

LOCAL 284



The Communicator

A publication for SEIU Local 284 Education Workers Across Minnesota

STRONGER TOGETHER

SPRING 2014

We provide a clean, safe, nurturing place for children to learn and grow.

We support teachers, faculty, and families.

We work hard to provide for our families and we give back to our communities.

WE ARE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND WE ARE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO!

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Check us out on the web for more information:

- * Upcoming events
 - * Member Stories
 - And Much More...
- www.seiu284.org



SEIU Lobby Day 2014

On March 20, 2014, SEIU held Lobby Day at the Capitol. Over 200 SEIU members from across Minnesota came together to visit with their Legislators and to ask them to support pro-worker legislation. Members met with their legislators in small groups and asked them to support the School Services Accountability Act, an increase in the minimum wage to 9.50 per hour (with indexing) and the Minnesota Secure Choice Retirement Savings Act. Members felt great to see all the purple and to be able to share their stories with their legislator.



Left to right: Contract Organizer Nic Frey, District 271 Bus Drivers Gary Bergeson, Andy Carcione, District 273 Bus Driver Bob Mallon, and Shaquonica Johnson of Healthcare Minnesota.



Isaiah Campbell speaking out on the School Privatization Act

At one point, while talking with Local 284 Contract Organizer Nic Frey, Gary Bergeson, a bus driver for District 271 was asked, Why did you come to Lobby Day? Gary stated, "To talk to my elected representatives and discuss the issues that are important to me." Nic then asked Gary, What did you enjoy the most about Lobby Day? To this Gary replied, "Coming to the people's house and seeing the elected officials work for us."



Carol Nieters, Executive Director

Economic Justice and Equity - Women's Economic Security Legislative Session 2014

The 2014 legislative session is well underway and both houses are framing the session as, "Women's Economic Security." Our union is supporting the Women's Economic Security Act. You might ask why is our union supporting this Act and why does this matter to our members?

There are a number of very important reasons and here are just a few;

- Our union membership is over 70% female;
- The majority of working people in poverty are women; and lastly
- Over 80% of all people retiring in poverty or living in poverty after retirement are women.

Given the makeup of our union we cannot ignore these issues. We must do everything we can to improve the lives of women in Minnesota while at the same time many of the proposed legislative changes will have a positive impact on all Minnesotans.

These are just some of the bills within the Women's Economic Security Act proposed to close gender disparities women in Minnesota face; expanding pay equity reporting requirements to close the gender pay gap, increasing the minimum wage to \$9.50 (with indexing), expanding family and sick leave for working families, providing paid sick and safe leave, expanding unpaid leave under the Minnesota Parental Leave Act from 6 to 12 weeks, adding pregnancy to the Minnesota Parental Leave Act, adding "family caregiver status" and "familial status" to the list of protected classes for employment purposes, increasing enforcement of existing workplace protections, requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees such as more frequent breaks or transfer to a less strenuous position, enhance protections for victims of violence and allow victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking to use paid leave to obtain services, improve housing protections for victims of violence and expand unemployment insurance eligibility currently available to victims of domestic violence to include victims of stalking and sexual assault, provide incentives within DEED (Department of Employment and Economic Development) workforce development programs to integrate women into high-skill, high-wage, nontraditional jobs, help women-owned small businesses succeed, help older women be economically secure by developing a Minnesota Retirement Savings Plan allowing small private sector employees without an employer-sponsored retirement plan to pool into a state-managed program. The Minnesota Retirement Savings Plan is a bill that all SEIU locals in Minnesota are leading on as well as the minimum wage increase.

These improvements we are working to achieve are in coalition with others in labor and community organizations. These changes will not come easy. We need you to get involved to ensure a brighter future for all Minnesotans. To get involved, contact your contract organizer. For more information on the Women's Economic Security Act please visit our website at www.seiu284.org.

SEIU Advocates for MN Workers

The legislative session is well underway and SEIU members are at the Capitol almost every day advocating for workers. Our priorities this session are:

- **The School Services Accountability Bill** This bill (HF2282/SF1723) establishes criteria under which school districts can enter into private contracts. We are seeing a trend of school districts contracting out private services like bussing, custodial work, and food service. When that happens, taxpayers lose oversight of dollars, communities lose good jobs and relationships between staff and students, and workers lose good wages and benefits. This bill would make schools conduct a Best Value Comparison to determine long-term effects of private contracts. The bill passed the House Education Policy Committee by a 10-9 vote, and has yet to be scheduled in the Senate.
- **The Minnesota Secure Choice Retirement Savings Act** This bill (HF2419/SF2078) would create a retirement savings plan, to give workers without a retirement savings plan through their employer, access to a low-cost, state-managed retirement plan. You can read more about this bill at SEIU Minnesota's website at www.seiumn.org.

We have also signed on in support of the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act and the Health Insurance Transparency and Accountability Bill.—*Maren Hokanson, Political Organizing Director*

Join us for the SEIU Day at the Saints!

Wednesday, June 18, 2014 @ 7:05 PM

\$11 Package includes

- General Admission Ticket
- Hot Dog, Soda Voucher & Saints Hat



ORDER AND PRINT TICKETS

ONLINE AT:

SAINTSGROUPS.com (password: seiu)

Call 651-644-6659

Let's Play Ball!

Local 284 Members Making the Affordable Care Act Work for their Communities

Local 284, along with other unions and organizations, recognize the good that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) does in communities. Therefore, we have embarked on a campaign to support this law that:

- Provides affordable health insurance to millions of Americans,
- Slows down increases in premiums,
- Provides coverage for children up to age 26 and,
- Stops bad health insurance practices such as denying coverage for people with pre-existing health conditions.

We have educated hundreds of members about the benefits of this law, guided bargaining strategy, and signed individuals and families up for health insurance who wouldn't otherwise have it.

Several Local 284 members have played an important part in making this campaign a success. Colleen Nocerini, a cook in West St. Paul helped organize a community event in St. Paul to sign people up for insurance. "I enjoyed calling members for the event because most of them thought it was a great idea for us to participate in activities like this. The members now understand that unions are a way to help the community," said Colleen. In addition to turnout and setup, Colleen also conducted exit interviews of the people who signed up for insurance, saying, "it was so wonderful because all of the people were so happy and thankful to have help with the sign-up process!"

Molly Murphy-Valkar, a paraprofessional in St Michael became a certified MNsure Navigator for this work and helps people sign up for insurance. "There were quite a few people that I helped to get signed up—many had no health coverage at all. Some were widows with low-paying jobs supporting kids on their own" said Molly.

Molly went on to say, "I cannot understand why there are people out there who think it is wrong for the government to want everyone to be covered. This program is very important because it helps almost everyone in the country. As someone who lives with a person with a serious health condition, I've always worried that our insurance company could drop us at any time. This law takes that concern away." She went on to say, "I am really glad I was given this opportunity to work on the ACA. I have a better understanding of how the bill works and why it is so important."

Local 284 organized a health insurance sign-up event in Minneapolis in partnership with the community organization Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC). There were several members who were able to sign up for insurance or schedule time to meet individually with a MNsure Navigator.

James Brown, a food service employee from Minneapolis stated he, "felt blessed by the opportunity to get insurance that was affordable."

Gloria Richardson, also a Minneapolis food service employee said that, "after not having insurance for so long; which led to a large amount in medical bills, she finally has affordable coverage."

As members of a Union we recognize that together we can accomplish great things. The ACA provides an opportunity to make our communities healthier by providing more affordable access to coverage and reigning in insurance company practices that hurt working families. We recognize that quality health care is a right and it shouldn't matter what kind of job you have or where you live; everyone should have access to affordable care and medicine.—Nichols Frey, Contract Organizer/ACA Specialist



Colleen and Molly getting ready to turn people out to a Local 284 health insurance enrollment event.

Mounds View Paraprofessionals Take Action to Win a Better Contract

Mounds View Paraprofessionals attended two school board meetings to hear fellow Paraprofessionals share their personal stories with the Mounds View School Board. These school board actions resulted in the Mounds View Paraprofessionals bargaining, into their contract, addition benefits they had never had previously. These benefits include a district contribution to their Dental and Life Insurances and district paid Long Term Disability Insurance. The new benefits match those that other Mounds View groups have received. In addition, they won a fair pay raise! Sometimes member action is what it takes to get a contract settlement!—Keith Niemi, President



Leadership Assembly—Economic Justice and Equity!

Saturday, April 26, 2014

Fridley Community Center

6085 Seventh St. NE Fridley, MN

9 am—1 pm

Register online at:

<http://284.seiu.org/LA042614>



Ask Yourself These Questions

Why do so few have so much while so many struggle?

Why do we believe this is the best we can do?

Why do we accept so much inequity?

What can we do about it?

What will we do about it?

Now, register at <http://284.seiu.org/LA042614> and together we can come up with strategies to overcome inequity!

LOCAL 284



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If you have an article or suggestion for the newsletter, please contact Andy Running:
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LOCAL 284 OFFICERS

Executive Director:	Carol Nieters
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Sergeant at Arms:	Terri Buttleman
Senior Member:	Ginia Klamecki

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.

Local 284 Meetings

April 24 **Executive Board Mtg:** 3pm (Local 284 Office)

April 26 **Leadership Assembly:** 9am (Saturday)

Fridley Community Center

6085 Seventh St NE, Fridley, MN 55432

May 15 **Executive Board Mtg:** 3pm (Local 284 Office)

June 19 **Executive Board Mtg:** 3pm (Local 284 Office)

July 17 **Executive Board Mtg:** 3pm (Sauk Rapids)

July 17 **General Member Mtg and Picnic:** 5pm (Sauk Rapids)

1001 River Ave N., Sauk Rapids, MN

Change of Address or Phone Number?

Please let us know by contacting our office at (651) 256-9100

Or by emailing Terri at terrib@local284.com