Member Affairs #2

Subject: General Strike

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Submitted by: Local 200

WHEREAS, workers across Oregon and the country are facing attacks on wages, benefits, working conditions, and the right to organize, while corporate profits soar and economic inequality continues to widen; and

WHEREAS, the right to strike is a fundamental tool for workers to demand fair wages, safe working conditions, and dignity on the job, yet many public sector workers in Oregon and across the U.S. remain subject to restrictive no-strike laws; and

WHEREAS, our locals and unions across the country have won historic victories in recent years, demonstrating the power of worker solidarity in securing fair contracts, better working conditions, and stronger labor protections; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement is experiencing a resurgence in public support, with 71% of Americans and 88% of young workers expressing favorable views of unions, providing an opportunity to grow and strengthen worker power; and

WHEREAS, organized labor must expand its capacity for coordinated action, including aligning contract expirations, increasing strike readiness, and fostering cross-sector and community solidarity to maximize economic and political influence; and

WHEREAS, major unions, including the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), have taken steps toward aligning contract expirations for May 1, International Workers' Day, with the goal of increasing worker power and the potential for a mass strike; and

WHEREAS, Oregon's labor movement has a unique opportunity to lead in building cross-sector solidarity and preparing for mass collective action to fight for not just stronger worker protections and fair contracts, but broader societal change including universal healthcare, childcare for all, fully funded education from cradle to career, and a more just economy; and

WHEREAS, the strength of the labor movement lies in our ability to organize, educate, and mobilize members to take bold, strategic action in the fight for economic, racial, and social justice;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that SEIU 503 supports efforts to build the organizing capacity necessary for a general strike, including leadership development, strike preparation, and cross-union collaboration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that SEIU 503 will coordinate with labor allies across the state to explore aligning contract expirations, where possible, to increase collective bargaining power and create opportunities for unified action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that SEIU 503 will work to repeal no-strike laws that limit the ability of public sector workers to fully exercise their rights to collective action and solidarity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that SEIU 503 will commit to supporting affiliated locals and the broader labor movement in organizing, bargaining, and engaging in direct action—including strikes—when necessary to secure just and equitable contracts; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that SEIU 503 will call on the Service Employees International Union, Oregon AFL-CIO, and allied unions to stand in solidarity with efforts to build toward mass coordinated action, ensuring that the labor movement remains a powerful force for justice, democracy, and economic equality.

IMPACT STATEMENTS

Financial: No fiscal impact

Equity: This resolution disproportionately advantages public sector workers and is inequitable in its focus on public sector rights only. The homecare sector does not have strikeable units and could not benefit fully from the implementation of this plan.

Legal: While many of the activities described in the resolution, such as member education, leadership development, legislative advocacy, and collaboration with other unions, are generally protected and appropriate union activities, we note some legal, operational, and resource implications associated with implementing some of the strategies contemplated by the resolution. There are state and federal restrictions on strikes that require specific procedures, prohibit certain conduct, and prohibit certain employees from striking altogether. Many collective bargaining agreements also contain no-strike provisions that restrict or waive strike rights during the life of the agreement. The resolution's references to a "general strike," would require coordinated actions across multiple bargaining units, employers, and jurisdictions. To ensure that any strike preparation, coordinated bargaining effort, or solidarity action is conducted in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal labor laws and the terms of individual collective bargaining agreements, the Union would need to carefully evaluate actions on a unit-by-unit basis and maintain ongoing legal review.

Political: This resolution would require the union to advocate to "repeal no-strike laws that limit the ability of public sector workers to fully exercise their rights to collective action and solidarity." Some work would be needed to define which laws the resolution refers to, and to clarify whether it's intended to extend to homecare and personal support workers, who are not classified as public sector workers and are currently non-strikable. It's also worth noting that there are multiple classifications of public sector workers — within SEIU and within other unions — who are non-strikable, including firefighters,

certain local government workers, corrections employees, and employees at the Oregon State Hospital. A campaign like this would require coordination with other labor unions, including the AFL-CIO, and could require significant resources to achieve the desired policy changes.