

General Council Actions

Delegates to the 2008 SEIU 503 General Council...

... added a Board seat for a representative from Adult Foster Care, the local's newest sector.

... created councils in the Nursing Home and Private Non-Profit sectors, giving workers the chance to network and focus on sector-specific issues.

... authorized establishment of a resource center to serve all members. The first phase of this expansion — the Member Resource Center which now operates in the care provider sector — is to be in place by September 30, 2009. A steering committee will be formed to guide the project.

... committed to making SEIU 503 a leading force for quality public services, culminating in a launch by the next General Council in 2010 of up to three quality service initiatives.

... voted to engage in a project to educate Oregon lawmakers on the importance of workers' rights to organize.

... resolved to protect our work from privatization by changing the debate from public vs. private to one of quality services and quality standards for workers.

... pledged to continue organizing in Southern and Southwestern "sister states" to reverse the decline of union power nationally and thus protect union rights in Oregon.

... increased efforts to watchdog the Oregon Investment Council to protect state pensions and to educate members about the risks associated with private equity funds.

... backed a move to increase the medical mileage reimbursement rate that the state pays to homecare workers to \$.06 below the federal standard by fostering legislative support.

... reconfirmed support for efforts to hold Wal-Mart accountable and participate in campaigns against the company's abuses.

... created a Member Technology Committee to recommend ways to improve our use of technology.

... included Rules Committee chair in the duties of the statewide vice president.

... made members of the Board of Directors automatic delegates to the quadrennial international union convention.

... added 25 cents a month to the amount of member dues SEIU 503 rebates to sub-locals and reduced the cap on sub-local reserves from three years to two years worth of rebates.

... reduced the Strike and Job Protection Fund set-aside from dues to 50 cents per member per month and dedicated a higher proportion of that fund to member strike benefits, in recognition of the considerable reserves that the fund now contains.

... upped meal reimbursement to \$7.88 for breakfast, \$7.88 for lunch and \$15.75 for dinner plus a 20% gratuity.

Your Chance to Get Active: Join an SEIU 503 Committee



Have you ever thought about serving on an SEIU 503 committee or council? Since September 2008, union committees are no longer elected. Under new rules, the Local 503 President will make appointments for all committees and one of the four councils. All appointments are subject to ratification by the Board of Directors.

If you would like to serve — all interest forms must be in by 5:00 PM, December 1st. To apply online or print an interest form, go to www.SEIU503.org

"Both the President and the Board will maintain committee membership that respects the Union's geographic diversity and the diversity of employer groups within our membership," according to Article IX of the SEIU 503 bylaws.

There are 13 standing committees. Detailed information about each is in Article II of our Administrative Policies and Procedures.

The Union Rules Committee promotes the consistency of rules as set forth in the Union's Constitution, Bylaws and Administrative Policies and Procedures, making recommendations to the Board on issues requiring clarification.

The Member Representation Committee recommends Board action on matters concerning negotiation and representation of employees, election appeals and recall elections, allegations of a breach of the union's duty of fair representation, internal union disputes, and contract ratification procedures.

The Union Finance Committee develops plans for adequately financing the union, presents an annual budget to the Board and regularly reviews the fiscal operation of the union.

The Stewards' Committee coordinates steward activities statewide. The committee plans a biennial stewards' conference, disseminates a quarterly newsletter, monitors steward training, and assists with lists, selection and replacement language, and development of councils and other steward networks.

The Information Technology Committee, established by the 2008 General Council, will explore the use of technology to improve communication within the union and make recommendations to the Board on use of technology.

The Member Benefits Committee recommends Board action on benefit programs, policy positions on insurance programs, and maintenance, betterment and promotion of workers' compensation benefits.

The Staff Screening Committee collects and reviews applications, conducts interviews and makes recommendations to the Executive Director or Department Supervisor.

The Civil and Human Rights Committee promotes and monitors the union's commitment to equal employment opportunity and administers the Latino, the Lavender and African / American caucuses to build a strong power base for pursuing issues of cultural diversity.

The Member/Local Union Organizing Committee designs and supports programs in which members work on behalf of the union while on leave or release from their current employment.

The Hardship Committee sets standards and criteria for local Hardship Committees for providing limited and short-term assistance to members.

The Committee to Protect Injured Workers organizes, educates and mobilizes around the issues of workers' compensation, insurance, safety and health.

The Pension and Thrift Committee includes two members who help monitor the plan implementation and pension funds investment of the SEIU Local 503, OPEU staff retirement plan.

The Fight Contracting Out Committee is charged with developing expertise in how to fight privatization and acts as a rapid response team to assist in fighting any contracting out efforts.

There are five Special Councils that require member participation:

The Women's Council plans conferences and institutes information, research and lobbying programs that address issues of particular interest to the women of our union. It also serves as the Dependent Care Committee, ensuring that quality dependent care is available to members at major SEIU 503 events. This committee is comprised of members and a chairperson appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors.

The other four Special Councils were established to further communications and the principles of unionism within these groups. If interested in serving on a council, contact your sub-local president.

- Local Government Council
- Higher Education Council
- Nursing Homes Council
- Private Non-Profit Council

There is currently one Ad-Hoc Committee. The chair and members are appointed by the President and approved by the Board.

The Operational Audit Committee is charged with operational audits, reviews, and other investigations, as the Board deems necessary to assure that resources and assets are used efficiently and effectively.

Out of the Mouths of Voters

Volunteer for an SEIU phone bank enough times and you'll think you've heard it all. Then comes the next call. Here are a few verbatim examples from the robo-phone room in Portland during the 2008 campaign.

Some voters unwilling to discuss politics just hang up. Others offered the following explanations:

"I don't talk to people who call me."

"We already gave, thank you."

"There is no one here by that name — can I take a message?"

There are novel reasons to support or oppose SEIU 503 choices. Two examples:

"I'm a mailman and he sends too much mail. I always vote for the one who sends out the least mail."

"No I don't know anything about that, but I've already made up my mind."

"I'll cross party lines not to vote for a cagefighter."

Others respond in malapropisms worthy of a sit-com:

"I can't talk with my right ear."