



Why Not Consider Running for Office?

By Linda Burgin, SEIU 503 President

In the coming weeks, we will hold elections for all of our officers and bargaining delegates. It is a great opportunity for you to run for office as a bargaining delegate, General Council delegate, or as a local or statewide officer.

I can tell you that my initial decision to run for President of Local 581 at the Department of Education was one of the best decisions I have ever made. It was a hard choice for me at the time because I was busy in a job I loved and I did not see myself as a union leader. I stepped up because I knew I could have a positive impact on my local.

Eventually I was drawn to issues well beyond my own local, and the more involved I got, the more I understood how much power we really have. In addition, as I began to get more involved, I started liking the volunteer work I was doing for the union better than the paid work I was doing at my worksite! Go figure!

This is such an exciting time to become a part of the labor movement. SEIU Local 503 has doubled in size in less than eight years! We have begun planning for the SEIU 503 2010 General Council and are in the process of setting the agenda and scheduling speakers and writing resolutions. It is exciting to realize what the next year will bring. Nationally, we are on the brink of passing comprehensive health care reform, immigration reform, and the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).

Our union is a member-run democracy. Elected members make decisions at every level and work to make sure co-workers know what they can do to make a difference. When members step up and get involved, we all make progress in our worksites, in contract negotiations, at the legislature, and in our communities.

Are you listening? Are you ready to step up and make a difference? If it is not you, then who will do the work of your local or your sector or your region or the statewide union? If not now, when?

We are the union – 45,000 members strong! We are only as good as our activists who volunteer to represent our members. In his Inaugural Address on January 20, 1961, President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country." I say, "Ask not what your Union can do for you - ask what you can do for your union, or for all workers everywhere!"

Rights of Union Members and Responsibilities of Officers

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) guarantees certain rights to union members and imposes certain responsibilities on union officers. The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) enforces many LMRDA provisions while other provisions, such as the bill of rights, may only be enforced by union members through private suit in federal court. For more information contact the nearest OLMS field office.

Union Member Rights

- Bill of Rights** - Union members have:
- equal rights to participate in union activities
 - freedom of speech and assembly
 - voice in setting rates of dues, fees, and assessments
 - protection of the right to sue
 - safeguards against improper discipline

Copies of Collective Bargaining Agreements - Union members and nonunion employees have the right to receive or inspect copies of collective bargaining agreements.

Reports - Unions are required to file an initial information report (Form LM-1), copies of constitutions and bylaws, and an annual financial report (Form LM-2/3/4) with OLMS. Unions must make the reports available to members and permit members to examine supporting records for just cause. The reports are public information and copies are available from the OLMS Internet Public Disclosure Room at www.union-reports.dol.gov.

- Officer Elections** - Union members have the right to:
- nominate candidates for office
 - run for office
 - cast a secret ballot
 - protest the conduct of an election

Officer Removal - Local union members have the right to an adequate procedure for the removal of an elected officer guilty of serious misconduct.

Trusteeships - Unions may only be placed in trusteeship by a parent body for the reasons specified in the LMRDA.

Prohibition Against Certain Discipline - A union or any of its officials may not fine, expel, or otherwise discipline a member for exercising any LMRDA right.

Prohibition Against Violence - No one may use or threaten to use force or violence to interfere with a union member in the exercise of LMRDA rights.

Union Officer Responsibilities

Financial Safeguards - Union officers have a duty to manage the funds and property of the union solely for the benefit of the union and its members in accordance with the union's

constitution and bylaws. Union officers or employees who embezzle or steal union funds or other assets commit a Federal crime punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Bonding - Union officers or employees who handle union funds or property must be bonded to provide protection against losses if their union has property and annual financial receipts which exceed \$5,000.

Labor Organization Reports - Union officers must: file an initial information report (Form LM-1) and annual financial reports (Forms LM-2/3/4) with OLMS. retain the records necessary to verify the reports for at least five years.

Officer Reports - Union officers and employees must file reports concerning any loans and benefits received from, or certain financial interests in, employers whose employees their unions represent and businesses that deal with their unions.

- Officer Elections** - Unions must:
- hold elections of officers of local unions by secret ballot at least every three years
 - conduct regular elections in accordance with their constitution and bylaws and preserve all records for one year
 - mail a notice of election to every member at least 15 days prior to the election
 - comply with a candidate's request to distribute campaign material
 - not use union funds or resources to promote any candidate (nor may employer funds or resources be used)
 - permit candidates to have election observers
 - allow candidates to inspect the union's membership list once within 30 days prior to the election

Restrictions on Holding Office - A person convicted of certain crimes may not serve as a union officer, employee, or other representative of a union for up to 13 years.

Loans - A union may not have outstanding loans to any one officer or employee that in total exceed \$2,000 at any time.

Fines - A union may not pay the fine of any officer or employee convicted of any willful violation of the LMRDA.



Delegates confer during 2008 SEIU 503 General Council.

2010 General Council Set for Linn Expo Center

The 2010 General Council, SEIU Local 503's supreme governing body, will convene at the Linn County Fair and Expo Center, August 5-8. Committee Chairs and members will arrive a day early for training sessions.

Members of all SEIU 503 sub-locals will elect delegates to General Council in the coming weeks as part of their local election process. Even our smallest sub-local has at least one delegate. Delegates for larger locals are apportioned under an established formula. Notices related to General Council that are mandated by the SEIU 503 Constitution and By-Laws are included in this edition of *The 503 Voice*.

See the Local Election Chart on pages 3-7 for details about your sub-local. And check out our complete 2010 Election and General Council Guide posted at www.seiu503.org. New and updated Election and General Council information will be posted on our website as it becomes available.

General Council Resolutions

A General Council resolution is SEIU 503's version of a proposed law—and every member has the right to legislate. To be considered, it must be submitted through official action of a sub-local, the Board of Directors or a Standing Committee, or signed by 50 active members of the Union.

A proposed resolution should have a subject summarizing the intent as concisely and precisely as possible. It should start with one or more "Whereas" paragraphs, describing why something should be done, changed or implemented, and conclude with "Be It Resolved"—the proposed action. See SEIU Local 503, OPEU Bylaws Article XVI and the 2010 Elections and General Council Guide for additional information. They can be accessed at the union's website, www.seiu503.org.

2010 GENERAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION SEIU LOCAL 503, OPEU

Subject: Resolution Notice/Process (should tell exactly what it's about)

Author: Your Name

Local Number

Submitted by: Local Number

WHEREAS, the membership may not be aware of the resolution process, the timelines and/or format; and

WHEREAS, the resolution provides a very important method for members to use in defining the direction of the Union; and

WHEREAS, the timelines for the resolution, the format for their drafting, and the methods to move them to General Council need to be clearly described to the members; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the General Council of SEIU Local 503, OPEU, that the first issue of the union's newsletter prior to General Council contain the resolution timelines, the method of moving the resolution through the process and a sample resolution format.

Signature: _____

Contact Person: _____

(Local President, or signatures of 50 or more active members)

Address (of contact person): _____

Phone # (home, work, cell): _____

Email Address (home): _____

Note: The WHEREAS section is to list "why" the resolution should be done, changed or implemented. The BE IT RESOLVED section is the "who, what and how" of what you want accomplished. It explains the action to be taken by the Union.

Send to: SEIU Local 503, OPEU Attn: Resolutions Review Committee, PO Box 12159, Salem, OR 97309-0159 on or before 5:00 p.m., April 30, 2010.

NOTICE: Oregon Housing & Community Services Bylaws Change

Article IV Elections

Section 6. All Local Officers, Stewards, Bargaining Delegates and General Council Delegates shall be elected in accordance with the Union's Bylaws Article III GENERAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.