

# SEIU Local 620

## “AROUND THE LOCAL”

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BY WALTER C. HAMILTON

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Local 620



Stronger Together

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Please Post

### Local 620 Executive Board Votes to Oppose Proposed County Split

The elected officers of SEIU, Local 620 reviewed the proposal to split Santa Barbara County in two by creating a new County called Los Padres County at their meeting Saturday, March 23, 2002.

For those members who may not have heard, a group of north county residents calling themselves "Citizen's for County Organization, Inc." (CFCO Inc.) have incorporated themselves and, are studying whether or not to pursue splitting Santa Barbara County into two counties using a little known legal mechanism started by a hearing and followed by petitions.

Local 620's Executive Board of Directors reviewed "CFCO Inc.'s" "Informational Brochure" and a County Counsel Memorandum outlining the legal issues involved in the proposal before making their decision to oppose this effort. Our officers also noted that no county split has occurred in California in modern times and, the last time this was proposed in Santa Barbara County in 1978, the voters defeated the measure.

Local 620's Executive Board then examined some of the obvious issues, most likely to affect represented union members including, but not limited to: projected funding for the new county; representation of employees in the new county; likelihood of layoffs & legal issues surrounding layoff procedures; impacts from layoffs; potential for salary & benefit structure changes and the potential for increased contracting out, downsizing, etc.

"CFCO Inc." has served an initial notice of their intent and, held a sparsely attended public hearing in Santa Maria on February 21<sup>st</sup>. They are now free to pursue the next step, which is gathering signatures on a petition.

Our Officers and I harbor a great deal of skepticism about the true aims of this group. One of their colleagues was quoted in the newspaper recently as saying that they (north county interests) would get their way one way or another and specifically mentioned three methods: 1) Unseating Supervisor Susan Rose in her March 5<sup>th</sup> 2002 re-election bid or, 2) Re-calling Super-

visor Gail Marshall and installing outgoing Sheriff Jim Thomas using the phony "flag" issue or, 3) Splitting the county into two new counties and electing a *new* Board of Supervisors.

Although we now know that they failed to unseat Supervisor Rose and, Sheriff Thomas was embarrassed and weakened politically by the failure of his well funded, hand picked successor in the Sheriff's race, we can see these efforts continuing to play out in the cynical and shameful attempt to recall Supervisor Gail Marshall.

If this proposal to split the County is seen in this light then it is little more than one more effort by sore losers to keep stirring up the pot in order to try and gain (majority) political control for their own (minority) interests.

However transparent these goals may seem, Local 620's Board of Directors took pains to set our skepticism aside and judge the proposal on its merits (or lack thereof) *from our memberships point of view*. Evaluated in this manner, the proposed split came up lacking any merit for union members and creating the potential for serious problems including possible job and benefit losses.

After considering the issues from the perspective of our union's membership the Executive board of SEIU, Local 620 voted **unanimously** to oppose the 'County split'.

It is felt that the group's "feasibility study" which was reportedly bankrolled by a large company was far from unbiased and severely understated the real economic shortfall the proposed new County would likely suffer if approved by the voters.

A more neutral feasibility study would likely find that tax increases would be needed to continue to provide even the same level of service in the new County, not a likely prospect given the political beliefs of the proponents and most likely make up of a new board of supervisors.

Failing new taxes, the most likely outcome will be cut backs in public services provided by our membership.

(Continued on page 5)

**From Jude Garner, Steward Director**

Hi from the training and communication person. I've been busy with working on training schedules and I had my first successful training session on March 9<sup>th</sup> in San Luis Obispo. Ten stewards attended and we covered the very basic duties of a steward. My next training will be in Santa Barbara and I will be putting a flyer in the mail soon.

I have also started working with a web page consultant who is going to be setting up our web page and training me to maintain it. We will be putting lots of interesting information from Local 620 on the page, as well as links to SEIU state and international. We will also have a list of our staff and their duties and responsibilities, as well as a page for our Executive Board. I am also going to have a calendar of events for our Local, as well as things of interest in our two counties. This should give all you members a “one-stop” place to get answers about the union, plus giving you ways to contact any of our staff and the Executive Board. If you have any suggestions for the web page or for training subjects, please contact me, [jude@seiulocal620.org](mailto:jude@seiulocal620.org), or 963-0601, ext 16.

**Weingarten Rights**

One of the most vital functions of a Union steward is to prevent management from intimidating employees. Nowhere is it more important than in closed-door meetings when supervisors, often trained in interrogation techniques, attempt to coerce employees into confessing to wrongdoing.

The rights of employees to the presence of union representatives during investigatory interviews was announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in *NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc.* Since that case involved a clerk being investigated by the Weingarten Company, these rights have become known as Weingarten Rights.

Members are encouraged to assert their Weingarten Rights. If an employee has a **belief** of discipline being given or considered during a meeting with a supervisor, where questions are being asked that pertain to the employee's belief, they can request that a union representative be present. This would be that the employee would have one of the worksite stewards sit in the meeting with them. Employees **must** request the union representative; management is not required to offer representation. An employee is also allowed to ask if the meeting might lead to discipline, and then ask for a representative, or if the meeting turns into a disciplinary action, they may stop the meeting and request representation. Under no circumstances may an employee refuse to attend a meeting, or get up and leave a meeting before being released by the supervisor.

Management has various ways of handling a request for representation. The supervisor may agree to reschedule the meeting for a time when the worksite steward is available. The supervisor may stop the meeting and wait while the employee contacts the steward and gets them to the meeting. Finally, the supervisor can decide to continue the meeting. If the meeting is continued and no union representative is present the employee may decline to answer any more questions and continue to request representation.

A employee and the steward are entitled to a conference before entering the meeting with the supervisor. The steward is also allowed to ask the supervisor what the charges are prior to their discussion with the employee. These rights are for the employee, but management is not required to offer them to the employee. An employee must request the union representative.



**Member Benefit**



**AFLAC** – A world leader in providing supplemental insurance since 1955. Prompt Claims Payment – Employee receives benefits in 3 to 5 days.

**AFLAC** understands that the indirect costs of an accident or illness are as real as any hospital bill to a recuperating employee. These costs may include:

- ☞ Non-medical expenses such as travel, food, lodging, childcare, and household help
- ☞ Co-payments, deductibles and prescription and non-prescription drugs
- ☞ Daily living expenses such as car payments, rent or mortgage, groceries and utility bills

**AFLAC** benefits are paid directly to the insured; the insured maintains full control of policy proceeds.

- ☞ Employees can purchase individual or family coverage at payroll rates and pay premiums via payroll deduction.
- ☞ Policies are fully portable. If you leave your present employment, you take your policies with you, keep the group rate and can be billed at home.
- ☞ Policies include coverage for: Accident/Disability, Cancer, Heart Attack, Stokes, Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery, Hospital Confinement, and Intensive Care and much more.

**AFLAC** – Is proud to announce a new account manager for Local 620, Shirley Eyre. Shirley is a District Sales Coordinator for AFLAC and a resident of the Santa Ynez Valley. She is very service oriented and strives to make every policyholder a satisfied customer. She has an extensive background in insurance, real estate and mortgage lending. She can be reached at (805) 693-8333 with any questions or to request a rate quote.

**“Without it, no insurance is complete.”**

**From George Green, Field Rep**

Sisters and Brothers,

On March 27, 2002 a group of rank and file activists and staff from SEIU Locals 620, 998, 535 and 399 met in Carpinteria to discuss SEIU's political strategy around this year's state budget crisis.

The state budget has a projected shortfall of anywhere from \$12.2 billion to \$20 billion. This could obviously mean cuts to public services and public employees jobs. SEIU did extensive polling of Californians and we have found that a majority of folks in the state do not want to see a wholesale slaughter of public services. Californians support, and SEIU is advocating for, a balanced approach to balancing the state budget which combines new revenues with cuts that are spread fairly.

There will be some cuts, we want them evenly spread around. There must also be new revenues, we are working with State Senator John Burton to pass a bill which raises taxes on the wealthiest 2% of Californians (families with household incomes over \$250,000) back up to the rate they paid up until their taxes were cut in 1996.

Many of you have probably already signed postcards which we have forwarded to our Legislators' and the Governor. This was just the first step in our state wide plan to create a balanced approach to the budget process. We will also be visiting our local legislators' and asking for their support. SEIU will also be organizing a bus ride to Sacramento to lobby legislators at the Capitol.

This is a critical campaign for all public employees and their families in California. We need for the membership to become involved if we want to prevail. E-mail me at [george@seiulocal620.org](mailto:george@seiulocal620.org) or call (805) 963-0601 and let us know how you can be involved in the campaign.

In Solidarity and Peace,  
George

**From Bruce Corsaw, Field Rep**

**CalPERS Health Care**

S.E.I.U. Local 620 members are experiencing serious problems with their CalPERS Health Care providers throughout the central coast. Members are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain decent health care coverage due to medical groups, such as Mission Medical Associates of the Central Coast, filing for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 and/or primary care doctors and specialists terminating their contracts with the various medical groups. Another contributing factor is that insurance companies are coming to the conclusion that they are not making enough profit with their HMO plans and they are trying to phase them out.

These problems are causing cities and districts to experience difficulties adhering to their contracts with S.E.I.U. Local 620. For example, the City of Arroyo Grande found it necessary to have a temporary side letter of agreement with S.E.I.U. Local 620 to provide new employees with a PPO plan. The city agreed to pick up the extra charges for the new employees until these problems can be resolved.

Presently Blue Shield is seeking approval from the California Department of Managed Health Care to withdraw their HMO coverage from San Luis Obispo County by the end of 2002. The phone number for Blue Shield is (800) 334-5847. Other insurance carriers, such as PacifiCare Basic and HealthNet are finding that the IPA (Independent Physicians Association) has, again, placed a freeze on accepting any new HMO members, until further notice, unless they are a dependent of an existing patient. If S.E.I.U. Local 620 members would like more information from their health care provider, the phone number for PacifiCare is (800) 624-8822 (for Basic Plan) or (800) 228-2144 for Secure Horizons. The number for HealthNet members is (800) 654-9821.

CalPERS policy on health care providers disruptions is, if your health care provider terminates their contract with a health plan or ceases doing business for financial reasons such as insolvency, your health plan will arrange for you to be assigned to another medical group or they will attempt to contract directly with the providers of the terminated medical group. Sometimes, providers refuse to contract with the health plan and patients must select a new provider. California Department of Managed Health Care requires health plans to have sufficient providers available, in their network, at all times. If you are undergoing a course of treatment from a terminated provider for an acute, serious chronic, high risk condition or your are in the second or third trimester of your pregnancy, State Law requires your health plan to arrange for continuation of covered services by a terminated provider (**You must request this!**). If you have any questions or issues with your CalPERS Health Care Plan you should contact your health care administrator, or the California Department of Managed Health Care, (800) 400-0815, or their HMO Help Center, (800) HMO-2219. If you need assistance from one of the elected CalPERS commissioners you can contact Mr. Charles P. Valdes, (916) 972-7788. The Internet site for CalPERS is [www.calpers.ca.gov](http://www.calpers.ca.gov).

S.E.I.U. Local 620 will continue to work with members, cities and districts to resolve issues relating to CalPERS health plans as they arise in the future

**Union Meeting Schedule**

City of Santa Barbara Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month and meeting flyers are sent out one week prior to the meeting.

County of Santa Barbara Meetings are scheduled the second Thursday of each month and meeting flyers are sent out one week prior to the meeting.

Executive Board meetings are held the 4th Saturday of each month. The time and location of the meetings are set a year in advance. Call the office for a time and place.

Please watch for the flyers and newsletters and plan to attend.

**Steward Training—Saturday, May 18, 2002 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM**

**Santa Barbara County Employees' University  
Flyers are being sent out prior to training.**



**Hun Taing, Organizing Director**

**JUSTICE FOR COURT EMPLOYEES**

So this is it. The Court Employee Campaign is hitting its critical period. The court employees will have to make up their minds on forming a union. Our goal is 60% to file. The question is, do we have enough support to win? Court employees want to see changes in their workplace or at least have some say over their future. With employees committed to forming their union, a member volunteer helping out and I facilitating this campaign, there's a strong chance that this two-year campaign for the courts will come out victorious.

Few people know that the Court Campaign have already had taste of victory. With the presence of the court employees union, employers fought hard to match the County's COLA of 4.4%. Imagine how upset the employees would be if employers didn't fight for that COLA? And how about the Caesar Chavez holiday the courts received, the employee's appreciation luncheons, the unusual morning donuts, and the Valentine's gifts? These are all common tactics to appease employees. Workers know better.

On a more serious note, with California's projected 18 billion dollars budget deficit, the courts have too much to lose if they do not form a union now. Public services including the Superior Courts will be affected. No power and protection plus a huge budget crisis equals serious consequences, possibly cuts, layoffs, more clients, increase workloads, and less help.

SEIU with half a million members in California continues to lobby hard in Sacramento for the benefit of workers. The result of a SEIU public survey indicates that taxing the rich (those above a \$250,000 income) and spreading the cuts to a wider range of service sectors so no one industry is hit hard by the deficit are the strategies to help balance the budget. This balance approach is our proposal and it's our statewide lobbying efforts.

SEIU continues to fight for the benefit of all workers. However, if the Santa Barbara Superior Court Employees do not form their union now, they will continue to have little power if any over the future of their work.

**People's March for Economic Justice**

The second annual Santa Barbara People's March for Economic Justice is timely in the current stage of economic struggle. With California's state budget crisis, a recession hitting our economy and our national resources going towards weapons of mass destruction (military, nuclear weapons and wars) the poor and working class continue to bare the brunt of society. There isn't a more opportune and critical moment in this community to address the economic and global injustices by marching in solidarity.

All SEIU members are invited to take part in this exciting march that starts at 12 in Ortega Park and ending at the Sunken Gardens with Ralph Nader, Yes, Raph Nader speaking. Last year, over 500 people marched and we are expecting more this year. I will have an SEIU Local 620 banner where members can march in solidarity for economic justice. All union members attending, please contact Hun Taing at 963-0601 x 19 for your SEIU Local 620 t-shirts.

**The Second Annual Santa Barbara People's March for Economic Justice**

**Featuring Ralph Nader and several local speakers**

A march to address economic injustices from the local to the global. A moment to demonstrate the power of solidarity in our community.

April 27, 2002  
NOON, Ortega Park  
[www.peoplesmarch.org](http://www.peoplesmarch.org)

**ATTENTION: STEWARDS Proposed Change to Local 620 By-Laws:**

Stewards are invited to attend the June 1, 2002 Executive Board Meeting in Bulleton, at the Protection Services Division, Fire Dept., 195 W. Hwy 246 #102. A vote will be held to approve the changes.

The proposed change is to: **ARTICLE X – COMMITTEES Section 2.** Following are the standing committees and the aim(s) of each: e. Personnel – to assist the **Executive Board** President in conducting **to conduct** performance evaluations of the Executive Director; **and** to mediate personnel-related disputes between Union staffers **staff** and **disputes between Union staff and Union members**, on referral **when referred by** from the Executive Board, any disputes between Union staffers **staff** and other represented Union members. The **Executive Board President**, Chapter Chairs **Chairpersons**, and the Executive Director serve as the members of the Personnel Committee. **The Executive Board President and the Chapter Chairpersons are the voting committee members.**

(Continued from page 1)

From the Executive Director

Pressures to contract out union work to non-union contractors would likely increase and result in a loss of purchasing power and health and retirement benefits to the remaining workers.

A cutback of services would mean layoffs. Layoffs would enter into a complex legal tangle with the possibility of more senior employees of the new county being laid off and displacing less senior employees in the old ‘affected’ county.

There might be legal impediments raised over the union’s ability to represent the employees of the new county. In any case, the union would at best have to negotiate an additional major contract for the same or, more likely a reduced number of workers, weakening our entire membership’s ability to negotiate strong labor contracts with good wages & benefits for the working men and women in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Local 620 members reading this should call the union if you have questions or comments of course, but if you study the issues as the Board of Directors did, I am sure you will agree this is a “dead-on-arrival” proposal for union members who have everything to lose and nothing to gain by this ill advised attempt to shift the political power once again in Santa Barbara County.

By Philip Angelides and Art Pulaski

Over the past century, working people in California and across the nation have made huge advances in their struggle to win decent wages, working conditions, and benefits – often at considerable sacrifice.

Unfortunately, such gains have not been universal. While globalization of the marketplace may hold promise of broadened opportunity, it has also cast new light on the plight of workers in developing countries. Many face atrocious health and safety conditions on the job. Child labor and forced labor are all too common, and in many underdeveloped nations there is an absence of democratic institutions and such basic rights as freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and freedom to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining.

Thus, it is no small irony that in recent years, tens of billions of dollars of American capital have been invested overseas in countries with unstable governments and in companies that mistreat their workers. Adding insult to injury, many of those investments lost money. California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) investments in foreign “emerging markets,” for example, lost nearly 35 percent in Indonesia and almost 27 percent in Thailand annually over the last five years.

That is about to change. Over the last year, we worked closely with CalPERS Board Member Sean Harrigan of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union to secure CalPERS approval of precedent-setting new policies regarding investments in foreign emerging markets. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney – on behalf of union member across the United States – also actively supported the new policies, which will assist in screening out investments in countries which lack fundamental democratic institutions, and in companies that employed abusive labor practices or fail to protect human health and the environment.

To encourage economically-productive labor practices and stronger long-term returns, markets will be evaluated and graded on whether the countries in which they are located have ratified and are enforcing the tenets of the International Labor Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The Declaration promotes workers rights, condemns abusive labor practices, and encourages implementation of fair labor laws and regulations through impartial legal and judicial systems. The CalPERS standards also recognize that countries which lack an independent judiciary and a trusted legal framework are, as a practical matter, unable to enforce fundamental protections for workers.

CalPERS’ adoption of the new emerging market policies marks the first time in U.S. history that a major institutional investor has officially recognized the commonsense principle that a country’s political stability, market development, and respect for basic human and workers’ rights are necessary to produce strong, long-term returns for investors. The CalPERS action also is especially significant because, with \$150 billion in assets, it is the nation’s largest public pension fund and thus influences other funds across the country.

By adopting the new policies that will impede the flow of pension fund dollars to unstable countries that tolerate and encourage abusive labor practices, CalPERS sends a powerful signal to repressive forces across the globe: Recognize workers’ rights and build the democratic institutions needed to uphold those rights if you seek the benefits of our investment capital.

Philip Angelides is California State Treasurer and a CalPERS Board Member. Art Pulaski is Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation.

SEIU Local 620  
933 Castillo Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**We are Always  
updating our data  
base. Please return  
the Member Change  
Form to our Santa  
Barbara Office**

If any information has  
changed:  
New Address?  
New E-mail Address?  
Name Change?  
New Job Location?  
New Job Classification?  
New Home Phone?  
New Work Phone?  
New Beneficiary?

**MEMBER CHANGE FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ H Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ W Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_, CA Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Beneficiary : \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter : (Place X next to your Chapter)**

Air Pollution Control Dist  
 Arroyo Grande City  
 Atascadero City  
 Cambria Community Service Dist  
 Carpinteria City  
 Goleta Water Dist  
 Grover Beach City  
 Isla Vista Recreation & Parks Dist  
 Morro Bay City  
 Paso Robles City

Pismo Beach City  
 Port San Luis Harbor  
 San Luis Coastal Schools  
 Santa Maria Cemetery Dist  
 Santa Maria City  
 Santa Barbara County  
 Santa Barbara City "General"  
 Santa Barbara City "TAP"  
 Retired Chapter