

# Looking Forward: Five-Year Strategic Plan

In November our Union unveiled its five-year strategic plan, A Roadmap to a Fair Economy.

Over the next five years, SEIU 503 will have to navigate a challenging environment, and build power at a time when the odds are stacked against us. We have faced unprecedented attacks on our right to join together in union—and we have thrived through this tumultuous period. Yet the work continues.

**“The strategic plan lays out the time and place we live in – where income inequality is at its highest, corporations and the wealthy continue to succeed in this economy, and working families black, white and brown, really struggle. This plan lays out how we can confront that reality going forward.”**

- Melissa Unger, SEIU 503 Executive Director

“The strategic plan lays out the time and place we live in – where income inequality is at its highest, corporations and the wealthy continue to succeed in this economy, and working families, black, white and brown, really struggle,” says SEIU Local 503 Executive Director, Melissa Unger. “This plan lays out how we can confront that reality going forward.”

“We have to be the union that is there for you when you have a problem at work, and the union creating structural changes to put working families first,” Unger said. “The commitment I see from SEIU members everyday is what makes me think we’re up to the task.”

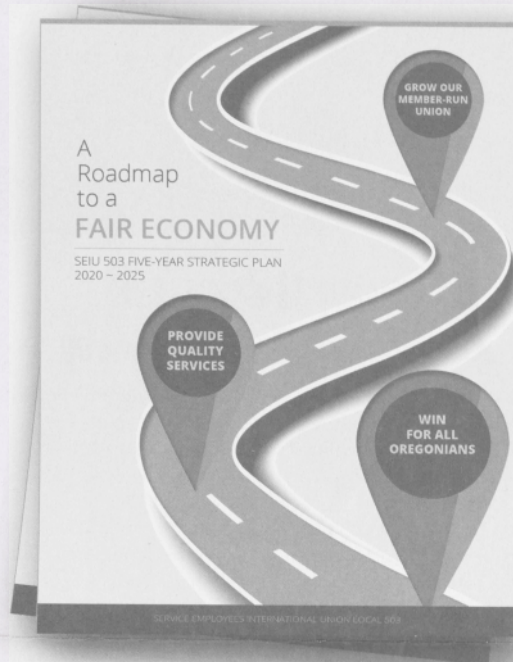
SEIU members from across Oregon came together to create the strategic plan. At regional meetings, over 200 members came together to talk about what keeps

them up at night. Members participated in focus groups and survey research, and pulled together a two-day retreat to think through all the information and create priorities.

Our plan is broken down into three key pieces:

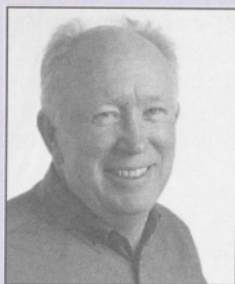
1. Growing our member-run union
2. Providing quality public services
3. Winning for all Oregonians

To read the full plan, visit [SEIU503.org/2025plan](http://SEIU503.org/2025plan)



## Changing The Conversation: Retirement For All

By Steven Demarest, SEIU 503 President



In 2019, I watched the Oregon Legislature cut the retirement benefits of 140,000 working families who are part of the Public Employee Pension System (PERS). I watched as people applauded a bill that would take money out of the pockets of voters – something that should be political suicide – and I was struck by how much ground we’ve lost in this fight.

It’s time to take back the narrative. I believe the main reason our pensions are under attack is that pensions are rare. Nationally, 22 percent of Americans have a pension (a defined benefit plan), and that number shrinks to just 13 percent in the private sector. In fact, retirement security, by any definition of the phrase, is rare. Only 55 percent of American workers have any kind of retirement plan at work.

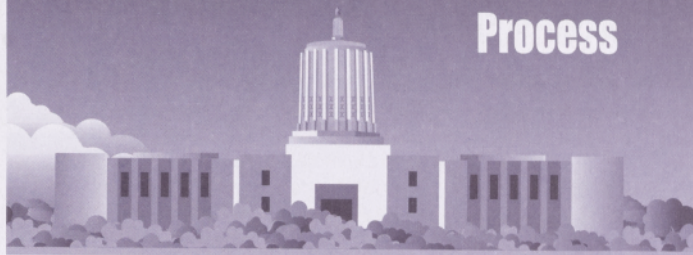
Most people no longer expect a secure retirement. People don’t see financial security as a right. Instead, they see our pensions as “overly generous.” Big corporations and anti-union politicians have done an excellent job pitting us against each other. We need to flip the script. Instead of asking “how come public employees get such good benefits?” Oregonians should be asking “how come I don’t get better benefits?”

That’s why we’re launching a new campaign in 2020 called Retirement For All. It’s time to get people thinking about the ground we’ve lost and how much better things could be, instead of attacking the few places where working people are still holding on.

In the early stages of the campaign, we will work to educate the public about retirement security and explain the root causes of its disappearance from the American workforce. In the coming years we will create policies that expand access to retirement plans, and fight to win them on the ballot or in Salem.

Most importantly, we’ll take a narrative that has been used to divide Oregonians, and flip it on its head.

## SEIU 503 Political Endorsement Process



This November, members of SEIU 503 kicked off an endorsement process that will determine how our Union engages in political campaigns in 2020. There’s a lot at stake. Decisions that impact SEIU 503 members – everything from the salary pots that determine our wages to our retirement and healthcare plans to policies like paid family and medical leave – are made in the State legislature, local governments and in Washington, D.C. It’s critical that we have a voice in those rooms, and the ability to advocate for our interests.

When politicians help SEIU members, we can reward them with our support. When they don’t, this process is how we hold them accountable.

Endorsements are driven by CAPE. The Citizens Action for Political Education (CAPE) is SEIU 503’s Political arm. It’s a member-run political action committee funded by voluntary contributions. Members on the CAPE committee will determine the 2020 endorsement process, and eventually make recommendations on candidates in state and local elections.

Note: The endorsement process for Federal candidates, such as the endorsement of a presidential candidate, is made by SEIU’s International Executive Board, which is made up of members from around the country. For more information on that process, please visit [Seiu2020.org](http://Seiu2020.org) or contact your organizer to get involved.

Our local endorsement process is run by a council of 52 members who are elected by CAPE contributors. The current board was sworn in on November 17.

Here’s a preview of the endorsement process and timelines.

- **Fall/Winter:** The newly elected CAPE council will meet and begin the discussion on the endorsement process.
- **Spring:** Political candidates will fill out questionnaires, and CAPE council members will interview candidates in person. Candidates will also participate in regional interviews, so members of their communities will have the opportunity to meet and talk to them.
- **Late-Spring:** CAPE council will vote on endorsement recommendations. Those recommendations will be finalized by SEIU 503’s Board of Directors.

When the process is complete, SEIU 503 will communicate endorsements to members so they are informed about where the candidates stand on issues that impact our union.