

## **SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 9.1.23**

### **Take Action!**

- Attend the next school board meeting Tuesday, 9/5 at 6pm at the district building
- Next membership meeting will be Saturday 9/9 at noon, at McDaniel HS (2735 NE 82nd Ave)
- Sign our email [petition](#) to the school board and share with family, friends and community members! Send a message asking the school board to prioritize safe and healthy schools over administrative positions.

### **Union Updates**

#### **How Does a New Contract Get Ratified?**

It is easy to feel out of touch with the bargaining process if you are not a member of the bargaining team and have not been able to attend any bargaining session in person. However, it is up to all of us to ensure that we win a fair contract for all our members. We are still very far apart from the district in terms of our bargaining proposals which means it is unlikely for us to reach an agreement soon. Stay tuned for upcoming actions to increase pressure on the district and amplify our demands for living wages and safe and respectful working conditions.

If the district refuses to make any reasonable offers to our proposals within the 150 days period since bargaining began in June, we have the opportunity to ask for mediation from the state. If this is also unsuccessful, we can decide whether a strike would be necessary. In order to strike, we would first hold a strike vote for all members to weigh in. We would only go on strike if a very high majority of our members vote to approve a strike.

When the bargaining team and district finally reach a tentative agreement on a new contract, either before, or as a result of a strike, it is then up to all the members to approve the agreement. All members will have the opportunity to vote to approve the tentative agreement. If it is approved, it is immediately adopted as our new contract. However, if it is not approved by members, then negotiations will continue to work toward a better agreement.

#### **Help Us Design a T-shirt for our Union!**

Our local's executive team is interested in creating unique t-shirts for SEIU Sub-local 140 which includes nutrition service workers and custodians at PPS. Although we are part of the larger Local 503 which includes thousands of home care and state workers from around Oregon, we feel it is important to come up with a recognizable logo/design just for us.

If you have ideas and would like to help us design a t-shirt for our sub-local, please reach out to Gabe at [gabepenk@gmail.com](mailto:gabepenk@gmail.com) or respond to the newsletter email. In the meantime, we intend to purchase more purple SEIU 503 shirts so that everyone has a union shirt for board meetings and other actions.

## **Local News and Solidarity**

### **Kotek's Central City Task Force Dominated by Business Interests**

Governor Tina Kotek has convened a [task force](#) focused on “revitalizing” downtown Portland that recently held its first meeting. Chaired by Kotek and CEO of The Standard insurance company Dan McMillan, the committee includes politicians, business executives and a handful of nonprofit leaders.

The first meeting apparently focused on some key challenges that have faced Oregon's largest city and that have been present in other cities around the US, such as drug addiction, mental health crises in public spaces and homelessness. There will be five subcommittees addressing downtown property values, livability, housing and homelessness, so-called community safety and taxes. Yes, you read that correctly. Two of the main focuses are property values and taxes, perennial poster children for the wealthy and corporations who insist that we all will benefit if their riches increase. “Livability” is a thinly veiled way of discussing the very real crisis of homelessness, albeit in a way that likely views those who are living on the streets as more of an eyesore than a symptom of an economic system that places profits above human needs. Housing has been a large agenda of Kotek, but it's [questionable](#) whether a shortage of housing units is the real issue. “Community safety” likely means more police, despite a lack of sociological evidence showing that the police reduce or prevent crime. Speaking of so-called safety, Mayor Wheeler has requested 96 Oregon State Police officers be deployed to Portland to assist the Portland Police Bureau with their work.

Of the [list](#) of members on the city task force, 12 are elected officials, 24 represent businesses or trade groups and 11 members are in the nonprofit sector. Some of the corporate interests include Schwabe, a large corporate law firm, as well as TMT which is a major development company. There are no members representing labor or working class people directly affected by poverty, homelessness, and failing social services. The body is unelected and its meetings [exclude the media and the public](#). Can we expect the recommendations of this committee to reflect the needs and desires of marginalized people in this city, or those who are struggling to make ends meet? Can we expect it to address the climate crisis or address ever-widening economic inequality, especially among Black, indigenous, and migrant residents? It remains to be seen what the task force will end up doing, so look for updates as we all learn more about what priorities they pursue for our city.

## **Camas Teachers on Strike**

[Camas teachers](#) are on strike, having failed to come to an agreement in bargaining with the Camas School District. Workers are [on strike](#) over issues of pay, class sizes, and funding for programs like music and physical education. Similar to PPS, the Camas School District is arguing that it doesn't have the funds and that it can't dip into the general fund reserves which it hopes to keep near 8% of the general fund.

Instead of meeting the union's demands for raises that keep up with inflation, the Camas School Board voted to declare the strike illegal and authorize legal action to end the strike. Still, teachers and the community continue to show up on the picket line and fight for better working and learning conditions. Educators at Evergreen School District in Vancouver Washington are also on strike and teachers in Battleground could soon be on strike as well. Teachers at Portland Public Schools are currently in mediation with the district, but could potentially strike later this fall.

## **OHSU Proposes \$1 Billion Merger with Legacy Health**

Just one week after the Oregon Nurses Association [declared an impasse](#) in bargaining with OHSU, the massive healthcare provider committed over \$1 billion to [merge with Legacy Health](#). This merger would make OHSU the largest single employer in the Portland metro area and would further limit consumer choice and competition in the healthcare industry. Mergers like this only serve to further consolidate power for massive companies, while the needs of workers are neglected for the sake of profit. Although OHSU is technically a public institution and receives [funding from the taxpayers](#), its president [Danny Jacobs](#) made over \$1.6 million in 2018. As OHSU monopolizes more of the healthcare industry in the region, it will continue to prioritize profit over our right to affordable and high quality healthcare.