

SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 4.12.24

Take Action!

- Membership meeting this Saturday 4/13 at noon at SEIU (525 NE Oregon St) or on [zoom](#)
- Stand with workers in the Philippines and sign this [letter](#) to condemn the Marcos-Biden visit
- Read our current contract [here](#)

Union Updates

General Council Resolutions

At our membership meeting this Saturday we will be deciding whether to endorse bringing the resolutions to SEIU 503 general council in August. You can read the proposed resolution to support workers rights in the Philippines [here](#). Another resolution to support disability rights is still being finalized. If these resolutions are passed, they will be voted on in August by delegates from SEIU 503 sublocals across the state at the general council. Our Local 140 delegates are our newly elected co-chairs Jim D’Arcy and Chris Walters as well as elected delegates Anya Cruz and Gabe Penk.

Local Solidarity

April 2 School Board Meeting

Students and workers mobilized to the April 2 board meeting to protest budget cuts, a proposal to establish Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and the district’s continued silence on the genocide in Palestine. A member of the organization Students for Justice in Palestine [reiterated student demands](#) that PPS provide education on the history of Palestine, issue a statement to condemn the ongoing genocide, and divest from SHI International and all companies profiting off the Israeli occupation of Palestine. She also protested the board’s proposal to put military training in PPS high schools.

Audience members also held signs saying “No JROTC” and “JROTC is about indoctrination, not education!” Board Vice-Chair Herman Greene has been a vocal advocate of the program. He got [noticeably upset](#) when audience members voiced their disapproval of the proposal and threatened to move the meeting elsewhere. He went on to claim that “opinions are like underwear...I don’t care about your opinion!”

Students also [spoke out about](#) the proposed staffing cuts to library assistants, adaptive PE teachers and other special education support staff. Union members and supporters [rallied](#) outside before the meeting to oppose the staffing cuts that will negatively impact students with some of the highest needs in the district. PAT president [Angela Bonilla](#) also showed the pattern of cuts to direct student-facing positions and pushed back on the idea that these cuts are a result of the teacher strike. Despite her clear evidence, Andrew Scott accused her of spreading misinformation.

Sexual Assault at PPS

It recently came to light that the parent of an 11-year old child are [suing](#) PPS, a nonprofit group that runs an after school program, and Multnomah County for \$9 million for negligence and abuse after the child was assaulted by fellow students when she was 9. The lawsuit alleges that the girl was the victim of unwanted sexual advances prior to being sexually assaulted in a bathroom at Scott Elementary School during an after school program run by the nonprofit Latino Network. At one point prior to the assault, she was suspended for defending herself from a classmate forcibly kissing her. The [suit](#) alleges that district staff undertook an internal investigation but failed to tell the girl's parents or police about the incident, while also stating that the district and nonprofit failed to implement protocols and training for staff and students aimed at preventing sexual harassment, assault and abuse. This lawsuit is only the latest in a series of revelations that unfortunately PPS has failed to protect students and workers from harassment and other harms.

Last summer, custodian Malak Elkher [quit](#) during a board meeting, describing her experiences being harassed by other workers as well as management and how these concerns weren't dealt with appropriately by HR. Last fall, our union coalition [spoke](#) at a board meeting highlighting a series of demands of the district and school board to address the ongoing sexual harassment and toxic work environments at PPS. This toxic work environment also includes health and safety concerns like the mold issues at [Creston](#). PPS has repeatedly claimed that they take all instances of harassment seriously, but a pattern has emerged with workers at different sites and in different departments citing similar instances of harassment being ignored or mishandled. It's up to us as workers and for the broader community as well to come together and hold the district and school board accountable for their actions and to make our schools a safe and healthy place for students and workers alike.

International Solidarity

Organize Against Military Build-Up in the Pacific!

On Thursday, President Biden met with Ferdinand Marcos Jr of the Philippines and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan in order to bolster the military and economic ties between the three countries. Activists around the country protested Marcos Jr's arrival in the US and condemned his fascist crimes against the Filipino people. Organizations like the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines are demanding an end to US-backed war crimes in the Philippines, including the ongoing [indiscriminate aerial bombings](#) terrorizing and displacing peasant communities. Labor organizations are also encouraged to sign this [letter](#) condemning the visit with Marcos for his anti-worker policies and violent repression of workers' rights to organize. Despite this, Biden referred to Marcos as a "good friend" and referred to the "special friendship" between the US and the Philippines.

While people in the US suffer from low wages, underfunded schools, failing infrastructure, inaccessible medical care and a housing crisis, the US government spends [billions](#) on its military as well as sending military aid to countries like Israel and the Philippines. The US is also preparing to host the massive Rim of the Pacific war games or RIMPAC this summer which are the world's largest naval exercises and will include forces from at least 26 other countries including Israel. As tensions between the US and China escalate, workers of all countries will be the ones who suffer the most while weapons corporations like [Boeing](#) will continue to profit. As seen by recent actions to oppose JROTC, even our public schools are targets for increased militarization. It is becoming clear that workers have an important role to play in the movement to oppose US militarization and wars of aggression.