

Change to Win: SEIU takes action

On July 25, SEIU announced that we are leaving the AFL-CIO, a federation made up of labor unions, and taking a different path to rebuild America's declining labor movement. This decision was endorsed by Local 503's Board of Directors.

This comes after a long struggle to get the AFL-CIO on track to build the strength of working people. We proposed new strategies to stop the decline in union membership in the U.S. Fifty years ago, one of every three American workers was in a union. Now, it's one in eight. That's a key reason why unions today are on the defensive and why we are less able to make progress for ourselves and our families.

Unfortunately the AFL-CIO leadership was not prepared to make the changes needed.

One reason we left is that Change to Win unions think organizing unorganized low-wage workers, like homecare workers used to be, should be the top priority. Other unions in the AFL-CIO didn't agree with this.

We are committed to continue to work with other unions and groups in Oregon to protect what we have won and to fight anti-worker ballot measures. We respect the AFL-CIO's national leadership, and we are committed to working with them toward common goals, despite our differences.

“This is our opportunity to bring union benefits to more unorganized low-wage workers. That's where we used to be. Being a part of SEIU made a big difference in my life and I know it will for others, too.”



Gus Cole
Homecare worker, Astoria

Judith Whitney, of Waldport, wrote this poem and presented it as testimony to the Homecare Commission on June 2, 2005

**Today I have a story to tell
One that may not have been shared
Had things been different or time rearranged
No one would even have cared**

**My health had been excellent
And I thank my lucky star
Cause luck was all I could afford
My new income did not go far**

**Reversal of fortune had left me broke
And changed my life in a flash
With no insurance and getting old
You're likely to burn and crash**

**At my age I was welcomed as a
homecare provider
And so was useful, I found
Although money and perks
were lean and few
The union was gaining ground**

**Two raises were won and workers comp
Changed things forever, too
And in April we were told "You're insured"
All right SEIU**

**The best part though is the end of my tale
In June I suffered a stroke
Two months after the insurance kicked in
Now, was I a darned lucky bloke?**

**The emergency room, the MRI's,
the ultra sound, the pills
All came crashing down on me...
that weight that almost kills
Not the pain, not the hypertension
nor the vision loss, but
The burden of finance we
cannot meet to soothe or save our ills**

**I am so grateful for my outcome,
all those who made it possible, take a bow
ODS paid seventy five percent,
I still had to pay six thou**

Nonprofit
Organization
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No 202
Salem, Oregon

SEIU LOCAL 503
Oregon Public Employees Union
P.O. Box 12159
Salem, OR 97309-0159
Stronger Together
SEIU
LOCAL 503