



Lights, Camera, Action

Members featured in new SEIU Local 503, OPEU video

by Joe DiNicola, President

Every time an employee starts work within an SEIU bargaining unit – whether they join a nursing home, a Department of Administrative Services (DAS) worksite, a university campus, a local government, a private non-profit agency, or sign up to become a Homecare worker – our union exercises a really critical contract right. Members have the right to talk to a newly-hired worker about the benefits and the power of being part of our union. They have the right to ask a new employee to join by signing a membership form.

The contract right to provide new employee orientation makes every member in every worksite a future star. Your story about what the union means to you is very powerful. Each member can play this most important and, in some ways, easiest part in building power in the worksite. Do you still remember the day you decided to join SEIU Local 503, OPEU? Since that day you've probably found even more reasons why it's much better to be a member.

Maybe you recall your own decision to sign a membership form. Maybe since then you've thought about what you would say during a new employee orientation. Now, we have a video to help get the message out about what it means to become a union member.

During General Council 2004, members adopted a resolution and allocated funds to create a video for state and university system orientations. So far, the reviews are unanimous – great job everyone! Members at DMV saw the video for the first time and were inspired to do some of their own creative work to help new employees see the benefits of our union.

In the video, Frances Hernandez, Revenue; David Wells, Forestry; Chris Sherland, Fish & Wildlife; Barbara Casey, DHS; Peggy Breen, Oregon School for the Deaf; Lew Cronenberg, OSH; Star Holmberg, UofO; Farrell Hopkins, DHS; and Chuck Lemonds, ODOT stepped up to showcase the important work members perform all over Oregon.

Ginger Redlinger, Education; Joel Broussard, DHS; and Cari Buchner, OSU talked about the power we have to make positive change. They described how we come together to win dignity and respect on the job and work to make our communities better. Hats off to these dedicated volunteers. Ask your organizer, local officer or steward to arrange for your own worksite screening of this exciting new hit ... and help spread the word. It's great to be a member – we are Stronger Together!

We are currently working on a video about how to produce shows with Cable Access stations throughout Oregon. Training is tentatively scheduled for the morning of Sunday, November 20. Don't touch that dial...

Union under attack on 2006 Ballot Measures

National anti-worker forces have placed a bulls-eye over Oregon on their 2006 campaign map

Instead of local activist Bill Sizemore, national anti-worker groups like Freedom Works, Inc. are now leading the attack. Because it draws national funding, Freedom Works, a group best known for its efforts to privatize social security, may pose an even larger threat to public employees than Sizemore ever did.

Along with two Republican state legislators, Freedom Works has filed four different versions of initiatives that would limit public employees' ability to participate in the political process and cripple our union's ability to make campaign contributions through our CAPE "two cent" program.

In addition to Freedom Works, we expect that attacks on public employee union members' rights to participate in politics will be funded by PHARMA, the lobbying group for the prescription drug industry. Angry at SEIU's efforts to limit the rise in prescription drug costs and to control pharmaceutical companies' profiteering,

PHARMA has funded similar ballot measures in other states, including California, where such a measure is on the ballot this November.

Freedom Works is also sponsoring a ballot measure that they call a "spending cap." This measure would cause major service cuts. Since the cost of big chunks of the state budget – prison costs, healthcare, etc. – rise far faster than inflation, limiting the overall increase in state spending to inflation plus population growth would guarantee cuts in other parts of the state budget. Money for public employee wages, programs for the working poor, and higher education will inevitably be targeted if this "service cap" passes.

SEIU Co-sponsors Ballot Measures to Make our Tax System Fairer

The good news is that not all of the ballot measures filed so far would send us backwards! SEIU Local 503, OPEU President Joe DiNicola is the co-sponsor of Initiatives 70 and 71, which would increase the corporate minimum tax, currently ten dollars a year. Joe asks "Why is it okay

for PGE/Enron to pay ten dollars a year when seniors can't get the services they need; college tuition is skyrocketing, and our members are getting laid off at DHS?"

Our union is also working in coalition with other community advocates to explore initiatives to close tax loopholes, to force corporations to disclose how little they pay in taxes; and to make health care more affordable for all Oregonians.

“ I'm glad we're involved in the ballot measure process in a big way. We pose a threat to the loophole lobby, so it's no surprise they're coming after public employee unions. But if we don't stand up to special interests, who will? ”



Farrell Hopkins creates and maintains computer systems that keep state agencies running efficiently.