

# Major Victory for Connecticut Homecare Workers!

**In March, homecare workers celebrated the historic formation of Connecticut Homecare United, the first-ever union for Connecticut's care providers. As a result, they will become a new chapter of the state's largest union of health care workers, District 1199, SEIU.**

SEIU 503 homecare members from Oregon traveled across the country to join this successful campaign to win a voice for Connecticut's home care workers and to ensure quality care for those they serve.

Linda Robles (Central Point) and Paula Brock (Grants Pass), were among the SEIU 503 members who participated in the Connecticut campaign, along with other SEIU members from around the country. In addition to making house visits, phone calls, and rallying to get out the vote, they also testified before the Connecticut legislature. Brock



Oregon homecare workers contributed to the success of the Connecticut campaign.

explained, "We were all there for one reason; to help the homecare workers and their consumers to fight for the right to receive a fair living wage and benefits."

Robles added, "It was very enlightening to hear how our brothers and sisters were being treated by many of the State Lawmakers in Connecticut. Basically, in this day and age, they were still being treated like domestic servants."

By a margin of 1228 to 365, the Connecticut homecare workers voted to join SEIU. The vote, completed by mail-in secret ballot, was the first step toward a voice for quality jobs and quality care for workers there, who have long been disrespected, unheard, and unrepresented.

Though almost all American workers have the right under federal law to vote to form a union and bargain a contract if a majority desires, home care workers have faced years of political hurdles to get to this point and still lacked the right to bargain a contract. Forming the union means that homecare workers in Connecticut will now have the right to



Connecticut homecare workers with the governor.

bargain a contract and have a voice in the state's homecare system.

Was all the hard work worth it? Paula Brock reflected that, "My experience in Connecticut was fantastic. To be on the other side of the country with SEIU members from Washington, California, Illinois, Minnesota, New York and many other states gave me the insight to see just how much of a difference we can make by standing together. We put in long hours, worked 3 weeks straight, and together won them the opportunity to have a voice and be a part of deciding how to make things better. What more can I say? I LOVE SEIU 503, and all my caring brothers and sisters!"

Linda Robles concluded that, "If I had to rate my experience as a union organizer from 1 to 10, I would give it a resounding 10. I felt the strong unity of my brothers and sisters together fighting for the future of homecare workers in Connecticut. This is one of the most important things I have done in my life and I will cherish the memories. Although this was the hardest and most exhausting work that I have ever done, I would do it over and over again!"