



# The Communicator

A Publication for SEIU Local 284 Education Workers Across Minnesota

## SEIU Local 284 Members Talking About What Matters to Education Employees with MN Gubernatorial Candidates

*Included in this issue:*

**Speed Dating with the Gubernatorial Candidates**

**Changes to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

**Political Update**

**Census Time**

**Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!**

Moved? Name change? Make sure and go to [www.seiu284.org](http://www.seiu284.org) and submit your updates.

**SEIU MN State Council**  
[www.seiumn.org](http://www.seiumn.org)

While many were raking leaves and preparing for a MN winter, SEIU Local 284 members from around the state gathered in St Paul for a unique opportunity. Candidates for MN Governor were invited to the Oct 24th SEIU 284 Leadership Assembly. Eight candidates attended and spent time discussing issues important to SEIU 284 members. Issues such as education funding and health care were on the top of the agenda as the candidates moved from table to table to take on questions SEIU members had prepared.

This was a chance to really get to know the candidates a little better and to hear how they would respond to member concerns. This election is very important to us as public employees and SEIU Local 284 members. The next governor will face difficult issues on funding public education. It is critical to our future that we organize our members and work towards electing a governor that will support working people and union members! *(Pictures inside)*

*"I was really pleased to see how genuinely grateful the candidates were to have been invited to participate in our interviews. They were all very responsive to our questions and made me feel at ease in talking with them. It was a great experience and I recommend it to everyone who is interested in learning and participating in our political system." - Bob Cook, Edina Bus Driver* **\*Please mark your calendars and plan on attending precinct caucuses on February 2nd, 2010. Contact your Contract Organizer for more information.**



### The ADA: Hope for Employees with Health

**Conditions** Sarah Huntley, SEIU Local 284 Contract Organizer

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to these individuals. Over the course of time, judges eroded the protections of the ADA. As a result, Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008 (ADA).

Meeting the definition of "disability" is a necessary element for claiming protection under the ADA. Thankfully, the ADA makes major changes in the way "disability" is defined.

The ADA defined, and still defines, a "disability," as a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." One of the crucial changes the ADA brings to the ADA is that it provides a non-exhaustive list of major life activities. This is good news for employees.

The ADA brings hope to employees with health issues. If you are an employee with a health condition, you have resources. You can contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for information. You can also contact your steward who may be able to help you talk to your employer. For advice about your rights, consult your attorney.

For an extended version of this article and more information, go to [www.seiu284.org](http://www.seiu284.org).

**SEIU Local 284 Members Talking About What Matters to Education Employees with MN Gubernatorial Candidates**



Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak



Representative Tom Rukavina

*"It was great to hear the candidates respond to our concerns and how they would address them if elected."  
Kelly Martini, Family Child Care Provider in Stearns County working with SEIU Kids First*



Representative Paul Thissen



State Senator John Marty

*"It was a great day full of positive energy on Saturday, for the gubernatorial candidates and SEIU members alike." - Sara VanAllen, Moundsview Secretary (Pictured in the center below.)*



Former State Senator Steve Kelley

*"Health Care was a major concern among SEIU members as they questioned potential candidates."  
Kathleen Engblom, Milaca Food Service (Right of Kelley)*



Former U.S. Senator Mark Dayton

## SEIU Local 284 Members Talking About What Matters to Education Employees with MN Gubernatorial Candidates



State Senator Tom Bakk



Representative  
Margaret Anderson Kelliher

**Local 284 Election Results:** On Wednesday, November 18, 2009 Keith Niemi, current President of SEIU Local 284 won re-election. The vote tally was 701 for Keith Niemi and 499 for Sandy Ringler. Participation in the mail ballot election was almost double what it had been in the most recent contested election held in 2007. Keith along with the other officers were sworn in at the November 19<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting.

### SEIU ... We Make Politics Work!

#### **Politics Matters!**

*Matt Toburen-SEIU Local 284 Political Organizer*

On Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> there were local elections throughout MN, including school board races and levy questions. In six school districts, members worked on behalf of school board candidates and levies. Members phone banked, mailed post cards, passed out fliers and put up lawn signs in support of SEIU endorsed candidates. We had success in all six! Congratulations to the members of: Anoka, Becker, Mounds View, St. Francis, Big Lake and Monticello.

Your hard work and initiative paid off! School board races are our opportunity to elect our own bosses. We have the power to get good people elected! All it takes is a little effort and we can have a huge impact on who wins these seats. Are you unhappy with your school board? Then let's do something about it!

In MN over 85% of the funding school districts receive comes from the state. SEIU members know that who is elected has a direct impact on their jobs and families. We are currently recruiting members to be part of a team that will help choose who SEIU endorses for Governor. Are you interested in politics? Do you want to be involved in an exciting and rare opportunity to decide the political direction of your union? Contact Matt Toburen at: [matt@local284.com](mailto:matt@local284.com) or at 651-256-9101.

#### **It Is U.S. Census Time...**

*Geri Katz, SEIU MN State Council*

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States, and is required by the Constitution to take place every 10 years. The 2010 Census will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for things like schools (including school lunch programs), hospitals, job training centers, senior centers, bridges, tunnels and other-public works projects and emergency services. The data collected by the census also help determine the number of seats your state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. An inaccurate count could result in Minnesota losing important federal funding, and possibly even losing a congressional seat.

In March of 2010, census forms will be delivered to every residence in the United States and Puerto Rico. When you receive yours, just answer the 10 short questions and then mail the form back in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you don't mail the form back, you may receive a visit from a census taker, who will ask you the questions from the form. Any personal data you provide is protected under federal law. Please return your census form so that Minnesotans are counted!

For more information about the 2010 Census, please visit [www.2010census.gov](http://www.2010census.gov).



# SEIU LOCAL 284

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## Calendar of Events

### LOCAL 284 OFFICERS

Executive Director:	Carol Nieters
President:	Keith Niemi
Vice Presidents:	Paul Wuethrich Sandy Ringler
Trustees:	Brian Dimberg Mark Hanson Marion Conwell
Members at Large:	Val Brott Bob Cook Sue Kreft Mark Krey Valerie Rolstad
Sergeant at Arms:	Mark Bolin
Senior Member:	Vaughan Holmes

The Officers of Local 284 make up the Executive Board. Executive Board meetings are open to all members in good standing. Please contact Union headquarters if you would like to attend.

- Nov 26, 27**      THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY-Office closed
- Dec 3**            Bylaws Committee Meeting 5:00  
Budget and Dues Committee Meeting 6:00  
SEIU 284 Office 450 Southview Blvd So St Paul
- Dec 17**           COPE Committee Meeting 2:00  
SEIU 284 Executive Board Mtg 4:00  
SEIU Local 284 General Member Mtg 6:30  
SEIU 284 Office 450 Southview Blvd So St Paul
- Dec 24,25**        CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY- Office Closed
- Dec 31**            NEW YEARS EVE—Office closed
- Jan 1**              NEW YEARS DAY—Office closed
- Jan 14**            SEIU 284 Executive Board Mtg 4:00  
SEIU Local 284 General Member Mtg 6:30  
SEIU 284 Office 450 Southview Blvd So St Paul
- Feb 2**              Precinct Caucuses
- Feb 10**            SEIU Lobby Day