

SEIU LOCAL 140

OCTOBER 9TH 2023 NEWSLETTER



TAKE ACTION!

Union rally at the next school board meeting, Tuesday 10/10 5pm at the district building

SEIU membership meeting Saturday 10/14 at noon Llewellyn Elementary (6301 SE 14th Ave) or on Zoom:

<https://seiu503-org.zoom.us/j/88398195941?pwd=OHg4U2tVNxE3ZmxmUFpHZ0ptWVICQT09>

UNION UPDATES

Coalition Rally - October 10

There will be a union coalition rally and practice picket at the next school board meeting with members of PAT, PFSP, SEIU, DCU as well as community members and supporters. We will begin with a practice picket holding signs and chanting as we demonstrate our solidarity with all PPS workers fighting for better wages and working conditions in order to ensure a quality education for all Portland students. The rally will include speakers from all the unions and will have an area for kids as well. After the rally, many will be sticking around

to go attend the board meeting at 6pm. SEIU will also launch a strike pledge at the rally. This is an opportunity to assess our readiness to strike if the district fails to offer a meaningful contract. A strike pledge does not mean we are necessarily going on strike. It is simply a way to show our readiness to take action and our commitment to winning a strong contract. If you are unable to attend the rally, look for an email with a link to sign our strike pledge online!

February Snowstorm Reimbursements



In March we filed a grievance against the district for failing to pay disaster pay to custodians who worked during February's state of emergency. Although the district has rejected the main issue of hazard pay, the district has offered partial compensation for damages due traveling in hazardous conditions. Please fill out [this survey](#) so we can respond to the district with an accurate estimate of the costs we deserve to get reimbursed for (taxi/uber rides, car damages, towing/medical expenses, etc.)

Bargaining Update 10/3

The bargaining team made a counter proposal on Article 17: Leaves which includes better language for quarantine/isolation pay. Although the district rejected our initial proposal, we countered with language which the district had agreed to for PFSP in their tentative agreement, which as a whole was recently rejected by members. During a separate discussion about employee evaluations, Frank Leavitt claimed that high schools are often “overstaffed” so that they can pull people for other schools.

We withdrew our proposals on Article 9 regarding midterm bargaining rights since under state law we have the right to bargain if the district makes a change to a policy which impacts a “mandatory subject of bargaining” midway through the life of our contract. We also withdrew a proposal on Article 11 to shorten the probationary period for NS workers (the probationary period for custodians is set by Custodial Civil Service Law which overrides the contract.) We decided to drop these two proposals in order to focus our attention on our most important priorities including wages.

We have three more days of scheduled bargaining this month. The district has indicated that they would like to settle our contract by the end of the month. We are hopeful that this means they are interested in bringing meaningful offers to the table. However, if we are unable to reach an agreeable settlement by the end of the month, we will have the option to enter into mediation in early November. This would put us on track for a possible strike in early January if negotiations are unsuccessful. In the meantime, we must continue putting pressure on the district and demonstrating our unity and strength.

Check Your Sick Leave!

Numerous employees have found that their sick leave was not replenished on July 1st as is agreed to in the contract. All employees who have completed one full year with the district are supposed to receive a year’s worth of sick leave in advance every year on July 1st. For full-time 12 month employees, this should be 96 hours. For the district to fail to provide us with our contractually agreed upon sick leave could be considered wage theft. It is important to check your pay stubs to make sure you are receiving the appropriate number of hours of PTO. If you believe you are missing hours you should reach out to a union rep and also email Marina Vlasenko in payroll services at mvlasenk@pps.net.

LOCAL SOLIDARITY

SEIU 49 Workers at Kaiser on National Strike

The newsletter team joined SEIU 49 workers at the Kaiser Sunnyside location for their unfair labor practices [strike](#) that lasted for three days from October 4th to October 6th. Workers at the healthcare giant have described short-staffing that has impacted care as well as lackluster pay while executives have received lavish paychecks. The picket line was filled with people chanting and holding signs while waving to passing drivers, many of whom honked or waved in support. At one point workers walked back and forth in classic picket line fashion. The strike is part of a national walk out of healthcare workers in what is the largest such strike in US history. If Kaiser continues to deny workers their basic demands, workers are preparing for a potential two-week strike later in the month.

UAW Strike Continues, Electric Cars a False Solution?

UAW President Shawn Fain announced on Friday that the union was beginning to win some [concessions](#) from automakers including General Motors who announced that all of their battery manufacturing plants for electrical vehicles would be unionized going forward. The union also reported some progress in wage demands. The UAW demands of a 32 hour work week is a concept that more have been discussing in the context of income inequality. As we are asking for higher wages and more benefits, we should also be asking for more of our time back from those to whom we've been forced to sell it to for a wage. Our productivity consistently [continues to increase](#), yet we are still made to work the same hours and for stagnant wages. We could surely meet the needs of everyone and live in a healthy, thriving society working less than 32 hours each week even, but moving to a four day work week is a step in the right direction.

Although Fain and many others have pitched electric vehicles as a solution to the climate crisis, some have criticized electric vehicles as a form of [greenwashing](#) that don't fully solve many of the problems of internal combustion engine vehicles such as noise pollution, pollution from tires that can have [effects](#) on aquatic life and other concerns including auto-centered design of cities. As a privatized means of transportation, cars are never going to be as accessible a means of getting around as transit or bicycling. To connect this with the environmental impacts of cars, the same means of transportation that requires long hours toiling in factories is also cooking our planet and killing salmon. While those who have jobs at car corporations have immediate needs that this strike will address, let's also not forget to seek common ways of living and relating to the earth that imagine a world beyond these corporations and their products.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

KMU Labor Organizer Murdered by Philippine National Police

A few weeks ago, several members from Local 140 and other Portland unions had the chance to meet with labor leader Elmer “Ka Bong” Labog, chairperson of Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), a prominent grassroots labor organization in the Philippines. Ka Bong had been touring throughout the US to link with unions here, and especially to discuss the escalating state repression against labor, which the US government funds through billions in military aid to the Philippines. Just about a week after that meeting, on September 29th, the Philippine National Police (PNP) extrajudicially murdered Jude Fernandez in a disgusting attack, who is another organizer in KMU and had been a labor activist for decades. This makes Fernandez the **4th labor-related killing this year, and the 72nd since 2016**. The persistent terrorism of the state is a gross attempt to dissuade even the most basic organizing of working people amid a cost of living crisis, further defunding of public services, deadly climate catastrophes, and overall exploitation of their labor and land for the profit of multinational corporations. As said in the [KMU condemnation](#), “ultimately, the attacks against organizers and unionists are attacks on the legitimate campaigns of the workers and the people for wage increases, regular jobs, freedom to unionize and other people’s rights.”



KMU protestors in front of the Philippine National Police National Headquarters, Quezon City