



Together WE RISE

JULY / AUGUST 2018

ISSUE #10

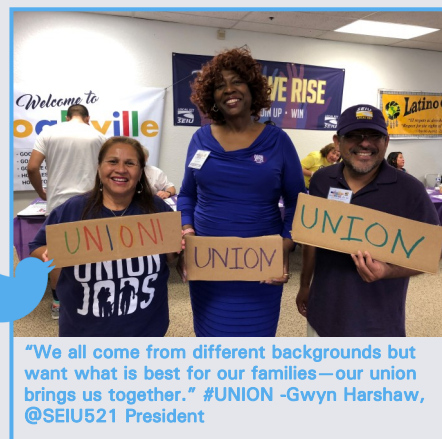
JOIN UP: AMERICA NEEDS UNIONS TOWN HALL UNITES US

Over 300 fast-food, childcare, public sector, security and health care workers met with US Representatives Zoe Lofgren and Ro Khanna, California Assemblymember Ash Kalra, and local elected officials and candidates at the America Needs Unions Town Hall on Saturday, July 21st at SEIU 521 in San Jose. The town hall, held just three weeks after the Supreme Court's *Janus* decision, showed our power while highlighting the need to make it easier for working people to join together in unions in California in order to raise wages and create thriving communities.

Through personal testimonies, working people discussed why putting more people in unions is the best way to confront inequality and lift the 64 million Americans paid less than \$15/hour out of poverty. **The town hall brought together unions, community partners, elected officials, and families who are fighting back against the wealthy special interests who want to divide us against each other and rig the rules of our economy.**

"We are here today because we know that America needs unions. We know that workers' rights are human rights. The only way to truly honor the people that came before us is to foster our connections, to organize our fellow workers, and to stand together for a better future," said Anna Griffin, a public-sector worker from Santa Clara County and SEIU 521 member for the past 23 years.

This was one of two dozen America Needs Unions town halls that have occurred or will take place around the country.



Anna Griffin, SEIU 521 member for the past 23 years, shares why we must stick together.



Family child care providers and SEIU 521 members posted their #Union challenge photos online during the town hall.



U.S. Reps Lofgren, Khanna and Assemblymember Kalra join Connie Chew, 521 Executive Board Member and Chief Elected Officer, Riko Mendez.

JOIN SEIU 521 MEMBERS THIS LABOR DAY BY PARTICIPATING IN PRO UNION ACTIONS IN OUR COMMUNITIES HONORING THE LABOR MOVEMENT



Kern County

Labor Day BBQ & March
Monday, September 3rd
Jastro Park, Bakersfield
9 A.M. – 1 P.M.

Labor in the Community Events TBA

Santa Clara County—San Jose
Monterey County—Salinas
Visit: members.seiu521.org for updates.

Fresno County

Labor Day Festival
Monday, September 3rd
Fresno Fair Grounds, Fresno
8 A.M. – 12 P.M.

RISE UP: WE WILL NOT BE DIVIDED — WE'RE STICKING WITH OUR UNION!

The recent Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* is part of a long-term strategy to weaken institutions like our unions by a greedy few and the politicians they pay for. But exactly who are the shadowy, wealthy billionaires and front groups bankrolling these attacks on us and our families?

One such organization is the **California Policy Center (CPC)**, an affiliate of the State Policy Network. Organizations like the CPC and SPN serve as front groups for billionaires like the Koch Brothers, who are determined to preserve the rigged economic system in the United States and who know that the key to their success is to defund our unions and harm our families.

CPC's anti-worker agenda includes attacking our public education system, fighting for pension cuts that hurt our members, and slashing state jobs and our pay and benefits by 20%. They also advocate for the outsourcing of public sector jobs. The State Policy Network (SPN), of which CPC is an affiliate, receives significant funding from the secretive organizations like Donors Capital Fund; their affiliated group, Donors Trust, helped fund the anti-union "reforms" in Wisconsin in 2011.

In Wisconsin, workers like us lost their rights to stand together and negotiate wages, benefits and working conditions. And they lost a lot of money – now they pay thousands more out-of-pocket for pensions and health care and they aren't getting the wage adjustments they used to. Lower wages during your career means lower pension payments at retirement.

You can learn more about the damage inflicted on working people in Wisconsin at www.uniondifference.org.

To carry out their attack on hardworking people like us, billionaires and their front groups like CPC are trying to convince members to leave their unions. They may knock on your door, call you, or even show up at your worksite. They may tell you to do things like "give yourself a raise by leaving your union," but remember that their true goal is to take away everything we've won as a union, including our ability to care for our loved ones. That's why SEIU 521 members are sticking with our union. To learn more and view a list of sources visit: www.seiu521.org/FightBack.



WIN: FRESNO COUNTY MEMBERS COME TOGETHER FOR CONTRACT VICTORY

In 2011, the County of Fresno was facing a steep budget crisis that led to drastic cuts in salaries and differentials for workers; a nearly 9% salary deduction was imposed on employees. Most workers would not see a restoration or increase for another 7 years. Through these difficult times, the most vulnerable and underserved communities in Fresno County felt the effects of these cuts—through lack of access to service, staffing shortages, and inadequate case support.

In the face of all of these challenges, Fresno County members focused on supporting each other and the communities we serve. Organizing efforts were a major part of the 2018 contract campaign—members built relationships with new members, rallies were planned through numerous membership meetings, **and our power was continuously on display in worksites across the County.** After the Fresno County bargaining team and chapter membership took on months of intensive negotiations and unity actions, we finally came to an agreement that was voted on and ratified two days after the *Janus* decision. The agreement ensures an investment in quality public services, an increase to salaries that begins to restore lost wages, and increases in employer healthcare contributions.

As corporations and wealthy special interests try to divide us against each other and take away our collective bargaining rights across the country, let's take inspiration from the working people of Fresno County who stood together and showed that when we fight, we win.

