



THE WORKERS' VOICE

Santa Clara County Chapter Newsletter

Service Employees International Union, CTW-CLC

www.seiu521.org

VOL. 30, NO. 9

NOVEMBER 2011

(408) 678-3300

“We are the 99%” came to Julian Street on Tuesday and SEIU 521 members made some NOISE!

The event was organized to highlight the current contract negotiations between Santa Clara County and the Social Service Supervisory Unit, which is being asked to take steeper cuts than any other employee group to date.

More than a hundred workers showed up, some with tents. ABC-Channel 7 and Univision covered our action.

“This fight is about more than a fair wage, or keeping jobs, or cuts that we are willing to make,” said **Kathleen Starr**, Social Work Supervisor. “It’s about remembering the reason why we are in this position. There is



The SEIU 521 Supervisory Unit was joined by the whole Santa Clara County Chapter to push for a fair contract. Pictured: Kathleen Starr, Social Work Supervisor

a national crisis and our government has been hijacked by corporations which benefit from political favors like tax loopholes.”

The economic crisis caused by Wall Street trickled down to Main Street and middle class families and that is why now, more than ever, we need our County Supervisors to stand up and protect the workers with a fair contract.

As another speaker, San Jose State University lecturer Gil Villagran, said: “We occupy for all Americans who are not billionaires. The American Dream is beyond the reach of 99% of Americans. But we, the people, can regain our commonwealth.”

Until a fair contract is won, the Santa Clara County Chapter workers vowed to continue the fight.

SEIU 521 Plans Solidarity March for Jobs

Enough is enough—we can’t wait any longer. Three years after Wall Street wrecked our economy, 25 million people are still unable to find full-time work and the scandalous income inequality gap between the super rich and working

families just grows. But instead of creating jobs, Congress keeps focusing on job-killing budget cuts.

The wealthiest 1% in America owns 42% of our nation’s wealth.

It’s time to declare an economic emergency for the 99%. On Nov. 17, we will peacefully join the Occupy movement at sites all across the country and demand an economy and a country that works for everyone, not just the 1%.



“My daughter lost both her job and home. The only way out of this is to create good paying jobs that can sustain a family.”
– Rachel Welch, Forensic Chemist (VMC)

OCCUPY SAN JOSE NOW!



THURS. NOV. 17 - 5 PM

**SAN JOSE CITY HALL
200 E. Santa Clara Street**

March from San Jose State University MLK Library (S. 4th St. and E. San Fernando St.) to City Hall.

Join us by filling out our online commitment form at www.seiu521.org.

Santa Clara County Chapter - Remaining 2011 Meetings

Meeting Type	Date	Time	Location
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, November 17	CANCELLED - please attend the Occupy San Jose Action	
Combined Chapter Leadership & General Membership Meeting	Thursday, December 8	6:00 p.m.	To be announced

NOTE: All our meetings will begin at 6 pm, unless stated otherwise. The location of our meetings will have rotating locations to increase membership access and will be announced as far as in advance as possible.

Please RSVP at (408) 678-3300 to attend.

How will the Governor's pension plan impact members?

Governor Brown presented a 12-point proposal for reforming California's pension system in October, immediately raising questions about how public employees' retirement security will be impacted.

One thing is clear:

The Governor's plan is only a proposal. The Legislature—not the Governor—will decide on pension reform.

What's in the Governor's proposal:

- It would force most current public employees—both state and local—to increase their share of pension contributions.
- It would cut back retirement benefits for future employees.
- Newly hired workers would receive a mixed retirement plan including part pension, part 401 (k).
- It would raise the full retirement to 67 for most newly hired state and local workers.

What we support:

- Public employees are part of the solution.

- We have led on curbing practices such as pension "spiking" and putting an end to other abuses.
- We have agreed over the last two years to pay more toward pensions and other changes that have saved California \$600 million.
- In more than 200 California cities, counties and local districts, public employees have already agreed to increase pension contributions and lower public costs.
- Employers and workers need to be able to negotiate changes to pension plans at the bargaining table; one-size-fits-all usually fits no one.

What's next:

The legislative committee held its first meeting regarding reforming California's pensions in October. The committee has two options:

1. It can submit a recommendation for pension reform for an "up or down" vote of the Legislature, which would not be able to modify the proposal.
2. It can make recommendations on

"We support responsible retirement security. We cannot jeopardize the secure retirements of hard-working Californians whose modest pensions are often the difference between living out their final years in security or retiring into poverty."

– Matt Nathanson, Vice President (Region 2)



pension reform bills; it would be up to the legislature to draft and move the bills through the usual voting process. The committee's work is expected to be completed early next year.

SEIU 521 members are encouraged to participate on the localwide pension committee. Since the state legislature will have ultimate decision-making power on where pension reforms go, it will be critical for legislators to hear directly from public service workers.

Visit www.seiu521.org for up-to-date pension news and dates of future meetings.

Trigger cuts are coming!



California's budget depends on revenue, and this year's budget deal depended on a certain level of revenue. But if either of two agencies decides the state isn't likely to have enough revenue, then the spending level will be cut. That's what we're facing this winter.

What determines the cuts?

Two state agencies will make economic forecasts, one in November, one in December. The forecast with the higher revenues is the one that will be used.

What we're facing are what the state calls "tiered cuts." If revenues are forecast to be \$1 billion short, the state will make "tier 1" cuts. If revenues are \$2 billion short, the state will cut even more, hitting "tier 2."

The cuts will be deep, all taking effect for the last six months of a fiscal year—which means the cuts will be twice as deep as if they had been made for a full year. And in many cases, the cuts at the state level will mean a loss of federal matching funds, so services will be cut twice as much.

Who'll take the cuts?

- Homecare workers will face a \$128 million cut over six months. Joined with federal and county-level cuts, they'll see an annualized cut of more than \$700 million. That's a tier 1 cut.
- Bus drivers, who get our children safely to school and back, will see a \$248 million cut under tier 2. That's a 70 percent cut in funding, which will result in massive layoffs for bus drivers and more

danger for students getting to school.

- The workers in regional centers across the state could face furloughs, layoffs and increased caseloads after a \$100 million cut under tier 1.
- And hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to education, from kindergarten to college, will affect our families whether we get tier 1 or tier 2.

Visit www.seiu521.org for the latest news on these potential cuts.

"Private companies will avoid hiring new employees during a recession. When sales are down, tax revenue for governments drops as well. That's why Congress must pass President Obama's jobs plan. Building infrastructure, teachers in schools, all of these things provide huge benefits in the future, but more importantly, they put people to work today. That will create demand, stimulate the economy, and provide more jobs."

– Matthew Hall, Planner (Kern County Chapter)