



2024 Committee Recommendations:  
Do Pass \_\_\_\_\_ Pass as Amended \_\_\_\_\_  
Do Not Pass \_\_\_\_\_ Held in Committee \_\_\_\_\_

1 **Subject:** Increasing the capacity of our stewards to advocate for members experiencing  
2 workplace discrimination  
3 **Authored by:** Angela Jelley, Emily Wang, Fox Blackhorn, Gina Esqueda, Ivonne  
4 Rivero, Paula Pena, Theo Ko-Thompson, Nannette “D” Carter-Jafri, Thuy Huyen, Leann  
5 Ivers, Civil and Human Rights Committee  
6 **Submitted by:** Board of Directors  
7

8 **WHEREAS,** Every worker deserves a workplace that is free from discrimination and  
9 harassment.

10 **WHEREAS,** Many members from across our union, who belong to historically  
11 marginalized communities, currently face workplace discrimination and/or harassment.

12 **WHEREAS,** As a Union, we have a legal, ethical, and organizational obligation to  
13 represent all members fairly and equitably.

14 **WHEREAS,** Since some of our stewards do not have the training, tools, or capacity to  
15 support members facing workplace discrimination and/or harassment.  
16

17 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF SEIU LOCAL 503 OPEU**  
18 that SEIU Local 503 is committed to a union-wide effort to increase the ability of our  
19 stewards to support members experiencing workplace discrimination by providing and  
20 mandating equity and inclusion training, education, and ongoing support for all stewards.  
21 These support systems will provide stewards with equity and inclusion skills  
22 development for representing members facing workplace discrimination and harassment,  
23 ADA accommodation advocacy tools, training on enforcement of our Code of Conduct in  
24 union spaces and events, and would be available online in multiple languages.  
25

26 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF SEIU LOCAL 503 OPEU**  
27 that SEIU Local 503 commits to bargaining stronger, enforceable, anti-discrimination and  
28 harassment language in all of our contracts.  
29

30 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF SEIU LOCAL**  
31 **503 OPEU:** that SEIU Local 503 is committed to investing resources in recruiting and  
32 retaining stewards from historically marginalized and oppressed communities, members  
33 who speak languages other than English, or are bilingual, and members from other  
34 demographics or communities currently underrepresented in our union, such as young  
35 workers.

**IMPACT STATEMENTS**

**Financial:** This would be incorporated into our current steward program, so there would not be a financial impact.

**Equity:** The implementation of comprehensive equity and inclusion training for all stewards, as proposed by SEIU Local 503’s Civil and Human Rights Committee, will significantly enhance our union’s capacity to advocate for members facing workplace

discrimination and harassment. By mandating education and ongoing support, we ensure that all stewards are well-equipped with the necessary skills to represent and support marginalized members effectively. This resolution promotes a culture of inclusivity and fairness, directly addressing the needs of historically marginalized communities within our union. Additionally, by investing in the recruitment and retention of stewards from diverse backgrounds, including bilingual members and those from underrepresented demographics, we foster a more representative leadership that reflects our membership's diversity.

**Legal:** The legal impacts of this resolution depend on how it is implemented. Providing specific training to stewards on workplace discrimination issues is important to provide better representation to workers. It is also important that training provide guidance to navigate the role of a steward and potential ramifications if stewards offer legal advice as non-lawyers concerning non-contractual employment law claims to avoid liability for the steward or the union. Training can help stewards direct employees to resources and to help collect information through the Union's ability to request information which may aid employees in pursuing their own employment claims. Training can also help stewards to warn employees of short time frames to file a BOLI complaint or tort claim notice so they can promptly obtain legal advice. Training can also help stewards to identify bias in investigations, strengthening their representation of workers through the investigatory and grievance process. Regarding the commitment to bargaining stronger, enforceable anti-discrimination and harassment language in our contracts, the Union must take significant care in bargaining language to ensure that statutory claims are not required to be arbitrated or that arbitration results in "issue preclusion," where the facts found by an arbitrator could be binding on litigation over the same issues. Employers actually prefer arbitrating employment claims over litigating them in court because the remedies in arbitration are less than the damages available through a lawsuit and there is a substantial risk that employers could take advantage of the Union proposing to arbitrate anti-discrimination grievances to the detriment of employees. Arbitrators are also independent contractors with no guaranteed flow of income and the lack of diversity in labor arbitrators is a recognized problem by unions and even some employers. Any contract language proposed by the Union or the Employer concerning arbitration of discrimination, accommodation, or harassment should be reviewed by the Union's Legal Department to avoid the potential to undermine worker's claims under the law or creating liability for the Union for doing so. In summary, this resolution should be supported, provided it is implemented with consideration for the issues outlined above with consultation from Legal.

**Political:** No impact