efforts that keep SEIU Local 521 strong. Many of these challenges are *external*, like fighting off ballot measures meant to gut our pensions; adapting to and minimizing the Janus decision's attack on Agency Shops; and resisting attempts by reactionary forces to poison the minds of voters against us by spreading lies and distortions about what unions do and who union members are. We all know what's at stake and how essential it is to continue standing together to defeat these attacks! Your votes for our Local's Officers and Executive Board Delegates are a vital part of maintaining workers' strength and spreading our Stronger Together message.

By comparison, a Trustee often plays a more subtle (but no less important) part in helping our Local succeed with its *Internal* challenges, especially to ensure that our Local uses its power and resources as effectively and cooperatively as possible. Helping strike the right balance between those two types of challenges was one of the main priorities that I focused on three years ago, when I became a Trustee at Large. I've since learned how an experienced and diplomatic Trustee can play a key role behind the scenes to help coordinate our Local's public efforts and, when needed, to help resolve internal disagreements or difficulties that sometimes arise when committed people work together in strenuous efforts to win justice for working people. I've also learned that the only genuine way to carry out a Trustee's role is to always respect our members' differing viewpoints and diverse backgrounds, all of which make us stronger!

I respectfully ask for your vote, to allow me the privilege to serve a second term. My experience as a Steward, a Chief Steward, a Negotiator, and for the last 10 years as Chair of Santa Clara County's Election Committee, have helped me gain the insights, skills, and understanding that I believe are a good match for a Trustee's duties. My Election Committee teammates and I have found creative, durable, and inclusive solutions to several thorny (and sometimes unprecedented) issues, some of which resemble the challenges our Local faces. I contributed substantially to a long-term effort to clarify and modernize my chapter's Bylaws, and I've played a key role in drafting the proposed amendments to the Local's Bylaws regarding elections that appear on this ballot, which I hope you will also support.

Our Local can sustain itself, and the hopes and dignity of the 99%, *only* if we remain a cutting-edge Union dedicated to grass-roots advocacy for all working people! Those members who are fortunate enough to be elected as Trustees must therefore pay careful attention to our Local's fiscal health and compliance with its Bylaws, while combining their scrutiny with problem-solving people skills and stamina. I ask for your vote because I am dedicated, ready, and able to deliver that combination of skills and commitment. Thank you for the chance to serve.

Paul Klunder

Senior Paralegal, Santa Clara County

SAN MATEO COUNTY DELEGATE



I am running for the Executive Board Delegate to represent Region 1 - County of San Mateo because I believe it is time to rise together.

I am proud to be a Bay Area native; born and raised in San Francisco. I currently live and work in the County of San Mateo. I am a proud SEIU 521 Union member, a steward for the Human Services Agency, a participant of the Career Development Program Committee, and I have a degree in Psychology and Human Services. As a member of the current 2018 SEIU 521 bargaining team, we were able to negotiate a favorable contract, which was overwhelmingly approved by 97% of our voting members.

As a Latina member leader for more than ten years, my goal as a delegate of the executive board is to partner and work collaboratively with union members like you, and to contribute my time and efforts in making a difference in our community. Growing up in a union household, I recognize the value of having the support of a strong union for working families. Throughout my commitment in Human Services, I have had the opportunity to meet individuals and families, and provide them with the resources needed to succeed as vital members of the community.

Together, our union members have become a powerful team whose mission is to lift up the voices of their co-workers! Together, we have won strong contracts that protect jobs, wages, benefits and pensions! A vote for me represents a united voice in our communities. Together, we can win for our families, because "Together We Win"!

Mercedes Segura

Office Assistant II, San Mateo County

FRESNO COUNTY DELEGATE



A Message from Ron "The Steward" Emenheiser

The Janus vs ASFME decision brought down by the SCOTUS this past summer was intended to be the nail in the coffin for Public Sector Unions. I believe, and I can see that the effect has been quite the contrary. I see members finding their voice they didn't know they had. I see people organizing for change. Mobilizing to effectuate that change. Now, it is our time, and duty, to make our Local stronger than ever. Our membership has elevated its efforts and are taking a stand for rights at our Work Shops, making improvements in our communities, and speaking truth to power at the State Capitol among other venues. Let's keep fighting, because: "When we fight we Win!". Strength in numbers, let's exercise our muscles. Let us keep pushing as champions for social and economic justice for all. Understanding that our well being, salaries, job security, retirement plight, and a certain future/defined benefit is at stake We must remain steadfast and vigilant in the attacks being perpetrated against our Union. For our families sake.

Organizations like the Freedom Foundation are encouraging people to drop their memberships by spreading false slogans like "Right to Work" and "Give Yourself a Raise". We won't be misled though. Right to work for less and no job security? Nonsense. These folks want to privatize public workers so as to diminish our power and benefits. Think about the return on investment that having a Union affords us. These nefarious organizations want to dismantle our Union and take away our negotiating power. Thus hindering and or eliminating altogether our ability to influence control over our own future by means of collective bargaining. Public Sector Unions are the last of a dying breed. We can take a look around and see how Private Sector Unions have been decimated, Wisconsin is the example. Now our very own Public Sector Unions are under attack.

As a Eligibility Worker in Fresno it is impossible not to be in touch with what's happening in the world around us. I grew up in South East Fresno, as a product of the inner city you witness a lot as a child. I went to Easterby Elementary, Kings Canyon Middle School, and Roosevelt High School. All my life I've seen people hurting, people who are in need. Being principled and instilled with a moral compass is what drives me to continue to keep helping people. The change agent making a difference. Anyone who knows me or has been in the same room as me can attest to my passion and willingness to speak on behalf of members and the under served. This is what I do and will continue to do if elected as your Executive Board Delegate for Large Chapter Fresno Co. SEIU521. Please support me with your vote and keep fighting to secure our futures together. TOGETHER WE RISE, in solidarity. To learn more visit: <https://ronthesteward.com>

Ron Emenheiser

Eligibility Worker III, Fresno County

REGION 5 VICE PRESIDENT



My name is Sonja Bennett and I am an Administrative Coordinator at the Department of Human Services in Kern County. I currently serve members as a shop steward, Kern Chapter officer and Region 5 Vice President. As an Executive Board member I serve on a variety of committees that include Budget and Finance and IT committees.

As an Executive Board member, I have worked towards the improvement of the systems and tools that are used by staff and members. We have heard your critique of our website and Memberlink. As such, we are currently working towards redesigning 521's website so that we can put our best foot forward to the public and create a user friendly experience that is more intuitive for members.

As a member of the IT Committee I have worked with staff in vetting proposals that will improve the Local's communication infrastructure and ensure these critical systems will be maintained in a safe environment. It is my belief that the computer systems, mobile devices, website, phones and other communication systems are the life blood of SEIU 521 as it enables us to do the work of protecting jobs, wages, benefits and pensions.

I support the ongoing review of our business practices to ensure that we are fiscally responsible in the expenditure of member's monies. We recently conducted a review of the copier/printer needs of the local and conducted a bid process for replacement of the equipment. As a result, it is estimated that the Local will achieve a cost saving of more than \$30,000 annually under the new equipment leases.

I hope to have the opportunity to continue my work on these committees and look forward to working and partnering with Union members like you. Together we have become a powerful team whose mission is to lift up the voices of workers and hold bad bosses accountable. Vote for me and together we can win for our families. *Vote "Together We Win"!*

Sonja Bennett

Administrative Coordinator, Kern County