

# Leaders needed now more than ever

By Rob Sisk, SEIU 503 President



“Now more than ever” is our cry and need for dynamic, dedicated leaders steeped in union values

and ready to go the distance for our members and working families in this state.

Everywhere we turn, there is an urgent need to continue the re-vitalization of unions, in both bringing in new members and creating stronger bonds with existing members. At the same time, powerful and malevolent forces want to eradicate any collective power and voice of working people in this country, some of them hitting us right at home—even at some of our doorsteps. And to top it all off, working families continue to struggle to get ahead while the 1% continues to accumulate more and more wealth and power at their expense.

The middle class and those trying to pull themselves into it are dependent on strong, effective unions. Just as much, SEIU 503 continues to be dependent on strong and effective leaders.

Anybody who has served before knows the duty is not always easy - even more so now with the challenges coming at us from so many directions and the responses those challenges will require.

But the call for duty in its importance and nobleness impassions the soul and can be an incredibly meaningful and rewarding experience—for many, even life-changing. New skills, confidence and a sense of empowerment come from leadership development. Tackling the important issues affecting our members, their families and our communities is an exhilarating experience that will be cherished. And there is the added thrill and sense of community that comes from joining with other dedicated, vibrant and supportive leaders in a common mission in a diversity of exciting activities and settings, truly embodying the ideal of being “In It Together.”

As my leadership role in the union increased, my world expanded enormously over the years, from the small landscape crew at the State Capitol, to the four corners of our state.

I met members from a multitude of occupations in diverse settings in all types of services—members with incredibly interesting backgrounds and experiences that had led them into leadership. Looking back, I realize the effect my entry into leadership had on my work environment and the welfare of my coworkers, with monumental achievements gained with other officers and stewards I worked with. For new leaders, the first rung of the ladder is a step towards what can be a lofty future with SEIU 503. It is a step toward significant participation in the affairs and operations of both our sublocals and SEIU 503 and our strategic vision. There is also the essential and very rewarding element of personal day-to-day interactions with members as we work to demonstrate how effectively our union is taking on fairness and justice issues and ensuring a strong voice for workers. And there is the critical work of bringing our core values into action for an Oregon that benefits us all.

For those who are already leaders, the need for your continued experience, cultural and organizational knowledge and guidance can't be overemphasized. Out of necessity, the union is an engine that can never stop running. Those who continue as leaders while new ones are brought on and trained are the fuel that ensures SEIU 503 never stops moving forward.

Returning leaders are also the mentors for the new ones taking that first step into leadership. Extending a hand down helps them climb the steps and decreases their learning curve. Support, guidance and constant reassurance from a seasoned voice—and a role model—is what enables new leaders to gain confidence and desire to continue climbing the ladder to new levels of expertise and value to our members.

Coming up this election cycle are a host of leadership positions to choose from, suiting a variety of strengths and preferences. Some are at the grassroots level—sublocal officers and stewards—and some have overarching duties. Some necessitate steady involvement and some—like General Council Delegate—have periodic duties. Regardless, each position is vital to our union and its members—and each is vital if we are to move into the future united and strong.



## Loren Parks: He's Ba-aack

He's ba-aack! That's right, Nevada millionaire and “sex hypnotherapist” Loren Parks is back in action, taking another swing at Oregon workers. If you're unfamiliar with Parks, a quick Google search will help you out (be warned: It's not necessarily suitable for work).

### Here's some safe background on him:

- Loren Parks is the largest political contributor in Oregon history.
- He's a businessman who made his fortune selling medical equipment.
- He runs a website and YouTube channel dedicated to treating emotional and physical issues—like cancer and sexual dysfunction—via hypnotherapy.

Hypnotherapy and faith healing aside, Parks is a wealthy man who makes no secret of his attempts to shape Oregon politics. He's funneled millions of dollars into initiatives in the past decade and a half—primarily through Bill Sizemore and Kevin Mannix—most of which would have slashed taxes for the rich and cut funds from schools and basic services. **Simply put, he's the largest political donor in the history of Oregon politics, and he's spent a lot of money trying to hurt working families, attack immigrants and silence everyday Oregonians.**

### Some of his greatest hits:

- In 2008, he improperly spent hundreds of thousands of dollars from a private, tax-exempt foundation, to fund Bill Sizemore's anti-worker initiatives.
- He helped fund anti-worker ballot initiatives in 2013.
- In 2014, he spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to attack Oregon immigrants, make our roads less safe and attack legislators for supporting immigrants and road safety.

This time around, he's funding a new ballot measure, IP 62—just one of the latest anti-worker attacks to come to Oregon. This initiative, like the others filed before it and a few filed after it, aims to dismantle Oregon's unions and weaken workers' voices. The intent is the same as all those old Bill Sizemore measures, as well as a handful of measures filed by the state's largest timber industries. Parks' goal? To make it harder for working people to form unions that would allow them to fight for better wages, benefits and workplace safety.

Loren Parks is back. We know what his priorities are, and we know his pockets go deep enough to fund an all-out attack. He didn't succeed in his previous attacks on workers, and if we stand together, we'll make sure he doesn't succeed this time around.