

# **SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 8.5.23**

## **Take Action!**

- Rally and board meeting Tuesday 8/8 at 5:15pm at the PEC
- Membership meeting Saturday 8/12 at noon at SEIU building (525 NE Oregon St.)

## **Union Updates**

### **Rally for Livable Wages and Safe working Conditions August 8**

SEIU 140 is hosting a rally on August 8 at 5:15pm at the PEC in support of our bargaining platform including a living wage as well as safe working conditions. We encourage all members who are not working in the evening to come support us and show the district we stand united for \$25/hr starting wage and safe working conditions free of sexual harassment and retaliation! After the rally we'll attend the board meeting where we will present our bargaining support petition which has majority support of our members. All PPS workers and community members are welcome and food will be provided.

### **Bargaining Update**

The bargaining team met with management July 27th for our 7th bargaining session. We have made all of our proposals, but management has refused to agree to nearly all of them and has only shared a few counter proposals. We spent most of the day focusing on issues related to the grievance procedure, work assignments and transfers, healthcare, and staffing and APPA standards. We did not specifically discuss wages this time because generally management is not willing to come to an agreement on wages until all the other issues have been agreed on. However, we have not changed our wage proposal and still plan to stick to a \$25/hr starting wage for both departments.

Management has not yet responded to our healthcare proposal. We have proposed that the district guarantee that all workers have access to health insurance including part time. We want the district to cover the costs of insurance for any part time worker who is not eligible for OHP. We also pushed to create a substitute pool for custodians to reduce the amount night custodians are transferred around the district. When asked why the district moves custodians Frank explained it is primarily related to "interpersonal issues."

When discussing nutrition service expenses, Whitney claimed that the NS budget is very complicated because it is federally funded and it hasn't relied on money from the general fund since 2004. Last year the district initially offered 8.5% raises for NS workers, but eventually the bargaining team was able to win 19% raises for NS assistants. Whitney claimed this extra money came from COVID related funds, but did not explain why it was not part of the district's initial offer. This year we are still trying to

determine how much money is available for labor costs but we have again not gotten any clear answers from the district.

The bargaining team met with management again on Friday 8/4. We will share more updates next week, but we have still not come to agreement with the district on any of our major proposals yet. We are working on prioritizing our bargaining demands and drafting some updated proposals in response to the district's counter-proposals. We also presented our list of signatures from the bargaining platform petition to show management the majority support we have for our bargaining demands. Now is the time to stand up and fight for the contract we deserve! We hope to see many of you at the rally on Tuesday to put pressure on the district to pay us livable wages and ensure safety and respect on the job.

## **Local Solidarity**

### **Kaiser Workers Picket**

Throughout last week, thousands of SEIU Kaiser service workers picketed across [50 healthcare facilities](#) nationally, including those represented by SEIU Local 49 in the [Portland area](#). The picket was a show of force for their ongoing bargaining campaign to address the pervasive understaffing and cost of living crisis, with their contract having expired as of June 30th. Though Kaiser is a “non-profit,” it is clear the organization remains highly inequitable with an entry level cafeteria aide starting at \$19/hr, in contrast to their CEO Gregory Adams who alone made a \$17 million salary in 2020: something only possible off the backs of said actual workers, who are the ones made to face economic insecurity. On August 1st, Local 49 put out a national [proposal summary](#), which includes a \$25 minimum wage and fights against Kaiser's attempts to roll back benefits. Kaiser has so far refused to give any counter-proposals to these demands, much like we saw at Local 140 when we presented our initial proposals. Local 49 is soon holding a strike pledge & subsequent vote, with a potential strike aimed for October.

### **Powell's Books Workers Vote to Authorize Strike**

Powell's Books workers in ILWU Local 5 have voted to [authorize](#) a strike, with 92% of those who voted casting their ballot in favor of a work stoppage. They clarified that they are not asking people to boycott the company at the moment, but that this is an indication that they are serious about what they are asking for as they continue bargaining. Workers have stated that management's meager offers on pay so far have been greatly insufficient and that many of them are struggling to make ends meet. Apparently the pay of many of the workers in their stores tops out at around \$19 an hour, the starting pay for custodial positions at PPS. It's important to clarify that workers are not imminently going on strike, but rather that a strike authorization means that a strike can be called if needed. You can support their strike fund [here](#).

## **International Solidarity**

### **Hundreds Protest APEC in Seattle**

Hundreds of people from labor, human rights, anti-war, and environmental organizations gathered last weekend in Seattle to oppose the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum which kicked off on July 29th. While trade ministers and corporate lobbyists met behind closed doors to discuss secretive new free trade agreements, the PNW People Over Profit coalition organized a weekend full of workshops, speakers, and a march to expose the false solution which APEC proposes to address poverty, inequality, and climate crisis. In fact, in the over 3 decades in which APEC has been in existence, all of these issues have only gotten worse, while the major corporations sponsoring these talks including Boeing, Microsoft, and Amazon have continued to rake in billions in profit at the expense of workers and the environment.

At the People's Summit against APEC on Saturday, participants learned about the human cost of free trade from keynote speaker, [International Migrants Alliance](#) chairperson Eni Lestari. An Indonesian migrant worker living in Hong Kong, Lestari has [spoken before the UN](#) advocating for the rights of the millions of people displaced, trafficked, and forced to migrate to escape poverty, lack of jobs, and economic crisis. She exposed how free trade policy, which APEC promotes, creates the conditions which force people to flee their homelands in search of better opportunities, only to be further exploited as cheap labor in countries where they are vulnerable to deportation, state violence, human trafficking and slavery. She reiterated the importance of building grassroots organizations to stand up against corporate globalization and demand that the rights of workers, migrants, and women are upheld.

On Sunday, hundreds rallied at Cal Anderson park before marching to the Seattle Convention Center, where APEC's senior finance officials were meeting. Despite APEC's 2023 theme "creating a resilient and sustainable future for all," the public was not invited nor were they welcome inside where decisions were being made which will impact billions of people worldwide. When the march arrived, APEC officials largely hid inside, and a few peered down from the roof as protestors chanted "No to APEC!" and demanded that officials come out to hear the voices of the people. The Washington Fair Trade Coalition even tried to deliver over 10,000 signatures demanding that APEC allow for more input from workers and the public. However, their petition was not received. Undeterred, protestors occupied the street in front of the main entrance and multiple speakers raised the issues of the millions of women, migrants, and workers worldwide who are excluded from these talks, yet will be seriously affected by them.

### **Teamsters Reach Tentative Agreement, Averting Strike**

Teamsters UPS workers reached a tentative [agreement](#) that has been endorsed by nearly all of the locals, and all rank and file members will get the chance to vote on it going into August. The deal includes raises for full-time and part-time workers, and the union notes that this makes their drivers the highest paid delivery personnel in the US. This shows the strengths of unions as comparable positions with

FedEx or Amazon pay far less. All new vehicles purchased starting next year will be required to have improved AC and ventilation systems, and this has been a serious safety concern for drivers in the summer especially in the hotter parts of the country. This is an excellent example about how well organized workers can use the threat of a strike to force corporations to make concessions.

## **July Hottest Month Ever Recorded**

July was the hottest month ever [recorded](#), with a major heat dome event in the Southwest pushing temps to dangerous levels day after day. Although Oregon has some OSHA protections for workers during hot conditions, many employers such as PPS don't follow them. They include creating a plan to monitor temperatures when they are over a certain threshold and also creating a plan to take care of workers in the event that certain thresholds are reached. All they've bothered to do so far this summer is send out the usual emails about opening the windows in the mornings, shutting blinds, and distributing a token cooling towel to each custodian. Heat protections are necessary for all workers but are particularly vital for farmworkers and other outdoor workers who also deal with wildfire smoke. As the climate crisis grows worse it will be up to grassroots movements including the self-organized working class to form networks of solidarity and mutual aid.