



Bylaws (BL #4)

1 **Subject:** Rank and File Bill of Rights

2 **Authored by:** Ann Montague

3 **Submitted by:** Retiree Local 001

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5 **WHEREAS**, an empowered rank and file makes us a stronger union

6 **WHEREAS**, we want our members engaged with community, nation and global working
7 class struggles

8 **WHEREAS**, becoming a union member is an identity that is carried with individuals
9 both inside and outside the union’s organizational structure

10 **WHEREAS**, the rank and file bill of rights are already codified in the U.S. Constitution.
11 It may be that no member has been sanctioned for accessing those rights. However, there
12 has been some confusion coming from staff and member leaders about rank and file
13 member rights outside of the union governance. A few examples:

14 1. A member of the Board of Directors questioned if a particular union member should be
15 allowed to write an article for “Labor Notes” about rank and file organizing by 503
16 members. (It was immediately made clear that members do have that right).

17 2. A former union attorney implemented a requirement for elected Board of Directors
18 members to sign a “loyalty oath”. In the 1980’s the U.S. Supreme Court said loyalty
19 oaths are a “political test” and violate free speech rights and the right of association. They
20 are a vestige of McCarthy era witch hunts. (After members questioned him, the attorney
21 eventually responded and said it was a “clerical” mistake as they had an out of date
22 template).

23 3. A 503 committee made up of member leaders and staff discussed concerns about a
24 member working with community members to develop educational opportunities to better
25 understand minority community issues.

26 4. When Ralph Nader was running for President with the Green Party there was a mass
27 rally to support him in Portland the evening of General Council. A member leader of
28 CAPE addressed the delegates the day before saying no member who attends the rally
29 can wear an SEIU shirt because SEIU was not endorsing him for president.
30 (Members ignored the mandate and laughed it off).

31 **WHEREAS**, this resolution only applies to SEIU 503, it is a cautionary note that the
32 Connecticut State Council of the Service Employees International Union forced the
33 resignation of its Executive Director, Kooper Caraway because of his speech at a march
34 and rally in support of Palestinians.

35 **Be It Resolved**, that every new member and every new staff person receive a copy of the
36 Rank and File Bill of Rights

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38 **Be It Further Resolved**,

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Rank and File Bill of Rights

40 SEIU 503 welcomes you as a member of our Union. We encourage you to learn about the
41 organizational structure of our Union and think about participating in your workplace and
42 in the larger Union.

43 We also encourage you to engage in activities outside the governing body of SEIU.

44 In your local community, state and nation there is an uprising of working class struggles.
45 We encourage our members to work with other unions, coalitions and movements to
46 advance civil and human rights as well as the economic issues that affect us all.
47 We also encourage involvement in global solidarity activities where workers are
48 struggling around the world.
49 We are all protected by the same Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution.
50 Freedom of Association. "The right of individuals to interact and organize themselves to
51 collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests."
52 The freedom of assembly, rally, picket, march including the time-honored right to use
53 civil disobedience.
54 Freedom of religion, expression, speech. Freedom to publish
55 As a union we believe in collective action, we also believe every individual has the right
56 to decide the issues and movements they want to build to make this a better world for all
57 of us.

IMPACT STATEMENTS

Financial: This could be incorporated into current program and there would be no impact.

Equity: Potential negative impact as we already have a Bill of Rights in Bylaws and could cause confusion.

Legal: Possible negative impact due to confusion between the existing "Bill of Rights" in the Union's Bylaws and this new "Bill of Rights," which concerns rights that are not specific to Union members. The Legal Department strongly recommends (at minimum) changing the name of the proposed document to avoid confusion with the Union's existing Bill of Rights.

Political: No impact